

profit and loss? By this quarter I mean January, February and March, 1988.

SHRI J. VENGAL RAO: This quarter's report is not with me. Last year the cash losses were reduced from Rs. 50 crores to Rs. 28 crores. This year it will wipe out the cash losses and it will come into profit this year.

*104. [The questioners (Shri Kai-, lash Pati Mishra and Shri Ashwani Kumar) were absent. For answer, vide col. 35-36 infra].

*105. [The questioners (Shri K. Gpoalan and Shri V. Gopalsamy) were absent. For answer, vide col. 36-37 infra].

STD facility on National Highways

*106. SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have undertaken to provide STD facilities to travellers at different points on the National Highways;

(b) if so, what is the number of places where such facility has already been provided on National Highway No. 1; and

(c) the number of place, planned to be covered by STD facility in the current year?

THE MINISTER OF ENERGY AND THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI VASANT SATHE): (a) to (c) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

The Government has not yet formulated a formal policy for providing STD facilities to travellers at different point on National Highways. However, as part of policy of improving accessibility of telecommunication facilities to the general public facilities have been provided on a trial basis at Six centres on the National Highway No.1 between Delhi and

Ambala and at two places on State Highways in Haryana.

2. Four more communication centres are proposed to be opened during 1988-89.

SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL: Madam, the Idea to start a commission some tele-communication centres on the National Highways is indeed a very welcome one and would greatly serve the travelling public whenever the need arises. I would like to know from the honourable Minister whether free use of this facility would be provided to those travellers who may want to use the same, not for their own personal purpose but to pass on some information about self, any accident having taken place on the highway, may be to the police station or a hospital at the nearest place.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: That is a very good suggestion. If such an emergency call is booked on the highway, we will definitely consider how to see that it is not charged.

SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL: Secondly, would the facility be available round the clock?

SHRI VASANT SATHE: Our idea is that we would like to make this facility available throughout the country. We are thinking that we should use the petrol pumps and also some hotels on the highways which work round the clock to have these phones so that for all the travelling people telephone facility is available round the clock.

PROF. C. LAKSHMANNA: Madam, the Minister's answer says that while they do not have any formal policy, on trial basis they have so far had eight centres and four more communication centres are proposed to be opened during 1988-89. I would like to know where these four communication centres are proposed to be opened and what is the rationale in opening these four centres in the proposed places.

SHRI VASANT SATHE: They are at present on the Delhi-Ambala road. Four more communication centres are proposed. We have not yet identified the location but, as I was saying, we would like to cover the entire country. I am discussing this matter with our people as to why restrict it only to four and why can't we extend it throughout the country. These petrol pumps where telephones are already there, if only I provide this sort of facility where the exchange facilities are there, I can give connection instantaneously throughout the country. I would like to see how we can do it throughout the country on a faster basis and not restrict it only to four centres.

PROF. C. LAKSHMANNA: Why did you mention only four?

SHRI VASANT SATHE: At present my Department is thinking only of four. I have the names and I can tell you those places. Those places are. Gharonda, Samalkha, Morthal and Ambala City. These four places I am giving you in addition to those four places. Don't you want them? These I am giving to you in addition to what I have answered.

SHRI VISHWA BANDHU GUPTA: Madam, I would like to know from the honourable Minister whether he is thinking in terms also of creating these centres for getting information which may be passed on by subscribers throughout the country to a particular point. Now, for example he has restricted it to four or six new centres that are going to be set up where facilities are there. For any travellers to get information from that centre, if the information is given in advance, would the charges for this facility be reasonable?

SHRI VASANT SATHE: We will examine this suggestion, whatever facility we can give.

SHRI KAMAL MORARKA. Madam, I would like to draw the attention of

the Minister to statements by one Mr. Sam Pitroda who is styled as Adviser to the Prime-Minister. I would like to know from the Minister whether the pronouncements of Mr. Pitroda have the force of Government policy behind them or they are his personal opinion because, most of his statements are contrary to the policy announced by the Minister from time to time whether it is on development of technology or provision of cellular or mobile phones or STB. So, I would like to -know, specifically, from the Minister whether Mr. Pitroda's pronouncements form part of Government policy or they are his personal opinion.

SHRI- VASANT SATHE: On this question I do not know whether Mr. Sam Pitroda has given any because Mr. Sam Pitroda, who is the Advisor for Telecommunications, to my knowledge, has not made any statement relating to this STD facility on the highways. If something has come to the notice of the "honourable" Member, he may bring it to my notice also. I have not seen any contradictory statement by Mr. Sam Pitroda relating to this.

"SHRI PUTTAPAGA RADHA-KRISHNA; Madam, the Minister has disclosed that the Government is considering to provide telephone facility with STD provision in petrol bunks and hotels. There are already some guest houses on the national highways managed by the Department. Some more guest houses may be constructed. Is the Government considering at least to provide those guest houses, inspection bungalows with the STD facility?

SHRI VASANT SATHE: They will also be covered.

SHRI GHULAM RASOOL MATTO: Madam Deputy Chairman, in the month of March this year the Jammu-Srinagar highway was closed once for twelve days and at another time for seven days. Many passengers who had come from Bombay and other

place, were stranded en route, and their families did not know the whereabouts of those people. In view of the geo-political, strategic importance of the national highway from Jammu to Srinagar, will he consider providing the STD facilities on the highway on a top priority basis?

SHRI VASANT SATHE: I will definitely do that. I will go to the extent of even providing a mobile telephone, if possible, so that they can communicate any information.

SHRI GHULAM RASHTI MATTO: Thank you.

SHRI YASHWANT SINHA: But they must work.

"107. [The questioners. (Shrimati Renuka Chowdhury and Shri Mukh-tir Singh-MaMa) were absent. For answer, vide col. 37 infra].

*108 [The questioner (Shri Chaturana Mishra) was absent. For answer, vide col. 38 infra].

International Speed Post Service

*109. SHRI AG. KULKARNI:

SHRI V. GOPALSAMY:

Will the minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the names of the cities and countries which are presently linked by international speed post service and

(b) the names of cities and countries which are likely to be included in the international speed post service in the near future?

THE MINISTER, OF ENERGY AND THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI VASANT SATHE): (a) and (b) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri A. G. Kulkarni

At present, 29 countries, and 36 cities in India have been linked by International Speed Post Service. The names of the countries are:

1. Australia
2. Austria
3. Bahrain
4. Bangladesh
5. Belgium
6. Egypt
7. Federal Republic of Germany
8. France
9. Greece
10. Hong Kong
11. Iraq
12. Ireland
13. Japan
14. Macau
15. Netherlands
16. Oman
17. Pakistan
18. Portugal
19. Senegal
20. Spain
21. Sweden
22. Switzerland
23. Thailand
24. Tunisia
25. Turkey
26. U.A.E.
27. U.K.
28. U.S.A.
29. U.S.S.R.

The details regarding cities of the twenty-nine countries for which International Speed Post Service is available is as follows:

- (i) Countries where international speed post service is available for all the cities served "by post, excepting a few areas—USA, U.K., Japan, F.R.G Hong Kong, Australia, Austria, Switzerland, France