

tion, is he aware that over-billing of telephones is a major complaint amongst the citizens? What is he going to do in this regard?

SHRI VIJAY N. PATIL : The overall condition in Calcutta, as compared to other metropolitan cities, is not that satisfactory. We are making special efforts to improve the things by giving micro wave links in the city and also, Sir, because of the recent digging there, particularly because of the tabular railways and others things, things went from bad to worse. But there also co-ordination is going on and speedy recovery in the efficiency in the working we are trying to have and we are having the meetings of the General Manager (Projects), General Manager (Maintenance) and the General Manager, Telephones, especially for Calcutta to see that things are improved with the available equipment there at present.

SHRIMATI USHA MALHOTRA : What about the overbiling?

SHRI VIJAY N. PATIL : Regarding overbiling, Sir, whenever the complaints come, we try to go into the details and we are having some observation units. We have purchased about four single-line unit analysers which are sometimes placed on the subscriber's telephone in the exchange and we watch the STD that is being operated on the telephone and sometimes we find that the case is genuine and in the case of genuine complaints, rebate is also given.

SHRIMATI KANAK MUKHERJEE : Sir, the telephone service in Calcutta is worse than what it is in Bombay. May I know from the honourable Minister as to how many people are waiting for the new connections? I think we can never depend on the telephone service in Calcutta. You will be surprised, Sir, to know that the telephone works hardly for one week continuously. Only one example I will give you. I myself have been trying for the last six months to shift a telephone from my own college building to a new college building and I have written four letters to the General Manager. But nothing has happened. The college is suffering so much. This is only shifting

the telephone from one building to another building. I will give you the number also. The telephone number is.....

MR. CHAIRMAN : I think, you can tell the Minister about it and not through this House.

SHRIMATI KANAK MUKHERJEE : This is a simple thing. Thousands and thousands of people are suffering like this, so, can we expect any better service in Calcutta at least in the future, if not in the near future? Can he also guarantee that at least for one week the telephones will give better service in Calcutta?

SHRI MANUBHAI PATEL : For that, Mr. Stephen has already said that if the telephones do not work, you should surrender them. That is the only solution.

SHRI VIJAY N. PATIL : Sir, with regard to the waiting list, the waiting list for Calcutta is 28,928 and at various places in Calcutta the telephone exchanges are due for expansion and expansion is under way and we hope to give more connections during the next year.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Next Question No. 202. I think that is also about telephones.

*202. [The Questioners Sarvshri Yogen-dra Sharma and Suraj Prasad were absent. For answer vide col. 31 infra]

MR. CHAIRMAN : Question No. 203. Yes, Mr. Joshi.

Waiting list for telephones in Delhi

*203. **SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA :**
SHRI JAGANNATHRAO
JOSHI :

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) what is the number of persons in Delhi on the waiting list for telephone connections and by when they will get the same; and

(b) how many applications are pending for transfer of telephones to the new resi-

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Jagannathrao Joshi.

dences of subscribers in Delhi and by when these transfers will be effected?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI VIJAY N. PATIL): (a) About 1,05,000 applications were on the waiting list in Delhi on 1st March, 1983. Most of these applicants except a few in General Category, are likely to be provided with telephone connections progressively by March, 1986, subject to timely availability of equipment and cables.

(b) Over 1300 applications for shifts to exchanges, which have no spare capacity, are pending at present. Most of them are likely to be cleared progressively during 1983-84, except those at Nangloi which are expected to be cleared in 1984-85.

श्री जगन्नाथ राव जोशी : सभापति महोदय, जो प्रश्न क्रमांक "क" का उत्तर दिया है उसमें उन्होंने प्रोविजो जोड़ा है "सब्जेक्ट टु टाइमली एवेलिबिलिटी आफ इक्विपमेंट एंड केबल्स" यह किस के हाथ में है क्योंकि जवाब में इन्होंने कहा है कि मार्च, 86 तक क्लियर कर दिया जायेगा जबकि इन्होंने यह भी कहा है कि ज्यादा से ज्यादा प्रतीक्षा सूची 1 लाख 5 हजार की है। मैं यह जानना चाहता हूँ कि सब्जेक्ट टु एवेलिबिलिटी को छोड़ कर इनमें से कितने क्लियर हो जायेंगे, यह साफ-साफ बता दें? इसके साथ ही साथ मैं यह भी जानना चाहता हूँ कि 1 लाख 5 हजार की प्रतीक्षा सूची में जो नाम दर्ज हैं इनमें से सबसे पुराने नाम कौन से साल के हैं?

SHRI VIJAY N. PATIL: By 'subject to availability' we mean that sometimes there are things beyond our control. For example, just the year before last there was a strike in the III and we lost production of about 70,000 lines, which could be given to subscribers all over the country. As for the oldest on the waiting list, it differs from exchange to exchange.

For example, in Karol Bagh it is recent. For June, 1980 applicants, we have given connections. But in other areas there may be waiting lists of five years or six years, where new exchanges are coming up, like Shahdara. If the hon. Member wants detailed information, we can provide it to him after some time.

श्री जगन्नाथ राव जोशी : इसी क्वेश्चन में मेरा दूसरा सवाल यह है कि नये टेलीफोन कनेक्शन देते वक्त जो नाम प्रतीक्षा सूची में हैं या जैसा कुलकर्णी साहब ने पूछा कि जो आउट आफ टर्न आप देते हैं उनको आप पहले देंगे या प्रतीक्षा सूची में से देंगे? हमें यहाँ कम से कम यह गारण्टी जरूर मिल जानी चाहिए कि जो पुरानी प्रतीक्षा सूची में हैं उसमें से ही नए कनेक्शन दिये जायेंगे? दूसरा सवाल मेरा यह है कि जिन्होंने ट्रांसफर मांगी है उनके बारे में नांगलोई को छोड़ कर आपने यह कहा है कि 1300 लोग प्रतीक्षा सूची में खड़े हैं कम से कम उनके बारे में निश्चितता से हम को बता दें। "Everything is beyond our control. It is on the verge of collapse..." यह जब हम सोचते हैं तो पता लगता है कि मिनिस्ट्रों के बार-बार बदलने से कोई सुधार इनमें हुआ है ऐसा नजर नहीं आता।

श्री विजय एन० पाटिल : आउट आफ टर्न कनेक्शन और पुरानी वेंडिंग लिस्ट के आदमियों को टेलीफोन देने वाली बात जो आपने कही है इस बारे में मैं यह कहना चाहता हूँ कि जब हम 10-5 हजार नई लाइन रिलीज करते हैं तो यह देखते हैं जितने कनेक्शन हम लगा रहे हैं इनमें फलां तारीख तक वेंडिंग लिस्ट क्लियर हो जायेगी और हम इस प्रकार की लिस्ट बाहर बोर्ड पर लगा देते हैं। दूसरे ट्रांसफर्स के बारे में जो जोशी जी ने कहा तो हमने देखा कि

दिल्ली में ज्यादातर ट्रांसफर्स शाहदरा एक्सचेंज में हैं। हमें इतनी आशा नहीं थी कि इतनी जल्दी जमनापार की बस्ती का एक्सपेंशन हो जायेगा। इस बास्ते वेटिंग लिस्ट बढ़ती गई और ट्रांसफर्स की लिस्ट भी बढ़ गई। ऐसा ही नांगलोई एरिया में भी है। इसमें कंस्ट्रक्शन की और एक्सटेंशन की तकलीफ की वजह से ऐसा हुआ है। इसमें सब्जेक्ट टु एन्विलिबिलिटी आसानी सुलतानी य कोजेत्स वगैरह की कोई बात नहीं है।

श्री सभापति : आसानी सुलतानी भी खूब रही।

SHRI SUKOMAL SEN: Sir, in reply to a previous question the hon. Minister told that in Calcutta more than 28,000 are on the waiting list. But the subscribers who have already got connections are also suffering. I will give one example. Sometimes, despite complaints, telephones remain dead for two months or for more than three months. Even then they get bills and they have to pay the bills, otherwise the telephone is disconnected. Will the Minister kindly explain why even after a telephone is dead for a long time, despite complaints, the subscribers have to pay the penalty of again paying the bills? Why should not they be exempted from paying the bills for the period the telephone remains dead?

SHRI V. N. GADGIL: There is a prescribed procedure under which complaints are brought to the notice and the matter is considered. In 1980-81 as much as one crore of rupees was given in rebate or in cases which deserve, on merits, rebate or remission.

SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI: Sir, my supplementary will be more on Question Nos. 201 and 203. It is true that there are defects on the mechanical front and also on the human front. On the mechanical side, you will see that the defects are slightly increasing because in Delhi even now we find that we do not get a call without interlocking. On the human side,

what we have seen is that whenever you ring up 180 or 197 or 199, you never get a reply. After half an hour, you got a reply, a taperecorded message saying, 'kindly wait, you are in the queue', which gives us an impression that either the person who is in charge is not there at the table or even when he or she is there, the person puts the tape and goes away. I would like to know from the hon. Minister what he is going to do to the improve the human aspect though there will be some difficulty in improving the mechanical side because that involves cost and all that.

SHRI V. N. GADGIL: Sir, I am glad that the hon. Members have realised the faults in the machine. I do not want to justify on the ground of what happens in other countries. But I would like to state here that even in an advanced city like London only 63 per cent of the calls materialise. Therefore, there is a failure on the part of machines sometimes. As far as human side is concerned, I can give the statistics. On the human side, whenever complaints are investigated, action is taken. I can give the whole list. During the last year in Delhi itself, in 57 cases, action was taken against 57 Telephone operators, 10 Junior Engineers, one Phone Inspector, four Linesmen and so on. So, whenever a case is found on merits where a person is found to be guilty of misconduct or something irregular, action is taken.

SHRI DINESH GOSWAMI: Normally speaking, a person does not complain for various reasons. Apart from complaints, I would like to know whether you are making any checks and what the outcome is of that.

SHRI V. N. GADGIL: Sir, as was stated in the answer to the first Question, regular checks are made. And I would like to request all my colleagues to kindly see the last page of the new Directory. A new system is introduced. There is a page prescribed on inspection report. And I would request that if any fault is there and somebody comes, the Member should please insist on the inspector or whosoever comes there to sign

there and that will give us information as to what action is to be taken.

SHRI MANUBHAI PATEL: As if there is nothing else to learn from London example, the hon. Minister just compares with the 63 per cent of the calls which materialise there. And he wanted to compete the negative side of London efficiency as if there are no good things there. Sir, after the valuable certificates by two ruling party Members, hon. Dr. Zakaria and hon. Mrs. Usha Malhotra about the dismal failure of the telephone working, I need not go into that. But I would like to know from the hon. Minister that even after this equipment and cables are available for Delhi, are you sure that the apparatus will be functioning all right or, in case of failure, the threat of the former Minister, Mr. Stephen, will stand that the telephone-owners are at liberty to surrender them? I want to know whether the same policy stands today also. I would also like to know.. Please. I would also like to know that when the hon. Minister has given a fixed time-limit that by 1985 he will be able to instal these telephones in Delhi provided the equipment, etc., is there, when he has fixed the target of 1985, whether he has got the data also with him as to how much equipment will be produced by our factories or how much will be imported in order to keep up the promise that he has given.

SHRI V. N. GADGIL: Sir, as my colleague has rightly stated, the target of 1985 will be achieved only if there is specific availability of equipment and finance. Now, as to how much will be available, Sir, certain targets are fixed for ITI, Bangalore and other places. If these targets are achieved, only on that basis, the statement is made.

SHRI MANUBHAI PATEL: Don't you have co-ordination between production and the actual requirement? Sir, what sort of planning or coordination is going on there in the Department when they say that if it is produced? Before accepting the requirement and fixing up the targets, don't you work out the details that this much will be produced and you will

be able to supply this much? Then, why do you give 1985? You say 1995.

SHRI V. N. GADGIL: Sir, planning itself presupposes a projection as to how much should be achieved and what should be achieved. Now, in a given case it may so happen that owing to certain circumstances that target may not be achieved. We are assuming that it will be achieved and on that basis the statement is made.

PROF. SOURENDRA BHATTACHARJEE: Mr. Chairman, Sir, the vagueness of the Minister's reply is typical of the vague functioning of telephones; of course, not as vague as disturbing, for many of us. Unfortunately for me, I currently happen to be a member of the Telephone Advisory Committee of the Calcutta Telephones, where almost all, with whom I have any contact, have their telephones out of order. The Telephone Advisory Committee there made one unanimous recommendation. In reply to a question from Mr. Sukomal Sen, the Minister said rebates are given when there are *bona fide* complaints. The Calcutta Telephone Advisory Committee made a concrete recommendation to the effect that when a particular telephone is out of order for a specified period, rental should be deducted proportionately for that period. The Government side is continuously refusing to accept this recommendation, that rental will not be charged for the period during which a telephone is out of order. I submit to you, Mr. Chairman, Sir, whether such a recommendation is quite in order, and why should they not accept it straightaway, without going into the causes of rebate which is a discretionary power with the telephone authorities?

MR. CHAIRMAN: You ask the question.

PROF. SOURENDRA BHATTACHARJEE: I am asking the question whether to the recommendation of the Telephone Advisory Committee of the Calcutta Telephones that the rental of a telephone which has remained dead for a specific period would not be charged, is going to be accepted?

SHRI VIJAY N. PATIL: The suggestion is noted and we will examine its pros and

cons. (*Interruptions*). It is not only the Calcutta Telephone Advisory Committee which has recommended it but some others also. We are looking into it.

PROF. SOURENDRA BHATTACHARJEE: Calcutta Telephones Advisory Committee has...

MR. CHAIRMAN: They have accepted it.

PROF. SOURENDRA BHATTACHARJEE: Have they accepted it?

SHRI VIJAY N. PATIL: We will look into it.

SHRI SHYAM SUNDAR MOHAPATRA: Sir, in the course of last one month my telephone has remained dead 43 times and I have kept a record of it in my diary. Today also for the last five hours my telephone is dead and there is no response, I want to know from the hon. Minister how many times his telephone was dead after he took over as Minister. Secondly, as in other States the telephone authorities check up every morning VIP telephones and find out whether they are working all right, whether they are going to introduce a system whereby the telephones of Members of Parliament will be checked up every morning?

DR. RAFIQ ZAKARIA: Mr. A. P. Sharma had started it.

SHRI V. N. GADGIL: As far as the first part is concerned, not once. As far as the second part is concerned, such a system has already been introduced. Some M.Ps. have personally contacted me and appreciated that Members of Parliament are being rung up and enquiries are being made from them whether their telephones are working or not.

Indo-Argentina discussions on Oil and Natural Gas

*204. SHRI ADINARAYANA REDDY: Will the Minister of ENERGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Indo-Argentina discussions on oil and natural gas were held in New Delhi in the 1st week of February, 1983; and

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard?

DEPARTMENT OF PETROLEUM IN DEPARTMENT OF PRETROLEUM IN THE MINISTRY OF ENERGY (SHRI GARGI SHANKAR MISHRA): (a) A trade delegation of Argentina businessmen and experts visited India from February 7 to 19, 1983 to explore possibilities of co-operation in industry, trade and technology between India and Argentina.

(b) Discussions were held with ONGC at the request of the Argentina delegation to explore the possibilities in the field of oil exploration/production. The Argentina delegation showed interest in construction of ships, platforms, jack-up rigs and laying of onshore pipelines etc.

SHRI ADINARAYANA REDDY: Is there any possibility of concluding any agreement or treaty on this issue?

SHRI GARGI SHANKAR MISHRA: We have only placed some order, some trial order, for certain equipment, but so far we have not received anything.

Appointment of Chairman of the Central Electricity Authority

*205. SHRI SUSHIL CHAND MOHUNTA:†

SHRI LADLI MOHAN NIGAM:

Will the Minister of ENERGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Electricity Supply Act (ESA) restricts the selection for the post of Chairman, Central Electricity Authority (CEA) only to the full time Members of CEA (5 Engg. and 1 Commercial);

(b) whether it is also a fact that the present re-employed Chairman, CEA, and his predecessors have never worked as full time Members in CEA prior to such appointments; and

(c) if the answer to parts (a) and (b) above be in the affirmative, whether Government propose to revise, its policy in this regard so that a part time member could be appointed as Chairman of the Authority?

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Sushil Chand Mohunta.