

[जॉर्ज फर्नान्डो]

के परिवारों को जो पैसा दिया जाना चाहिए और अपघात वे जो लोग घायल हुए, उन लोगों को जो पैसा दिया जाना चाहिए, वह देने का काम ठीक समय पर किया जाएगा... (व्यवधान)

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (DR. G. VIJAYA MOHAN REDDY): That is a good decision.

श्री सुब्रह्मजीत सिंह अहलुवालिया : श्री जीसा कि ग्रारिफ साहब ने बताया कि इंडियन एयरलाइंस की एयर बस ए-300 की बंगलौर दुर्घटना में जो लोग मरे हैं, उनके किसी रिश्तेदार को नौकरी दी जाएगी तो क्या रेलवे मंत्रालय के पास भी उक्त दुर्घटना के लिए इस प्रकार का कोई प्रस्ताव विचाराधीन है?

श्री जॉर्ज फर्नान्डो : ऐसा कोई प्रस्ताव नहीं है।

श्री तनावर पंडेय : प्रस्ताव तो कर दिया है सदस्य महोदय ने... (व्यवधान)

श्री जॉर्ज फर्नान्डो : हमारे सामने ऐसा कोई प्रस्ताव नहीं है... सदस्य महोदय ने भी केवल सवाल किया है। प्रस्ताव करने के कुछ नियम होते हैं। ऐसा कोई प्रस्ताव नहीं है।

श्री सुरभ्रजीत सिंह अहलुवालिया : यह मेरा प्रस्ताव है आपको... (व्यवधान)

श्री जॉर्ज फर्नान्डो : वह मैंने सुन लिया, पर ऐसा कोई प्रस्ताव हमारे सामने नहीं है।

अध्यक्ष जी, कुछ माननीय सदस्यों ने यह भी शन किया कि अलग-अलग जोनल लेवेल में किस प्रकार और कैसे प्राधात होते हैं... (व्यवधान)

श्री कपिल वर्मा : प्राइम फी रीजन था था, कोई न तो तो अंदाज आपको हुआ होगा...

श्री जॉर्ज फर्नान्डो : कोई अंदाज नहीं है। कुछ भी जानकारी मेरे हाथ में होती तो सदन के सामने न रखता तो कहाँ रखता? जैसे ही रिपोर्ट आ जाएगी, तो सदन को बताऊंगा।

अब जहाँ तक हर जोन पर तिसरा अपघात हुआ, यह बात यह पर छोड़ी गई है कि साउथ सेंट्रल रेलवे में अपघातों का अनुपात बढ़ता गया है, ऐसा माननीय सदस्य ने आक्षेप किया।

On the South Central Railway, there were 40 accidents in the current year as against 45 during last year. Therefore, to conclude that on the South-Central Railway, there are a very large number of accidents and it is heading the statistical table of accidents would not be very correct, because the statistics in my possession state the contrary. अंत में अध्यक्ष जी, सदस्यों का आभारी हूँ कि सक्ष प्रश्न पर जो भी मुद्दे बहस में उठाए गए हैं उन पर यह बहस छिड़ी है। अभी रेल बजट पर बहस होनी है सदन में और यही निवेदन करना चाहूँगा कि इस मुद्दे पर, इस मसले पर कुछ ठोस बहस जरूर हो जाए ताकि कर्मचारियों के प्रशिक्षण से लेकर रेलों के ऐवसीडेंट्स तक के बारे में उनको सचेत करने के बारे में कुछ कार्यवाही करना जरूरी है, मैं मानता हूँ कि जरूरी है। इसीलिए उन्हें सचेत करने से लेकर रेलवे इंजन, रोलिंग स्टॉक आदि सारी चीजों में जो सुधार की आवश्यकता है उस पर सदन में कुछ ठोस सुझाव आए और सदन जो सुझाव देगा उस पर अमल करने के लिए, सारी जिम्मेदारियों के बावजूद उन पर कार्यवाही करेंगे

#### STATEMENT BY MINISTER

#### Revision of Tariff for Telecommunication Services

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES WITH ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF THE MINISTRY OF

**LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI):** Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, on behalf of my colleague Shri K. P. Unnikrishnan, Minister for Surface Transport and Communications I rise to make the following statement:—

2. The Honourable Members are aware that Telecom services from a basic infrastructure and the Government is committed to its faster development and providing better accessibility, connectivity and improvement in the quality of services. It is also the policy of the Government to extend the telecommunications into the rural sector so that the remote villages are brought into the main stream of national life. The emphasis will be on a balanced development including rural sector and efficiency in the services.

3. Telecommunication services are capital intensive. However, owing to constraint of resources and priorities of other competing demands, the telecom sector has not been able to adequately fund its expansion programmes. At the same time, investments in telecom fetch additional resources, which in turn, be ploughed back to accelerate development. Given the right impetus, the telecom sector could grow into a self-sufficient service. Also, there are certain anomalies in the tariffs—which I will presently mention—which need to be rectified. Keeping these factors in view, I propose to make the following modifications in the existing tariff structure as a measure of rationalisation:

#### A. Charges for metered calls

Presently, the charges for metered calls are as under:—

Upto 275 calls—Free.

276 to 2,000 calls—80 paise per call.

2001 to 5,000 calls—Re. 1 per call.

Over 5,000 calls—Rs. 1.25 per call.

The above tariff structure is somewhat irrational. Those who use the telephones most have to pay relatively higher tariffs. The existing tariff structure also results in more telephones being cornered by a person just to save on call charges. To rectify these defects, it is proposed to make the call charges Re. 1.10 per call, for calls in excess of 1,000, including free calls. For calls upto 1000, including free calls, the existing rate of 80 ps. will continue.

#### B. Rates for operator assisted trunk calls—national and international

Presently, there are two systems of trunk calls viz., Subscriber Direct Dialling (STD & ISD) Facility and Operator assisted calls. Operator assisted calls involve the handling of a call by a number of operators before it matures. The trunk lines are also held up for a longer time than in the case of directly dialled calls. Hence, the cost to the Department of an operator assisted trunk call is much higher than that of a subscriber dialled call. However, the tariffs for booked trunk calls are less than the revenue for STD calls of standard duration. It is, therefore, proposed to revise the prescribed trunk call rates to levels which broadly correspond to STD revenue for a call of equal duration. The details are contained in Statement-I. (See below).

#### C. Telephone rentals and free calls

Another anomalous situation now obtaining is that in several cases the value of free calls is far in excess of the rentals payable. This is untenable. The alternatives are to keep the number of free calls unchanged and increased the rentals correspondingly or to reduce the number of free calls, in which case the increase in the rentals will not be so steep. I propose to adopt the latter and reduce the number of free calls to 150 for a bio-monthly period and to modify the rentals so as not to be less than the value of the free calls. At the same

[Shri Dinesh Goswami]

time, I am glad to inform the House that for small exchanges of less than 100 lines each on measured rate system, the rental is now proposed to be reduced from Rs. 125 to 100. The concession will largely benefit the rural sector. A Table showing the existing and the revised rentals/free calls is placed at Statement-II. (See below).

#### D. Telex rentals and calls charges

##### (i) Rentals

The present system of telex rentals is not quite satisfactory. The rentals are related to the distance of the subscriber from the main telex exchange. Accordingly, they vary from Rs. 1500 per annum to about Rs. 20,000 if the distance exceeds 20 kms. Such wide disparities are totally unjustified. There have been several complaints from telex users about this irrational feature. To rectify this, the revised tariff structure provides uniform rate of rental for all telex subscribers located within the local area, irrespective of the distance from the Exchange. The new rates will be as under:

Telex Exchange capacity	Rental
Less than 300	Rs. 1500 per annum.
301-1000	Rs. 2000 per annum.
1001-5000	Rs. 2500 per annum.
Above 5000	Rs. 3000 per annum.

##### (ii) Telex Call charges

The present rate of telex call charges is Re. 1 per unit, which was fixed in 1976 when the telephone call rate was 30 paise. A rate of Rs. 3 would be now justified. However, in order to encourage telex usage, a uniform rate of Rs. 2 is now proposed.

#### E. Time and zone metering

I propose to introduce the concept of time and zone metering for local

calls. A major advantage of this feature will be a relief on the telephone exchanges which are already congested. The introduction of revised tariff in this respect would depend on the availability of necessary equipment and how soon the same can be provided. My Department is examining these aspects with a view to enable introduction of this system as early as possible.

4. No, some good news I am happy to announce the following concessions in telecom tariffs for a variety of users:—

(i) With a view to encourage the use of telephones in the rural sector, the call charges will be reduced by 50 per cent in respect of Long Distance Public Telephones (LDPTs) located in rural area. This will be valid for a period of 3 years.

(ii) The reduction in rentals from Rs. 125 to Rs. 100 of exchanges less than 100 lines will benefit the rural sector.

(iii) The rate of Rs. 1.10 per telephone call involves a substantial concession for those who make more than 5,000 calls bi-monthly.

(iv) Rationalisation of telex rentals is another major concession to those who are located far off from the Telex exchanges.

(v) In addition, I propose a 25 per cent concession in the telephone rentals for the following categories.

(a) Institutional (non-residential) telephones in all recognised educational institutes like schools, colleges, Universities etc., and non-commercial research organisations.

(b) Upto 2 telephones (non-residential) in recognised institutions like Homes for the Aged, Infirm, Spastics, Handicapped, Deaf-dumb-mute persons, Orphanages

and Voluntary organisations working for tribal welfare.

(vi) As an encouragement to the Press and News agencies like PTI, UNI a 50 per cent concession in the rentals for leased circuits used for data transmission/facsimile by News agencies and newspapers for propagation of news. This will not extend to circuits hired for transmission of commercial data to commer-

cial institutions like Banks etc., or video text/news-scan services, etc.

5. I do hope that the Honourable members will appreciate the measures proposed for rationalisation of tariffs and the concessions that have now been proposed. I assure this House that the Telecom Sector will continue to work for improvement in the quality of services and customer satisfaction and extension of service to the remote corners of the country.

#### Statement-I

##### *The existing and revised rates for Operator Assisted Trunk Calls*

###### (a) National

Distance Slab (Kms)	Existing Trunk Tariff (3 minutes)	Proposed Tariff (3 minutes)
Upto 20 . . . . .	Rs. 2	Rs. 2
>20- 50. . . . .	Rs. 4	Rs. 5
>50- 100 . . . . .	Rs. 8	Rs. 15
>100- 200 . . . . .	Rs. 16	Rs. 25
>200- 500 . . . . .	Rs. 27	Rs. 45
>500- 1000 . . . . .	Rs. 36	Rs. 55
Above 1000 . . . . .	Rs. 45	Rs. 75

###### (b) International

	**(One Minute)	**(One Minute)
I (a) Neighbouring SAARC countries . . .	Rs. 20	Rs. 26
(b) Other Neighbouring Countries . . .	Rs. 25	Rs. 30
II Countries in Africa, Europe, Gulf, Asia and Oceania . . . . .	Rs. 45	Rs. 50
III All Countries in American Continents and other places in Western Hemisphere . . .	Rs. 55	Rs. 60

\*\*Minimum 3 minutes.

## Statement-II

Statement showing the existing Rental/Free Calls and as now revised (MR)

Exchange Systems	As now existing		As now proposed	
	Rentals	Free Calls	Rental	Free s Call
	(Bi-monthly)			
		In No.		In No.
Less than 100 lines . . . . .	Rs. 125	275	Rs. 100	150
100 and above but below 1000 lines . . . . .	Rs. 140	275	(Rs. 150	150)
1000 & above but below 10000 lines . . . . .	Rs. 160	275	(Rs. 200	150)
10000 & above but below 30000 lines . . . . .	Rs. 200	275	(Rs. 200	150)
30000 & above but below 1 lakh lines . . . . .	Rs. 250	275	Rs. 250	150
1 lakh & above but below 3 lakh lines . . . . .	Rs. 300	275	(Rs. 330	150)
3 lakh lines and above . . . . .	Rs. 330	275	(Rs. 330	150)

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (DR. G. VIJAYA MOHAN REDDY): You can give the salient features.

PROF. CHANDRESH P. THAKUR (Bihar): Give us the highlights.

SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI: You want the highlights. One of the highlights is that there has been a change in the charges for metered calls. At present free calls upto 275 are allowed on a bi-monthly basis and the charges are:

Upto 275 calls	Free
From 276 to 2000 calls	80 paise per call
From 2001 to 5000 calls	Rs. 1 per call
Above 5000 calls	Rs. 1.25 per call

Now the situation is that those who utilise phones more tend to corner more telephones in order to bring their call to the minimum limit. Therefore, now it has been revised as:

Upto 1000 call, with free calls 80 paise upto 150 per call  
Above 1000 One slab of Rs. 1.10 per call.

There has been some revision of trunk call charges which is given in Annexure I to the statement, by which we have brought at par the trunk calls with the STD calls because now the STD calls cost more.

There has been some corresponding revision of traff for international trunk calls.

So far as rental-free calls are concerned, there were seven slabs earlier. Now we have brought them down to five with the minimum slab being reduced from Rs. 125 to Rs. 100 and the maximum slab has been kept at the same rate of Rs. 330. But the slabs have been rationalised. Now there will be slabs of 100, 150, 200, 250 are 330.

So far as telex rentals are concerned, there was an irrationality in

the sense than those who used to utilise telex had to pay Rs. 1500 per annum upto 5 kilometres and incidental charge was calculated at Rs. 450 per kilometre beyond the radius of 5 kilometre with the result that some of the subscribers within a radius of five kilometres had to pay only Rs. 1,500 per annum but those who are located at, say, 20 kilometres, had to pay Rs. 18,300. This, we felt, was not rational and now we have, more or less, rationalized it in that if the Telex Exchange capacity is less than 300, the rental will be Rs. 1,500. Then, 301 to 1,000 it will be Rs. 2,000; 1,001 to 5,000 it will be Rs. 2,500 and above 5,000 it will be Rs. 3,000. Therefore, a person who had to pay Rs. 18,300 earlier, because of some irrationality in the structure of telex rental rates, will have to pay an amount which is more rational.

So far as telex call charges are concerned, from Re. 1 per unit the rate has now been increased to Rs. 2, and corresponding increases will be made taking into consideration the distance involved.

Now there are some concessions given in telephone rentals. A concession of 50 per cent is given to long distance public telephones, particularly to help the rural areas. Concessions are given to recognized educational institutions like universities, research institutes, colleges and student's hostels. Concessions are also given to institutions like Homes for the Aged, Infirm, Spastics, Handicapped, Deaf-dumb-mute persons, Orphanages and voluntary organizations working for tribal welfare, etc., recognized by the State Government up to a maximum of two telephones each.

A concession of 50 per cent is given in the rentals for leased circuits to news agencies such as PTI, UNI, Samachar Bharati and newspapers for data transmission/facsimile for the propagation of news, etc., as may be prescribed from time to time.

Now, Sir, these are the main features of this statement which I am making on behalf of my colleague, Mr. Unnikrishnan.

**SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA** (Rajasthan): Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, I will begin with a request to the honourable Minister that because he does not belong to this particular Ministry if he is not able to reply to all the questions properly, may I expect replies to them from the Department in due course? Sir, I am not going into the merits of the charges being increased because I know that for capital intensive services like telecommunications he may have to increase the charges. I would not question that for another reason also, that is, if we are able to get the services, because I am more concerned with the services. I know that my other friends will question him about the charges and so I leave it at that.

At the moment I am on the services. On the 14th March in the reply of the honourable Minister of Communications to Unstarred Question No. 170, details of excess billing for the different years have been mentioned. It statistically proves that about one per cent of the bills have been questioned about excess billing. I am not concerned with this one or two per cent, but the question is, why should there be even a single excess bill? Because, the amount involved may be much more in totality though the number of bills may be less. In the same reply the Minister has mentioned some remedial measures taken by the Government. Remedial measure (c) says:

"The facility of detailed billing of STD/ISD calls free of cost has been allowed to subscribers, wherever existing exchange facilities permit this."

I would like to inform the honourable Minister that specially in the city

of Calcutta, as the honourable Minister himself has agreed, telephone communication is deteriorating instead of improving, and this facility is not at all available there.

6 P. M. Item No. (d)—I am not going into the details—simply says:

“Facility of fortnightly meter reading.”

I can say that this meter-reading fortnightly is not being given even to the MPs regularly. It comes after two months, three months, four months, six months. Then it becomes useless. The charges are being charged in the Bill, all right. But the service is not being rendered.

Then item No. (c), sub-clause (2) says:

“Provision of automatic switch-over day and night telex.”

Probably it is happening because I really do not know whether it happens or not. How do you create confidence in the minds of the subscribers that it really happens, especially in a place like Calcutta where the operators or the telephone staff are least concerned about what is happening to the communication system? You dial 199, you dial 197, you dial 180, 186, you dial emergency calls, nothing is received, and if they are received, they are not replied properly.

Sub-clause (4) says:

“Routine testing of subscribers' meters.”

All right. I am not questioning. I am not doubting the integrity of the telephone staff. Again how do you convince the subscribers that it is being checked regularly? Therefore, I suggest: Like the electricity meters can you not have meters at the premises where the telephones are installed? If it is technically not

possible, I have a second suggestion: Can you make it possible for the subscriber to monitor the meter himself by placing it at a suitable place at the telephone exchange itself? It is a question of credibility, Sir, and I believe the hon. Minister will like to ensure that the credibility of this Department must increase, and then only the subscribers will be satisfied.

Now, coming to the statement which he has made today, again it is a question of service about the telex especially in Calcutta. In certain cases now it has to compete with the FAX service which is very little available so far. But again telex in Calcutta is hardly operating. There is no maintenance at all. I wish he could do something about it or at least see how we can ensure that the services are given regularly and timely.

There is no mention of the FAX service. Do you have that intention to introduce the FAX service in a bigger way in our country?

Thank you, Sir.

श्री मोहम्मद खलीलुर रहमान (ग्राम्प्रदेश) : जनाब वाइस-चेयरमैन साहब, मिनिस्टर साहब ने जो स्टेटमेंट पेश किया है उससे मालूम होता है कि अब तक 275 फ्री काल्स थीं, इन फ्री काल्स को घटाकर 150 काल्स दो महीने के लिए कर दी गई हैं। इस तरह से दो दिन में सिर्फ 5 काल्स की बात पड़ती है। मैं समझता हूँ कि 275 काल्स जो पहले थीं वही फ्री काल्स रख दी जायें तो बहुत हद तक बेहतर रहेगा। बरना इससे बहुत बड़ा वार पड़ेगा। एक तरफ तो टैरिफ की कीमत बढ़ा दी गई है और एक हज़ार से ज्यादा काल्स हो जायें तो एक रुपया दस पैसे होंगे। दूसरी तरफ जो फ्री काल्स थीं उनको घटाकर 275 से 150 कर दिया गया है। इसलिए मैं मिनिस्टर साहब से दख्तास्त करूँगा कि फ्री काल्स को बढ़ाने के ताल्लुक से गौर करें।

دوسری بات یہ ہے کہ خیار تیار سے رورل ارییا میں جو ٹیلیفون ایکسچینج لگایے گئے ہیں، یہ دو قسم کے ٹیلیفون ایکسچینج ہیں۔ ایک تو مینٹنل ٹیلیفون ایکسچینج ہیں اور دوسرے آٹو مینٹنل ٹیلیفون ایکسچینج ہیں۔ مجھے یہ کہتے ہوئے انتہائی افسوس ہوتا ہے کہ رورل ارییا میں جتنے بھی ٹیلیفون ایکسچینج ہیں وہ کام نہیں کرتے ہیں۔ سب سے زیادہ ٹیلیفون تیار لگا لیتے ہیں اور جس مقصد کے لیے ٹیلیفون لگایا جاتا ہے وہ کام نہیں کرتا۔ یہاں پر ٹیلیفون ایکسچینج کے سامنے شکایت بھی کی گئی ہے، پھر بھی کچھ نہیں ہوتا ہے۔ خاص طور پر ایم۔ پی۔ جی۔ کی انفارمیشن میٹنگ میں بھی شکایت کی گئی تھی وہاں پر بھی یہ بات اٹھائی گئی۔ ہمیشہ وعدہ کیا جاتا ہے مگر اس کے باوجود اس کی طرف توجہ نہیں دی جاتی ہے۔ میں مینسٹر صاحب سے درخواست کروں گا کہ رورل ارییا میں جو ٹیلیفون ایکسچینج لگائے گئے ہیں ان کو بہتر بنائے تاکہ وہ کام کر سکیں اور ان کی کارکردگی بہتر ہو۔

تیسری بات یہ کہنا چاہوں گا کہ رورل ارییا میں جو پبلک کال ٹیلیفون ہیں ان کو وہاں کے پوسٹ آفیس میں رکھا جاتا ہے۔ لیکن جب رات میں باہر سے کوئی ٹیلیفون آتا ہے تو پوسٹ ماسٹر نہیں اٹھتا اور جس کے لیے ڈک کال آتا ہے اس سے اس کی بات نہیں کہائی جاتی۔ اس لیے اس بات کا خاص خیال رکھا جائے کہ جو پبلک کال ٹیلیفون رورل ارییا میں لگائے گئے ہیں ان کے لیے خاص انتظام کریں۔ ان چند تاجرین کے ساتھ اپنے مجھے جو کہنے کا جو وقت دیا ہے اس کے لیے میں آپ کا شکریہ ادا کرتا ہوں۔

† اشری محمد خلیل الرحمن

(آنر پارٹیشن) : جناب والس

چیرمین صاحب - مینسٹر صاحب

نے جو استیتمات پیش کیا ہے -

اس سے معلوم ہوتا ہے کہ ان کے ۲ < ۵ فری کالیں تھیں - ان فری کالیں کو دیکھنا کہ کالیں دو مہینے لیٹے کر دی گئی ہیں - اس طرح دو دن میں پانچ کالیں کی بات پڑتی ہے - میں سمجھتا ہوں کہ ۲ < ۵ کالیں جو پہلے تھیں وہ بھی تو کالیں دی جائیں تو بہت حد تک بہتر رہے گا - رات سے بہتر - بڑا بہتر پڑے گا - ایک طرف تو ٹریف کی کمی ہے دوسری طرف تو ٹریف کی کمی ہے اور ایک ہزار سے زیادہ کالیں آتی ہیں تو ایک دوپہر میں ۲ < ۵ کالیں آتی ہیں دوسری طرف جو فری کالیں تھیں ان کو دیکھنا کہ ۲ < ۵ سے ۲۵۰ کر دیا گیا ہے - اس لیے میں مینسٹر صاحب سے درخواست کروں گا کہ فری کالیں بڑھانے کے متعلق فور کریں -

دوسری بات یہ ہے کہ خاص طور سے رورل ارییا میں جو ٹیلیفون ایکسچینج لگائے گئے ہیں - یہ دو قسم کے ٹیلیفون ایکسچینج ہیں اور دوسرے آٹو مینٹنل ٹیلیفون ایکسچینج ہیں - مجھے یہ کہتے ہوئے انتہائی افسوس ہوتا ہے کہ رورل ارییا میں جتنے بھی ٹیلیفون ایکسچینج ہیں وہ کام نہیں کرتے ہیں - لیکن جس مقصد کے لیے ٹیلیفون لگایا جاتا ہے - وہ مقصد یہاں نہیں ہوتا ہے - کیونکہ ٹیلیفون کام نہیں کرتا



ہے - کئی دفعہ انہوں نے سامنے شکایت کی گئی ہے - پھر بھی کچھ نہیں ہوتا ہے - خاص طور پر ایک چیز - کی انفراسٹرکچر مشاورتی میٹنگ میں بھی اس تعلق سے شکایت کی گئی - وہاں پر بھی یہ بات اٹھائی گئی - ہمیشہ وعدہ کیا جاتا ہے - مگر اسکے باوجود اسکی طرف توجہ نہیں دی جاتی ہے - میں ماسٹر صاحب سے درخواست کروں گا کہ رورل ایریاز میں جو ٹیلیفون لکائے گئے ہیں - ان ٹیلیفونوں کو ایسے بہتر بنائیں تاکہ وہ موثر انداز میں کام کر سکیں اور انکی کارکردگی بڑھے -

تیسویں بات میں یہ نہیں چاہیے کہ رورل ایریاز میں جو پبلک ٹیلیفون ہوں - انکو وہاں کے پوسٹ آفس میں رکھا جاتا ہے لیکن جب رات میں باہر سے کوئی ٹیلیفون آتا ہے تو پوسٹ ماسٹر نہیں اٹھتا - اور جس کیلئے ٹرنک دل آتا ہے اس سے کوئی بات نہیں کرائی جاتی - اسلئے اس بات کا خاص خیال رکھا جائے کہ جو پبلک کال ٹیلیفون رورل ایریاز میں بلاک اور ملحق سطح پر رکھے گئے ہوں انکے لئے خاص انتظام کریں - ان چند تجاویز کے ساتھ آپ نے جو مجھے کہنے کا جو وقت دیا ہے - اسکے لئے میں آپ کا شکر ادا کرتا ہوں -

SHRI KAPIL VERMA (Uttar Pradesh): It is most distressing that a big burden has been put on telephone subscribers who are already suffering because of the total breakdown of services in several parts of the country. Only yesterday there was a highly inflationary Budget presented and prices of diesel, petrol, cigarettes and so many other things hiked. The other day the Railway freight and fare were hiked. Now comes another burden.

The first thing is that the charge per call has been increased to Rs. 1.10 and the number of free calls has been reduced. I have gone through the Statement. It looks that there is a significant shift in the policy of the Department. Earlier they were depending on borrowings for meeting the deficit. Now they have decided to tax the subscribers. My point is if the services are good, then subscribers may not hesitate to pay a little more, but the whole difficulty is that the services are awful and going down every day.

Now, I would seek clarifications from the hon. Minister. What is the total extra revenue which the Government will be getting from the revised tariff and what is the total amount from the internal resources of the Department of Telecommunications, which he is going to raise through various proposals which have been presented today? How much is the deficit and to what extent will the present tariff raise will meet the deficit? How much relief has he given to the rural areas, as my friend opposite has just now pointed out? Whatever relief you give in the rural areas is welcome, but the point is whether the telephone services are properly functioning there or not. It is clear the services are not functioning properly. So, whatever relief announcements you make remain on paper in most of the areas.

Now, the rationale that you have given for revision of rates today is

that you want to undertake an expansion programme and improve the quality of the services. These are the two reasons that you have given. But you have not outlined the expansion programme. What is your expansion programme? As far as improvement in services is concerned, probably you are zero at the moment. I have been using telephone for the last 40 years. My friends have talked about Calcutta and other places, but in the city of Lucknow, which is the political heart of India, there is a virtual breakdown of services. You never get 197 or 198 or 199. You will be interested in knowing something funny when Mr. Bir Bahadur Singh became Minister of Communications, I telephoned 197. Firstly, I did not get 197. Somehow I got the Supervisor and asked what was the telephone number of Mr. Bir Bahadur Singh. They said "We have an old directory. We do not know his number because your Communications Minister changes every day. We can give you the number of Mr. Arjun Singh". This is exactly what is happening today. I will not go into details because this is not a debate but a time only for questions and clarifications but the main difficulty is that we get inflated bills. This is the main source of worry and most of the subscribers in Lucknow are getting inflated bills. As a Member of Parliament in Delhi also I am getting inflated bills running into thousands of rupees. Not only in Lucknow people are getting inflated bills but at many other important centres. This is our main source of worry. We are not getting money from blackmarketeers. We don't get money from the criminals or anything of that kind. We depend on our salaries or we depend on the profession which we have. As an honest Minister, Mr. Dinesh Goswami knows how difficult it is to make both ends meet at a costly place like Delhi. How can a Member of Parliament pay thousands of rupees on the telephone even though the telephone is locked? Something is al-

ways going wrong. When I telephoned from the Lobby to my place to tell my servant something, I never got that number for a long time and when I got my number, some cross-talk was going on. It is a well-known fact that linesmen in collusion with their own senior staff, give a lot of free calls and even Trunk calls to businessmen and they charge for them from other subscribers. This has not only been happening in Lucknow but in Delhi and so many other places. The first thing the Minister must do is to check the inflated calls because even Members of Parliament, a number of them have told me, that they are getting very inflated bills. In Lucknow my telephone which I have got as a Rajya Sabha member was out of order for about 14 months. So many times I complained but nobody bothered and somehow I got it transferred to some other Exchange but the inflated Bills continued to come even when the telephone remained locked. I hope the Minister would look into it. I would like to know what measures he is taking to solve this problem. Then, suddenly under today's tariff for 1000 calls you fix a certain rate. I will not go into the details but this Annexure-II you may see. What is the rationale in fixing this? What is the rationale behind the rates for trunk calls? For the manually operated one, you have brought the charge to the STD level. But the charts given, the facts and figures given show a sudden jump and there is no rationale behind it. Sir, I will not take more of your time. The Minister has talked about metering for local calls in his statement. What are the main features or advantages it will have for users?

At the end, I would like to know from the Minister, what measures he is taking to ensure better services to the subscribers because he has cited "improvement of services" as the main reason for increasing the tariff. In fact, the services have come down very, very much both in rural and

[Shri Kapil Verma]

other areas, everywhere and all over the country. This must be corrected.

[The Vice-Chairman (Shri Mirza Irfadbaig) in the Chair.]

The main thing I want to know from the Minister is what measures he is taking to improve the services and to check the inflated bills. Thank you.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI MIRZA IRSHADBAIG): Honourable Members, the time is very short; please take only one minute for putting clarifications.

श्री रामचन्द्र विकल (उत्तर प्रदेश) :  
हाउस कब कब तक चलेगा ?

उपसभाध्यक्ष (श्री मीर्जा इशदिबेग) :  
आज तो डिबेट कन्क्लूड करना है ।  
8 बजे तक शायद चल सकता है ।

डा० रत्नाकर पाण्डेय (उत्तर प्रदेश) :  
आपका भाषण होगा विकलजी ।

माननीय उपसभाध्यक्ष जी, हमारे विधि मंत्री जो ने दूरसंचार मंत्रालय के मंत्री जो की अनुपस्थिति में उनकी ओर से माननीय श्री दिनेश गोस्वामी जी ने जो वक्तव्य संचार मंत्रालय के दूरसंचार के टेरिफ के बारे में रखा है उसमें कल इनके बजट में जो सबसे बड़ा आक्रमण हुआ उपभोक्ताओं पर वह प्रत्यक्ष सदन के सामने है । कल ही टेलीविजन पर दिल्ली दूरसंचार का कार्यक्रम आ रहा था तब मुझे इस बात का बोध नहीं था कि आज सदन में भी रखा जायेगा । वड़ी तेजी के साथ धनराशि उपभोक्ताओं से वसूलने का प्रयत्न आपने किया है वे चाहे टेलीफोन के हों, चाहे ट्रंककाल के हों, चाहे टेलिक्स के हों चाहे और किसी माध्यम के हों । एकाएक आपने ऐसा धनराशि काल के लिए, ट्रंककाल के लिए टेलिक्स के लिए बढ़ा दी है । ये सब साधन अनिवार्य रूप से जनजीवन से जुड़े हुए हैं और उन पर जो टेक्स बढ़ा है उसमें जनजीवन क्ष-य

है । आपने दूरवर्ती गांवों को राष्ट्र की मुख्य धारा में शामिल करने के लिए यह किया है । माननीय सदस्यों ने कहा कि सबसे अधिक आप ठीक देते नहीं हैं और मैं कहना चाहता हूँ कि सर्विस की हालत यह है कि टेलीफोन का एक्सचेंजिकार शहरों में लोग घूमते हैं । एक तो फोन की घंटी बजता रहता है, कोई उठता नहीं या बजता ही नहीं है... (सभ्य की घंटी)

उपसभाध्यक्ष (श्री मीर्जा इशदिबेग) :  
यह घंटी भी बज रहा है ।

डा० रत्नाकर पाण्डेय : इस घंटी का मैं सम्मान करता हूँ । मैं अपने बात पर आ रहा हूँ । कुछ लोगों ने बहुत विस्तार से पूछा और मैं काम की ही बातें पूछ रहा हूँ ।

उपसभाध्यक्ष (श्री मीर्जा इशदिबेग) :  
आपने पाठे भी भाषण करना है ।

डा० रत्नाकर पाण्डेय : मैं आ रहा हूँ । तो आपने काल पर या अन्य चीजों पर प्रहार डाले हैं । ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों में क्या स्थिति है । मैं आपकी टेलीफोन एडवाइजरी कमेंटी का संस्वर अपने जिला कमिश्नरों बनारस में हूँ । गांवों में कोई टेलीफोन लगवाने के लिए तैयार नहीं होता है । तैयार किया जाता है आदिमियों को कि टेलीफोन लगा लो । जो आपके वहाँ के अधिकारी है वे कहते हैं कि शायद इतने टेलीफोन दिलवायें तो मैं एक्सचेंज चालू करूंगा । ऐसी स्थिति में क्या टैक्स लगाने के साथ ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों में टेलीफोन विकास के लिए कोई ऐसा माध्यम या कार्यक्रम आपने अपनाया है, कोई योजना आपके पास है जिससे गांवों में टेलीफोन का जाल बिछ सके क्योंकि आज के गांव की मानसिकता टेलीफोन वाला नहीं है । टेलीविजन भी अभी धीरे धीरे वहाँ पहुंच रहा है, रेडियो वाला मानसिकता तो है । तो उस मानसिकता को विकसित करने के लिए आपकी सरकार क्या कर रही है । हमारे बनारस का मैं जानता हूँ कि वहाँ के टेलीफोन एक्सचेंज को इलेक्ट्रॉनिक बनाने का प्रस्ताव आपके पास पड़ा

हुआ है और अभी तक न भवन बन पा रहा है न उसमें इलेक्ट्रानिक एक्सचेंज स्थापित करने की व्यवस्था हो रही है। माननीय उपसभाध्यक्ष जी, आपके माध्यम से मंत्री महोदय को मैं बताना चाहता हूँ कि पिछली सरकार ने एशिया का सबसे बड़ा टेलीफोन एक्सचेंज केन्द्र उत्तर प्रदेश के मन्दापूर में खोला है। इलेक्ट्रानिक एक्सचेंज इतना प्रोडक्शन करने वाला एशिया में कोई नहीं है, वह हमारी सरकार ने किया है। आपकी सरकार टैंक्स तो लगा रही है लेकिन सर्विसेज ब्रेटर देने के लिए क्या कर रही है कि गाँवों में टेलीफोन लग और उनके नाम पर आप टैक्स बढ़ा रहे हैं उनके लिए क्या आपके पास प्लान है और क्या फ्यूचर प्रोग्राम है यह मैं जानना चाहता हूँ।

SHRI SUNIL BASU RAY (West Bengal): My reaction to this statement is this:

While the rental for the exchanges below 100 lines has been reduced, rentals for all the other exchanges have been increased and the free calls have remained the same for all the exchanges. Now, the rationale behind this scheme is not understood. So, I think the honourable Minister must explain this also. It applies to the long-distance tariff rates also because the rationale behind the increase is not clear. One thing that I want to point out to the honourable Minister is that in view of the higher tariffs for all the means of communication, whether it is road transport or rail transport or air transport or telecommunication system, which are all going up. I feel that this will cause great hardships to the common people because nowadays it is not only the upper class people or the top businessmen or the rich people who use the telephone system, but it is also the middle-class people and the poorer people who use this communication system. So, I think that more benefits should be afforded to them.

The next point that I want to make is this: How is the Department

or how is the Government going to improve the telephone services? I am asking this question because most of the telephone exchanges are generally ungenerative. They do not have the appropriate technical arrangements suitable for this period. The switch-over which the Department is making from one type of cables to another type of cables is also causing great hardships to the industries, to the factories, which manufacture a certain type of telecommunication cables. So, these points are also to be clarified. How the Department is going to expand its satellite service system or the micro-wave system for better and speedier communication is also to be clarified. This also has to be stated by the honourable Minister. I think there is scope for further revision in the rates for the benefit of the common people and I request the honourable Minister to do it. That will help the common people appreciate the Budget and also the endeavour that the Minister is making to improve the telecommunication system. This is all that I have to submit.

श्री सुरेन्द्रजीत सिंह अहलुवालिया (बिहार): उपसभाध्यक्ष जी, जब कोई काम करे, तो उसे कीमत पूरी मिलनी चाहिए, पर जब काम ही अच्छा न हो और कीमत माँगता हो, तो बड़ा ही अफसोस होता है।

सुवर्ण में टेलीफोन पर बैठिए और कहीं का भी नम्बर लगाइये, तो उसमें टैरिफ जवाब आता है कि लाइनें व्यस्त हैं, कुछ देर बाद ट्राई करें और नहीं तो कई बार ऐसा जवाब आ जाता है—मैंने कई सज्जनों को अपना टेलीफोन नम्बर दिया और वह कहते हैं कि टैप बजता है कि यह नम्बर एग्जिस्ट नहीं करता है। यह पता नहीं लगता कि कौन नम्बर एग्जिस्ट करता है और कौन नम्बर एग्जिस्ट नहीं करता है। यह समझ में नहीं आता और इसमें बड़ा कन्फ्यूजन हो जाता है। कई बार एयरपोर्ट आप कांटेक्ट करिए तो पता लगता है कि नम्बर एग्जिस्ट नहीं करता, कृपया 197 नम्बर में पुछिए और

[ श्री सुरेन्द्रजीत सिंह अहलुवालिया ]

107 नम्बर लगाने रहिए, कोई उठाता ही नहीं है ।

उपप्राध्यापक महोदय, मैं आपके माध्यम से माननीय मंत्री जी से पछुंगा कि यह जो हम लोगों ने टैरिफ में इन्क्रीज किया है, इसको देखते पर ऐसा महसूस होता है की हमारा नजरिया क्या है, हम क्या देना चाहते हैं ? मैं अगर इसको यह कहूं कि यह जन-विरोधी और गरीब-विरोधी टैरिफ लेकर आए हैं, तो कोई अन्याय नहीं कहूंगा । उसका कारण यह है कि आपने जहां चार्ज तो दो रुपये है, वहां तो नहीं बढ़ाया, पर जहां का चार्ज 45 रुपये है, वहां 75 रुपये जरूर कर दिया है ।

तो साहब जहां दो रुपये में कोई गरीब आदमी टुक काल कर सकता है, वह तो माईकल पर या बस पर चढ़ कर चला जाता है, अगर किसी कामनमैन को जरूरत है टेलीफोन करने की, तो वह एक हजार किलोमीटर से ज्यादा दूरी पर जहां उसका कोई रिश्तेदार या कोई जान-पहचान वाला या किसी काम से कोई टेलीफोन अगर करना हो, तो वहां वह करेगा । उसमें आपने 75 रुपए कर दिया 45 रुपए से । मतलब 30 रुपए बढ़ा दिया और जो दो रुपए वाला है उसको दो रुपए में ही रखा । तो दो रुपए वाले तो हमारे जैसे हैं या कोई व्यापारी हैं जोकि घर से हिलना नहीं चाहते हैं और टेलीफोन से बात कर लेते हैं । तो उस पर तो कोई असर नहीं पड़ा, मगर कामन मैन पर असर पड़ा । दूसरे आपने जो फ्रैंक रखा है डोमेस्टिक या देशी कालम का और इंटरनेशनल कालम का — उसमें देशी कालम महंगी है और इंटरनेशनल कालम सस्ते हैं । अभी कुछ दिन पहले तक हम लोग कई जगह यह प्रयोग करते थे कि अगर कलकत्ता से बंबई नहीं मिल रहा है तो बलकत्ता से टोकियो फोन करते हैं और टोकियो वाले को कहते हैं कि बंबई में फोन कर हमारा मैपेज कन्वे कर दो । वह सस्ते में हो जाता है और जल्दी हो जाता है । अगर हम कलकत्ता से बंबई लगा रहे हैं तो मिलना ही नहीं या पता चला कि

नंबर खराब है या फोन डिस्कनेक्ट हो जाता है । मान्यवर, मैं मंत्री महोदय से यह भी पूछना चाहता हूं जो मायक्रोवेव के थ्रू या इनसेट के थ्रू हमारा टेलिकम्प्यूनिकेशन सिस्टम चल रहा है, उसमें देखा जाता है कि सदन जॉन के काल्स बहुत जल्दी मेच्योर हो जाते हैं । एस०टी०डी० घुमाने से मिल जाता है और वही जो ईस्टन जोन है या नार्दन जोन है वहां जल्दी मेच्योर नहीं होता । इसका कारण क्या है ? इस पर गौर करने की जरूरत है । महोदय, मैं आपके माध्यम से मंत्री महोदय से यह भी जानना चाहूंगा कि गांवों में टेलीफोन और गांवों में संचारण की बात हम कर रहे हैं, किंतु गांवों की बात तो छोड़िए, कुछेक बड़े शहरों को छोड़कर अगर आप दिल्ली से पटना टेलिक्स मैसेज भिजवाना चाहें तो उसमें कम से कम एक घंटा लगेगा और अगर पटना से किसी डिस्ट्रिक्ट हैडक्वार्टर पर टेलिक्स लगा हुआ है और अगर वहां मैसेज भेजना चाहें तो नहीं मिलेगा । कलकत्ता से अगर आप किसी डिस्ट्रिक्ट हैडक्वार्टर पर टेलिक्स मैसेज भिजवाना चाहें तो नहीं मिलेगा ।

इसलिए महोदय, मैं यह कहना चाहता हूं कि इन टैरिफ्स को बढ़ाने के पहले कम-स-कम इन सबकों को सुचारू और सक्रिय करने की कोशिश कर ता शायद आपको उसमें पूरे मुक्त की आवादी की मदद मिल सकती है अन्यथा इसका विरोध ही होगा और मैं भी इसका विरोध करता हूं ।

SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL (Punjab): Sir, there are two observations made in the statement which have impelled me to seek clarifications.

He says that those who use the telephone must have to pay relatively higher tariffs and, having been convinced of this he has brought about the changes in the tariffs for the calls. This is contrary to the general policy of ours that it is, in fact, the elitist consumption which has to be taxed more. Take the case of the Income-Tax. There is a higher rate of tax on the higher slab. Take the

case of electricity tariffs. The rates are higher for those consumers whose consumption is high. Here the honourable Minister wants in fact, he has brought forward an amendment to give effect to these changes in the tariffs—that the people who use the telephone frequently must pay, not at the rates which were fixed earlier, but at the new rates which are higher. I can give an example. There is a retired Government official, say the DPI, a poor teacher who rose to that position. Does the Government want that he should not have a telephone? Does the Government want to charge him at the same rate at which it charges the businessmen who otherwise also, in collusion with the officials of the telephone exchange, manage to pass off the calls to the other subscribers? Incidentally, I want to read out one sentence of his statement. I just cannot appreciate it. He says:

“The existing traff structure also results in more telephone being cornered...” — I emphasise the word “cornered”—“...by a person just to save on call charges.”

What is the Government up to? If a person asks for a telephone connection, he is using the word ‘cornered’! Are they treating him like a criminal or a blackmarketeer? What is the purpose of providing telephone services? Because of the constraint of time I would not like to dwell further on it. But I would like to know from the honourable Minister — I appreciate what has been done in Delhi to provide self-locking system to the subscribers—what is the programme of expansion of this service to other metropolitan and other cities. I would also like to know—this is a personal question—what is the state of progress about the telephone exchange that has been in the pipeline for long for Chandigarh? The people are suffering badly. The initial, two-level, exchange there is completely out of order not because of the fault of the people managing it but because of oversaturation and it having lived

its full life. I would like to know what has been done in this regard.

Finally on the question of propriety of raising tariffs through an order like this at this juncture. We had our Budget yesterday. There used to be a grouse on the part of our friends when they were on this side, but now what they have done is that to obviate the inclusion of this increase in the tariffs in the Budget they have come forward with it just before the Budget. I would wish Government does not resort to this practice again.

SHRI SHIV PRATAP MISHRA (Uttar Pradesh): I congratulate the Minister as he has given 25 per cent concession in telephone rental for recognised institutions. He has also given concessions to institutions like homes for the aged and infirm as well as handicapped, deaf, dumb, mute etc.—those who are living in the recognised institutions. But what about those who could not manage to live in the recognised institutions? Can they not get these concessions? This is what I wanted to know from the honourable Minister.

DR. YELAMANCHILI SIVAJI (Andhra Pradesh): Delhi is being connected to neighbouring places like Ghaziabad, Gurgaon, Faridabad and other places. But in other places in rural areas like Vijayawada, Guntur and Tenali, though they are under the same Urban Development Authority, trunk calls have to be booked, like from Vijayawada to Guntur, Guntur to Tenali, and so on. So, is there any proposal under the consideration of the Government to see that within the same urban development authority these calls are treated as local calls? Then the rise in the tariff for international calls is only Rs. 5 whereas the rise for inland calls is from Re. 1 to Rs. 30 for each call. Then, for operator-managed STD call it is said that operator-managed calls are costlier to provide for the department and therefore, we are bringing it on a par

[Dr. Yellamanchili Sivaji]

with those of STD by enhancing the rates. This anomaly does not stand reason because in an egalitarian society it is desirable that ordinary people calling for a hospital or a fire station or a police station should get a concession in their calls. Is there any such proposal under consideration of Government?

**SHRI MOTURU HANUMANTHA RAO** (Andhra Pradesh): The honourable Minister should reconsider the position in regard to free calls. Already the charges are very high. Even for shifting from one room to another room the previous charge was Rs. 50 and now it is Rs. 150 already. So they are making a good business out of it. Even though the previous installation is there for an old phone, if another phone comes installation charges are billed again. This way everything is charged very high. In this background cutting of the number of free calls is indeed horrible. From 275 you have brought it down to 150 for two months. Another aspect I want to bring to the notice of the Minister is that MPs are given 30,000 calls per year. My first thinking was that it was too high. But now after one year — I am a moderate user of phone STD facilities and other facilities — now a bill for Rs. 3000 extra has come.

**SOME HON. MEMBERS:** Everybody is thinking like that!

**SHRI MOTURU HANUMANTHA RAO:** Perhaps everybody is thinking that MPs have got enough number allowed free. Others are making use of it. Some other bills are included in our bills. This way it is going on. Some fraud is taking place obviously. I think it has to be seriously considered whether at least the MPs may be supplied meter so that they will have their own method in order to detect it. These things are to be seriously considered. I give you one instance. I was not

here. I left my quarters and went away. On that day some phonogram charge was put in my bill. I referred it but no response was there. This way things are taking place. So I request the Minister to clarify these issues. Already the charge is high. I again appeal to the hon. Minister to reconsider this position of free calls. It has to be reconsidered whether this tariff can be charged. It has to be seriously considered.

**SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI:** Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, I thank all the Members who have participated in asking for clarifications of the statement. Now, most of the clarifications have gone beyond the statement—and naturally because Members are agitating over the functioning of telephone. Hon. Members will probably appreciate that I am handling somebody else's baby. (Interruptions) I think he will be the person to respond to all these queries that have been made when the proper occasion comes. But it does not mean that I am not trying to respond to these points as far as I am in a position to respond.

Now, there has been a very strong complaint regarding excess billing. In the past also...

**SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL** (Punjab): You also must have experienced it.

**SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI:** Yes. Everyone does it. We have tried to meet the situation to some extent. We find that according to our statistics the excess billing complaints are 1 per cent, and this goes on increasing because of STD and international dialing. We are trying to meet this situation by providing the details of the calls that are made. Even in Delhi where the Members have complained, now a provision exists for detailed bills. Earlier most of my friends did not want these detailed bills. Now we have made it a point. We will give these detailed bills free of cost. These detailed

bills will be provided to the hon. Members free of cost, giving the numbers to which calls have been made. Obviously hon. Members will be able to find out whether a call has been properly billed or not. Now, this type of detailed bill exists in some places where the situation has improved. Because of financial constraints and other constraints and also constraints of materials, we have not been able to extend it to all parts of the country. But we are trying to extend these facilities as far as possible to different areas.

Bills are prepared on two-monthly basis. But if there is any complaint from any quarters, not only Members of Parliament but others, meter readings are analysed and the report and the result of the analysis is furnished to consumers.

All attempts have been made to improve the functioning of the telephone system. Digital Electronic Exchanges are also being installed in the rural areas. But I am aware, because I myself use telephones, there is a lot of scope for improvement in this directions. Obviously we are trying to do our best. Still there is lot of scope for improvement and we do hope that the situation will improve. I can only assure you that there will be constant endeavour on our part.

Coming to the question of increased tariff, I would like to point out that the telecom rates are being revised after two years. This has become necessary to compensate, to a substantial extent, the increased cost of inputs. One of my learned friends asked me what will be the increased amount that will come to the Telephone Department. The increased earnings will be to the tune of 593 crores of rupees. Of course, 18 crores of rupees will be offset because of the concessions. Therefore, the anticipated additional earnings of revenue is expected to be 575 crores of rupees. This will be primarily from the Trunk Calls (Rs. 263 crores), international calls (Rs. 6 crores)

and from rationalisation of free calls (about 285 crores of rupees).

My friend asked me what type of policy we are pursuing that we have now put one slab of Re. 1.10 above 1000 calls and thereby given some relief to persons who use the telephones most. This has been done because today there is a great demand for telephones. We have used the word 'cornering'. It may be an unhappy situation that a person, sometimes not in his own name, keeps 4 to 5 telephones with the result that he distributes the calls among the 4 or 5 telephones. Because of the existing rate which is Re. 1/- up to 5000 calls and Re. 1.25 above 5000 calls, he can save money. I can give you one instance. For example, in Delhi a subscriber making 12000 calls will pay Rs. 13,460/-. But he can save Rs. 2620/- every month if he has about four telephones. Therefore, we have decided to rationalise it so that there may be two slabs and the tendency to have more telephone by a person who uses it more, the number being above 5000 calls, is not there and he is happy with only one telephone. Thereby others in the waiting list can get telephones and we can meet their demands.

Now there have been suggestions that these 150 free calls should be increased to 250 calls. Obviously I am not in a position at the present moment to respond to this request because we have done it after careful deliberation. In other cases also we have made changes. Today a person who uses S.T.D. is to pay more than the one who uses the Trunk Call route. On a normal trunk route, we have to have operators. It takes time. But one has to pay less. We have therefore, decided to rationalise it, thereby people will be in a position to use S.T.D. more. We have reduced the free calls from 7 to 5. The '7' slab is totally cumbersome and reducing it to '5' is not going to create any anomalous situations.



[Shri Dinesh Goswami]

The cost of inputs has risen substantially over the years. After all, the Telephone Department or the Telecom Department is also compelled to correspondingly raise its own revenue. Though we would have liked not to do it, we have no other option to do it because of the constraint of resources.

Some of the questions were raised regarding defective meters. Some questions were raised regarding Calcutta. One of the questions that was raised was regarding the rural areas. So far as Calcutta and other things are concerned, I would like to have notice. We have taken a number of steps so far as the rural areas are concerned. Now there is production of electronic exchanges of various sizes from 64 lines to 512 lines. These will be used largely in rural and semi-urban areas. Now it is true that today even in the rural areas, people have not got that habit of using telephones as much as one would have liked them to. But it is a question of just putting it across to the people. In the rural areas, people are increasingly using the television, and I believe that even in those rural areas where people did not have the habit of using telephones, they are beginning to use the telephones. If we can provide the infra-structural facilities, then people will use that, and in fact a greater and greater demand is coming from there, and we will try to earmark a percentage of our own resources not only for providing telephones to the rural areas but also for improving the services of the rural areas. On the points made by the hon. Members regarding the services, well, there is a lot of complaint on this, and I will not be hesitating for a moment to say that there is a lot of scope for improvement in the services of telephones. And there will be a constant endeavour on our part. And whatever suggestions the hon. Members have given while seeking clarifications these will be taken not of, and if

there are some points which I have not replied to, I will see that the hon. Members get the written replies to these points, particularly the first hon. Member from West Bengal who has raised certain queries and asked for a written reply on the points raised by him.

Thank you, Sir.

SHRI KAPIL VERMA: About Lucknow also.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI MIRZA IRSHADBAIG): Now we will take up further discussion on the Motion of Thanks on the President's Address—Dr. Ratnakar Pandey.

SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI: How long will the House be sitting?

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI MIRZA IRSHADBAIG): We will try to complete this as early as possible.

#### MOTION OF THANKS ON PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS—Contd.

डॉ० रत्नाकर पाण्डेय : माननीय उप सभाध्यक्ष जी राष्ट्रपति जी के अभिभाषण पर मुझे बोलने का अवसर दिया है इसके लिए मैं आपके प्रति कृतज्ञता व्यक्त करता हूँ।

श्रीमन, यह नई सरकार आने के बाद राष्ट्रपति जी का दूसरा अभिभाषण है और दोनों अभिभाषणों को पढ़ने के बाद ऐसा लगा कि वर्तमान सरकार केवल बात करने में विश्वास करती है, काम करने में उसका कोई विश्वास बहुत अधिक नहीं है। क्योंकि सबसे बड़ी समस्या जो इस सरकार के साथ है वह यह है कि इस सरकार का जन्म ही एक दूसरे पर विश्वास और धोखा देने के साथ हुआ है।

माननीय उपसभाध्यक्ष, जी हमारे देश के जनता दल के नेता माननीय चन्द्रशेखर