

श्री शिव चन्द्र झा : इस महत्वपूर्ण विषय पर मेरा कॉलिग अटेंशन. . . .

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No, no. That will not go on record.

(Shri Shiva Chandra Jha Continued to speak).

CALLING ATTENTION TO A MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Serious deterioration of Telephone and Tele-communication Services in Calcutta and other parts of the country

SHRI KALYAN ROY (West Bengal): Sir, I beg to call the attention of the Minister of Communications to the serious deterioration of telephone and tele-communication services in Calcutta and other parts of the country, and the steps taken by Government in this regard.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KARTIK ORAON): Sir, while it may be conceded that the effect of this year's monsoon on the underground cable system in Calcutta has been causing some concern.....

AN HON. MEMBER: Sir, he is not audible. Let him come to the front bench.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You are not audible from there. Please come to the front bench.

SHRI KRISHNA CHANDRA PANT (Uttar Pradesh): He is as inaudible as a telephone.

SHRI KARTIK ORAON: Sir, while it may be conceded that the effect of this year's monsoon on the underground cable system in Calcutta has been causing some concern, it is not correct to state that there has been serious deterioration in the services in Calcutta and other parts of the country. It is true that compared to the pre-monsoon period, there has

been a rise in the number of faults in the systems, primarily due to cable faults with the advent of monsoon, but apart from this there has been no deterioration.

During the current year, as a result of heavy rains, there have been a number of cable breakdowns in Calcutta and the maximum number of telephones which went out of order were 19,059 which works out to approximately 8 per cent of the total telephones. Our efforts made earlier during this year have yielded some results and we are expecting a substantial improvement after the Task Force which has been set up for Calcutta to improve underground cable plant, completes its work. I hope the House will appreciate that the metropolitan cities of India are growing fast and there is considerable digging activity by all organisations in adding to the civic facilities. This digging activity often causes damage to the underground telephone cables, and this damage does not show up immediately but only later on when the rain water enters the cable through the damaged sheath. Our programmes for improvement in this regard have been earlier indicated in the House and I would just briefly reiterate that we have embarked on a large-scale programme for constructing underground ducts in Calcutta, and other cities. We also have large-scale programmes for pressurisation of the underground cable system so that the fault liability in coming years is reduced. While the above is meant for cables already laid, the new cables are laid in the pressurised condition initially itself.

The detailed steps that we are taking on a planned schedule are as follows:—

1. Provision of ducts for the new cable routes;
2. Pressurisation of the existing cables upto the secondary level, and laying of new cables under pressure;

3. Use of jelly filled cables in the distribution area;

4. Installation of cabinets and pillars for quicker repairs of faults;

5. Use of drop wire and overhead cables in difficult localities to reduce the fault rate; and

6. Use of digital microwave systems on main junction routes as a back up for the cable system.

A part of the present switching equipment in many cities was installed more than 25 years ago and has outlived its normal life. It is proposed to replace these exchanges, but the exact schedule will depend upon the availability of equipment during the Sixth Plan period. In addition to this, it has also been decided to modernise the trunk switching and the telex switching net works by inducting electronic equipment into our system on a progressively rapid scale.

I would like to assure the House that we are fully alive to the position in all parts of the country. Detailed investigations had been conducted and corrective measures had already been planned and are under execution. With the programmes under way it can be reasonably expected that in the next year we would not be facing such serious breakdowns.

SHRI KALYAN ROY: Sir, we had four Ministers in the last six years, namely, Shri Shankar Dayal Sharma, Shri Brij Lal Verma, Shri Bhishma Narain Singh and now we have Mr. Stephen. All these six years there is a record of continuous deterioration and decline.

Sir, I want the House to understand that telephone and telecommunication services throughout the country have seriously deteriorated and what is happening in Calcutta and the worst affected industrial belt of steel and coal, stretching from Calcutta to Durgapur, Durgapur to Dhanbad,

Dhanbad to Asansol, is sheer nightmarish and the agony, bitterness and utter frustration of the public just cannot be explained within a few minutes of the Calling Attention. The whole telephone system in this most vital, strategic and centre of India's basic industrial belt has virtually disintegrated and collapsed because of the—

(a) utter callousness of officers and supervisors concerned; (b) miserable failure in Calcutta to replace the 50 to 40 years old telephone cables and lines, which have just been patched up over and over again, and because the existing telephone equipment in Eastern India is hopelessly inadequate; (c) total lack of co-ordination between the various agencies of the Calcutta Municipality, Calcutta Development Authority, NTP, the Underground Railway Authority, the Calcutta Electric Supply Corporation and the Telephone authorities, (d) sheer indifference and contemptuous attitude towards public complaints and MPs not excluded. Mr. Bhupesh Gupta's telephone is out of order for the last two months. My telephone was out of order for one month and I have been told that Mr. K. C. Pant's telephone is out of order for one week.

Then (e): Heavy work load on workers at the lowest level and expansion of officers etc. at the top Economy at the bottom; less and less number of ordinary workers, to cope with the problem; and then, rampant corruption.

Then (f): Failure to top houses of Delhi, including the Minister, to give top-most priority to these things and allowing rot to continue.

Sir, at least, Shri Bhishma Narain Singh who was Minister for Communications for a short period was more honest and admitted on 16th February:

[Shri Kalyan Roy]

"Calcutta telephone system is the worst among the four metropolitan cities."

So, my question is—as he has mentioned in his reply to the Calling Attention—one constant and common explanation in Calcutta is the cables getting damaged because of digging operations either by CMDA or by the underground authorities or Calcutta Electric Supply Corporation or others. Whenever asked, Sir, we are told that the cables are damaged because of digging. Now, from 1970 to 1980, no proper co-ordination has been made possible from top to bottom. Sir, on June 11, 1980, the Minister of Communications stated in this House:

"Effective steps have been taken for full co-ordination between the departments of telephone authorities and the CMDA and MTP."

Mr. Stephen on the same thing had stated:

"Lack of co-ordination was one of the main factors. This position has been corrected."

But unfortunately, Sir, Mr. Stephen could not say at all how many cables were damaged; they had no information at all. Sir, you will be surprised to know, this was stated in June that co-ordination is there and that lack of co-ordination were things of the past and that the CMDA are doing a fine work. Then suddenly we find on 30th July, Mr. Kartik Oraon states:

"Due to extensive digging activities of various agencies, damages are caused to the underground cables, as a result of which other telephone lines get affected."

Exactly the same were the words which Mr. Brij Lal Verma stated on 22nd July, 1977.

What is the co-ordination? It means there is no co-ordination so far.

Then, Sir, my second question: Is

it not a fact that the cables are damaged because they are mainly laid by the contractor workers, the lowest-rank workers who do not know either the underground conditions or where the cable is going to be laid? As a result, one paper stated: "... the work site reveals that underground construction was done by unskilled workers without any supervision by the senior staff."

Sir, according to the Minister,—as stated by him on the 18th June—45,420 more telephones have been added to the city of Calcutta. If that is so, why is it that the number of workers is going down? He has to explain this. On 30th July, Mr. Kartik Oraon stated that the people who have to repair the lines, their recruitment has been stopped. I will give you the facts given by Mr. Kartik Oraon that the number of casual workers on 30th March, 1977 was 2527; it went down to 2229 on 31st March, 1980. They are the casual workers. Then Grade D workers; they were 3055 on 31st March, 1977 and their number went down to 2914. On the other hand, the officers are increasing. On 31st March, 1977 their number was 74 and it has now gone up to 86. So, the number of officers is going up and people who have to do the job right at the place, their number is going down. How would you explain this decline in the number of class III and IV staff? Then, Sir, he said—I am only confining to what he said in the House—one of the remedies is cable pressurisation. You would be surprised to know as to the progress which has been made. Mr. Stephen said in this House on 18th June. He mentioned about the range of Kms. of cable pressurisation and you will be horrified to see this. In 1976-77, the pressurisation was 205 Kms. In 1977-78—28 Kms; 1978-79—131 Kms. and in 1979-80—146 Kms. In all these years, they have reached only between 500 and 600 Kms. At this rate, it will take hundred years to complete the entire pressurisation. Then, there is rampant corruption.

Some telephones never go out of order. Some never develop defects.

You have not taken any action against any of the officers who have been found guilty of corruption.

My last point is that there is gross discrimination in regard to Eastern India. I will give only one figure. This has been stated by Mr. Stephen. This is in regard to the new exchanges planned, with capacities proposed to be added to them and the expansion of the existing ones during 1980-81 and 1981-82. In Bombay, the expansion will be 80,000; Delhi, 40,000; Calcutta only 9,000 and Madras—only 4,300. The number of new exchanges to be opened, as per Mr. Stephen, Bombay-8; Delhi-6; Calcutta-3 and Madras-Nil. (*Time bell rings.*) I am finishing. I am on my last point. He mentioned about the task force. This is the greatest hoax. Mr. Brij Lal Verma has also said the same thing on 22nd July, 1978. In reply to a question, he also said that a task force was being appointed. He said 'A Committee of senior technical experts has been set up to go into this aspect'. Now, again, he has revived this gimmick of task force. But the main thing is, task force or no task force, the telephone system in the Eastern India, steel and coal belt, has completely collapsed. You will be surprised to know, Sir, that from the Chasnala disaster to the Bhanora disaster, when the mine managers tried, they have not been able to contact the rescue department and the Directorate-General of Mines Safety, to inform them that this disaster has taken place. As a result of this, the inspectors came after a lapse of ten hours, twenty four hours and so on. In such a condition, I would like to know whether he has taken any steps to import electronic exchanges, to import electronic equipment, to improve the system which has nearly disintegrated. The telephone system in the entire country is faulty. I demand that either he should assure that he would take the necessary steps, or like Mr. Venkataraman, if he cannot improve it, as an ex-trade union lea-

der, he should be prepared to face the consequences and hand over his resignation. This is the situation in the whole of the country. I demand his resignation in view of this.

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI C. M. STEPHEN): Immediately? Would you not give me five minutes time? You want me to tender my resignation straightaway? (*Interruptions*)

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Let him reply. . .

SHRI C. M. STEPHEN: Sir, my esteemed colleague and friend, Mr. Kalyan Roy has raised a number of issues. I do not know whether I will be able to cover the whole gamut, as he has done. The first question which he has asked is why there should be discrimination against Calcutta in the matter of opening of exchanges. Exchanges are opened in accordance with the demand for the connections.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: (West Bengal): I go there for two days. I am not able to do any telephone.

SHRI C. M. STEPHEN: I am coming to that. Now, the waiting list in Calcutta is 22,000. The waiting list in Bombay is 1,20,000. The waiting list in Delhi is about 80,000. This itself explains why more exchanges have got to be opened. This depends on the demand which is coming up. This is all I have to say in regard to this question of his. He then has emphasised the point in regard to the strength of workers and that of officers in the lower and higher cadres. I can assure my friend that I am a man who is very keen about this aspect. I would take a note of it. I will examine the position. This was a question which came up on a former occasion also and it was said that there was time-lag in filling up some posts which are there. This question came up during question hour and I spelt out the position. Steps are being taken in this regard. Now, as far as the question of casual workers is con-

[Shri C. M. Stephen.]

cerned, their number will not remain the same. Casual workers are progressively being regularised when they go on to the higher cadres. To that extent, the number of casual workers would be reduced. (Interruptions) I can assure my friend that I will go into it and I will myself examine the position to see whether any distortions had taken place as between the lower cadre and the officer cadre. This is a matter which we will specifically go into. This is all I have to say on this. About pressurisation, let us not call it a gimmick and all that. Total pressurisation will be effected at certain stages, what we call the junction cable stage, that is from one exchange to the other exchange. The primary cable stage is from exchange to all sorts of cables...

SHRI KALYAN ROY: Only 86 km. in the whole year.

SHRI C. M. STEPHEN: I am coming to that. And then they would go on to the secondary stage. These are the stages which we have got to cover up. The total cable length in the whole country which is to be covered is 20,000 km. Now we have covered altogether, till today, about 7000 kms. for pressurisation. A portion has gone to Calcutta. Different areas have also been covered. This is going on. That depends on the digging activity which is going on. Certain areas we will not be able to cover. Progress is being effectuated there. This is all what I have got to say and a large portion of this will come under pressurisation. This is the scheme which can alone give consolation.

With regard to Calcutta, a microwave system, as nowhere else, has been introduced between exchange and exchange in Calcutta itself because it is very difficult to depend upon the cable system in Calcutta. There are 44 exchanges and 168,000 telephone connections already functioning in Calcutta. These exchanges will have to be connected because once a junction cable collapses, the connection becomes impossible; this is

what has happened during the recent rains. Therefore, microwave system is being introduced. The Dum Dum and Kasipur areas have already been connected and in the next year we have got a massive scheme of connecting various exchanges in Calcutta by microwave system which will relieve us from depending on the cable system between exchange and exchange. Then the problem will be only between the exchange and the subscriber. This is one of the aspects which I have to emphasize about.

Now, about non-attending of functioning of Calcutta, I can say in February 1980 a team was sent over there to identify certain exchanges which are extremely bad. Those exchanges were identified. In a few exchanges a special team was sent to take up the task of improving the situation. I am happy to report to the House that the result has been very very rewarding. And one of the exchanges which was identified as a very bad exchange was that of Mr. Kalyan Roy. I could say that a concerted effort was made and as a result of that there is considerable improvement, which indicates that even in spite of restraints, conditions can be improved if a concerted effort is made somehow or other. But this concerted effort all over the country it will be difficult to make because it is a matter of some timing...

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: Do you give an assurance that next time when I go to Calcutta, I will be able to make a telephone call from Tollyganj?

SHRI C. M. STEPHEN: No, no, I cannot give that assurance. I do not know when he is arriving there and the cable would not collapse on that day. All I can say is that if there is a collapse of cable, it will be rectified immediately. That is all I can say about that.

As far as lack of co-ordination is concerned, every agency is a master of its domain. We are making our own effort. I am going to Calcutta tomorrow. I have fixed up a meeting

with the Minister concerned and with all the officers tomorrow and day after tomorrow in Calcutta to handle this matter.

SHRI BHUPESH GUPTA: I invite you to the residence where I live and from there you make a telephone call.

SHRI C. M. STEPHEN: Provided he gives me a cup of tea.

I have contacted the Chief Minister. He has given an assurance that there will be co-ordination. Things are improving, I must own it on the floor of this House. With my experience with the Chief Minister and the Government, as far as we are concerned there, I can say that they are taking it up seriously and things are improving, co-ordination is coming in, but the people who are going in for digging, they do not respect any personality, they do not respect anything at all. They just dig damage and get along. These are the experiences of a cable being put in a ditch with concrete plaster. Once they wanted to carry out some repairs and put it through, but then they could not put it through. So, the easy method; the concrete cover was broken down. The cable was broken down and he put the cable across my cable. The whole thing collapsed. This is one aspect. As far as Calcutta is concerned, one important problem is cable collapse. Twenty per cent is because of that. Cable theft has taken place in a very big way. Twenty per cent is because of cable theft and collapse. This has happened in Delhi. Suddenly it collapsed with the onset of the monsoon. This is the cumulative position that is coming up.

I would appeal to the House to bear with me if I spell out the various constraints under which the telephone system is working. We have developed from a scratch. We started with what is known as the Strowger system, which everybody has now rejected. Eighty per cent of the whole system in the country is being run on the Strowger system which is being

produced in Belgium. Then we introduced the cross-bar system, which is known as the Pentaconta system. The cross bar system proved to be disastrous. Our boys improved upon it and this improved version is now available. This is the system with which we are functioning. This is one part of it. A portion of the system, as Mr. Kalyan Roy has said, has outlived its age. Twenty years is the maximum during which it can be of use. So it has outlived its age and still it is there. It is helping us, through as the old lady, with all the defects. The difficulty is that we are not able to replace it because of the non-availability of the exchange with which we can replace it. Thirdly, our cables have been laid in a very unprotected manner. It is completely vulnerable. Therefore, everybody comes in and smashes on it and the cable becomes absolutely vulnerable. There is a new system of cable where there is no copper at all. In this case, there will be no theft. But ours is a copper-mingled cable. So theft is taking place. That is another difficulty that we are facing. These are the problems that are coming up before us.

Another very important matter that the hon. Members should understand is that we are not able to give connections to the extent they are needed. The demand has exploded. Therefore, all people are coming on all the lines which are just available. There is a burden which the exchange can take. For example, if I put through 2000 connections, the load that the exchange can take on is only 20 per cent of that. Ten to fifteen per cent of the load is all that the exchange can take on. Supposing everybody tries to ring up, nobody will get it because that will not go through that exchange. Now this heavy load is coming on us. Therefore, there is difficulty.

People are tempted to compare the situation in Delhi with Tokyo and all those places. There the telephones are numerous. But the burden is not that heavy. At one time, Tokyo also had

[Shri C. M. Stephen]

that difficulty. Today the effective call is estimated to be of the order of 70 per cent. London also is there. But Paris has not come up to that level. The other countries are also still around the area of what is called 35 to 40 per cent. This is the situation in which we are today.

We are trying to rectify it by massive imports. We are inducting into the whole system, as was stated by Shri Kartik Oraon, the electronic system. The electronic system is the future, as far as we are concerned. But there is a time lag and for a time we have to live with the Strowger system and the crossbar system. Production has also got to be of the crossbar system for a time because that is the know-how with us. We want to develop our know-how and thus come on our own. But until then, import is taking place and we are now going ahead with it. Microwave is being introduced in a big way. We were importing it. Today we have got the capability to produce it in our country. We are going ahead with it and the production is also going ahead.

The totality of the whole picture has been assessed. The weaknesses have been identified and an effort is being made to get the whole thing through. My friend stated about callousness. I do not want to comment on that.

SHRI KALYAN ROY: What about corruption? Not a single officer has been dismissed.

SHRI C. M. STEPHEN: Mr. Kalyan Roy does not know the statistics of the actions that we have taken. I have gone through that. A large number of actions have been taken at the officer level. Wherever corruption is coming up, there is no mercy given to anybody at all. Dismissals do take place. Other actions are taking place. There are different agencies through which we have got to go and a number of cases are pending. Investigation is proceeding. And whenever an indication comes, we go ahead with it. All I want to assure the House is, we are

all aware of the problem, we have analysed the problem, we have seen the weak spot there and I would appeal to the House to consider this. This is a national problem which we have to bear with and we have to correct it to the extent possible. Our instruments are limited, the demand is so high and the system that is available to us is a system which has developed in a slipshod manner, all sorts of systems coming together, and it is with it that we are going ahead and we are trying to improve it—improving the cables, improving the exchanges, improving the operation, improving the supervisory style of functioning, improving the functioning of the workers together, improving it in a total manner. I am very sure things are rosy and things are not that bad as they are painted.

SHRI SUNDAR SINGH BHANDARI (Uttar Pradesh): And we all have to live with it!

SHRI B. N. BANERJEE (Nominated): Sir, gone are those days when possession of a telephone was considered to be a status symbol. Sir, telephone is these days considered to be an ordinary necessity for even ordinary citizens. Sir, the hon. Minister will agree with me that if one has a telephone for which he has to pay a substantial sum these days on account of rent and also call charges which, the Minister will admit, goes on increasing from Budget to Budget—and this year also there is no exception—though it is not so far persons like us whose calls are rather on the low side. Sir, if I pay a substantially high rent and also call charges I am entitled to demand and expect that my telephone functions and its functions satisfactorily. But, unfortunately, Sir, so far as our experience in Calcutta in particular and in Delhi is concerned, it is otherwise. I have been using telephone in Delhi for the last 30 years and, previously, we seldom got a wrong connection. Now hon. Members will all agree with me—possibly Mr. Stephen is not dialling his on telephone these days; previously he used to do it;

otherwise he would have said the same thing if he was sitting on this side of the House—that every third or fourth call is a wrong connection. Why should it be so? There is no reason for this.

(Interruptions)

DR. BHAI MAHAVIR (Madhya Pradesh): And with the inefficiency in the Department, earnings are rising.

SHRI B. N. BANERJEE: So far as fault repairing is concerned, I should say that we, Members of Parliament here, who do not pay for the telephone rent or call charges, are very well cared for. *(Interruptions)* I am talking from my own experience. We are given attention but that is a source of complaint for others in the city and they tell us very often, "You are all VIPs, etc. Therefore, your complaint is attended to." So, the presence of too many VIPs including those under the category of Members of Parliament—Ministers certainly are there—and high officials results in too much attention being given to these persons and so there is a genuine complaint that the faults of telephone connections of ordinary subscribers are not attended to for days together. This is a fact. Sir, I leave it at that stage.

(Interruptions)

Now I am talking about Calcutta. So far as Calcutta telephones are concerned, Mr. Stephen also has admitted that they are in a mess—not that they are in a mess today only.

SHRI C. M. STEPHEN: I did not say that. *(Interruptions)*

(Interruptions)

SHRI B. N. BANERJEE: Yes, you said it.

SHRI C. M. STEPHEN: Don't put words into my mouth, Mr. Banerjee.

SHRI B. N. BANERJEE: From what you have said, telephone there is most unsatisfactory and you are trying your best to improve it. I wish you could improve it. My idea is not to find fault with your system. The telephone system in Calcutta is very very unsatisfactory. Sir, you are for-

tunate if your line is working. Then you are lucky, when you pick up the telephone, if you hear the dial tone. Sir, these are my personal experiences. I am not talking from somebody else's experience. And you should thank your stars if after dialling you get the right connection. First your telephone is not working. And if it is working, you are fortunate if you hear the dial tone after picking up the telephone. And you should thank your stars if on your first attempt you—get the right connection. These are the hard facts. I would ask the hon. Minister to go to Calcutta and try certain numbers. And the usual reply of the telephone department people—and I think the hon. Minister has also said that—is that the load is too much and that their equipment has also become very old and needs replacement. Sir, this we have been hearing, as far as Calcutta is concerned, for several years. I have been in this House for a pretty long time. That is why everybody has been complaining to me for the last 10—12 years about the telephone system in Calcutta. *(Time bell)* Sir, I have not taken even three or four minutes. If you give the first speaker 20 minutes. I should be given at least four minutes.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You have already taken four minutes.

SHRI B. N. BANERJEE: Sir, ordinarily the ground given is—and that ground has also been given here—that it is on account of a cable fault. It is a fact, as has been pointed out by Mr. Kalyan Roy, which Mr. Stephen has also admitted, that there is a lack of co-ordination among the various departments and the telephone department is also a party to that. You simply say that the CMDA is digging up the lines or some other Authority is digging up the lines. If there were some proper co-ordination, perhaps this could be avoided.

One more thing I may mention. If the telephone bills are not paid, the telephone department is very prompt in disconnecting telephones. But if a telephone is out of order for a long

[Shri B. N. Banerjee.]

time for no fault of the subscriber, why should Mr. Stephen be not prepared to give at least a rebate or abatement?

AN. HON. MEMBER: Why rebate, a penalty.

SHRI B. N. BANERJEE: Let him agree to that.

One word about the STD system. I would like Mr. Stephen to try an STD number from here to a place like Calcutta or Bombay. It requires a lot of patience. A person has to go on dialling and dialling for half an hour.

The last point and I finish. I have read a report in the press that Mr. Stephen in a press conference has promised that by 1982 he will clear all the pending applications for telephone connections. I hope I am correct. I welcome this statement. But I would tell him one thing. That he is giving new connections is well and good, but that does not mean he will neglect the existing connections. He should spend a good portion of his resources to see that the telephones that are already installed function well. But the way of the Government is different. In the Tourism and Civil Aviation Department also you see that the moment they get an extra plane, instead of strengthening their existing services, they expand services. Mr. Stephen should not make a mistake. Knowing Mr. Stephen very well, I have personally a good deal of hope that during his time in Calcutta, where I live and where the grievance has been there for a very long time, there will be an improvement so far as telephones are concerned. I am pretty sure that if he would visit Calcutta for a day, he would feel convinced about the grievance. In view of the Calling Attention having been taken up today, we would like to see an improvement in the telephone services in Calcutta. If he does that, the residents of Calcutta will be grateful to him.

SHRI C. M. STEPHEN: Sir, we are in an area where there is a lot of agreement, and the area of disagreement is

little. There is an area of disagreement, but the area of agreement is quite a lot. I want to say one thing. Let us not proceed on the basis that in any telephone system every call will mature. It will not. There is what is called the completion rate. That is a system. There is statistics of the attended calls and the successful calls. The best system is supposed to be that of Tokyo and London, and that ratio there is 70 per cent. Sir, that is the highest reached. That means that 30 per cent of the calls collapse. Even when you try the local calls, you do not get them. This is the situation. In Paris it is 50 per cent, between 50 and 60 per cent. That is as bad as ours 10 to 15 years back. The present President took over as the Chief of the committee and pumped in a lot of money. This is the situation. Our position is around 40 per cent. This is a fact that we will have to reckon with. With all the collapse that we are seeing in Calcutta, what is the number of trunk-calls passing in an year? In 1979-80, the number of the trunk-calls that matured was 24 lakhs, which means 2 lakhs per month, which means that in an effective working hour—we take ten hours of effective working per day, night being half time—about 1,000 trunk-calls are passing. This is what our dilapidated, useless system is managing. It is managing to get about 1,000 trunk-calls per hour matured. Let us not condemn it that way. There are, of course, collapses.

About the STD, you mentioned. When you dial from one station to another station, the STD will have to go through a number of intermediate stations. There are certain systems going on. If at any stage there is engagement, your connection is thrown back. It is an electronic affair. You cannot get through. If that is completely full, you cannot get through. That is the situation everywhere. That is all I have got to say.

SHRI B. N. BANERJEE: Everywhere means in all the countries of the world? You are hopelessly mistaken. You try it in other countries.

SHRI C. M. STEPHEN: There are systems which are absolutely mechanically perfect. In the STD system there is no operator sitting and managing. It is just a STD Subscriber Trunk-Dialling system. You yourself get on to that. That system is there. That system has got its inbuilt defects. As I told you, our system is the Stronger system. Our system is the old cross-bar system. It has got its inbuilt defects. Therefore, we are now trying to progressively introduce the electronic system, to improve upon the cross-bar system. An effort is being made. This is our child. We are trying to bring it up with all that. Our workers and our engineers are doing their best. They are going in a proper manner.

Again, let us not go on straightway condemnation of the whole system. I seek your permission to give one instance. Somebody in Bombay made a speech at a meeting of the Rotary Club. He said that somebody told him that he had put a trunk-call to Delhi, to the Prime Minister's Secretariat, that it was a lightning call and that he had got it after 18 hours. One Mr. Pai made that statement. I read it when I was in the plane. I immediately rang to the General Manager to contact that Mr. Pai and get the information on who made the call, who put it, the date and the man who put the call through. For the last 14 days my General Manager has tried to get it. He has been meeting Mr. Pai and asking him to give the information on who put the call across. Now he says that the information is not available. Yesterday he has come out again with a statement that this has collapsed and that has collapsed. He is not able to give any information. This sort of irresponsible condemnation is not serving any cause at all.

SHRI B. N. BANERJEE: Does the hon. Minister mean to say that the points which I have put forward stand on the same footing as those of Mr. Pai's?

SHRI C. M. STEPHEN: Not at all. Particularly when Mr. Banerjee makes

a point, it cannot have that condemnation and that thrust. It is an honest assessment. Therefore, it is taken up in all seriousness. That is what I am saying. But there is a tendency developing to condemn everything. When that comes, I say that the system is not that bad. The workers are not that bad. The supervisors are not that bad. All the workers, the staff, in the telephone system, are as patriotic as anybody in this House or anywhere. They are doing their best. We are trying to improve it. We will try to improve it.

SHRI SUNDER SINGH BHANDARI: There is no question of challenging anyone's patriotism. It is all a question of efficiency.
(Interruptions)

SHRI C. M. STEPHEN: If I give statistics, Mr. Bhandari will say that I am quoting this and that. So I am not going into it. There has been a deterioration for the last three years. I have got figures with me.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Mr. Bhattacharjee. Not here. Mr. Dhabe.

SHRI ARVIND GANESH KULKARNI (Maharashtra): Sir, I would like to know whether you are adjourning the House at 1 O'Clock and Special Mentions will later....

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Let us proceed. Then I will see.

SHRI ARVIND GANESH KULKARNI: When will the Special Mentions come?

(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: We may have to sit longer.

SHRI JAGDISH PRASAD MATHUR (Uttar Pradesh): Let the Minister reply to the point and not enter into a debate. (Interruptions). He is taking more time.

SHRI C. M. STEPHEN: The reference to Pai—that is what you mean

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: All the aspects of the question have been discussed. Let the Members ask only clarifications. Mr. Dhabe, please put your questions only.

SHRI S. W. DHABE (Maharashtra): Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, it is an important question...

SHRI JAGDISH PRASAD MAT-HUR: How is he speaking now?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: In the place of Mr. Kulkarni, Mr. Dhabe is perhaps speaking.

SHRI JAGDISH PRASAD MAT-HUR: Is it going party-wise?
(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: He is from the same party.

SHRI ARVIND GANESH KULKARNI: He is speaking in the place of Mr. Sankar Ghose. Mr. Sankar Ghose has written that Mr. Dhabe will speak on his behalf. Why are you objecting.

(Interruptions)

SHRI B. N. BANERJEE: Sir, the practice in this House is that his party gets a chance and he can speak on behalf of Mr. Sankar Ghose, but not in the position of Mr. Sankar Ghose, unfortunately he will have to wait.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Let him proceed ...
(Interruptions)

SHRI SUNDER SINGH BHANDARI: That will set up a precedent.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: It is being done every day.

SHRI SUNDER SINGH BHANDARI: No, it is not being done. Other names are called when the list is exhausted, not before that.
(Interruptions)

SHRI JAGDISH PRASAD MAT-HUR: Have you exhausted the list?
(Interruptions)

SHRI B. N. BANERJEE: It is not Calling Attention by Congress(U) Party, but Calling Attention by X or Y. Don't make the procedure ridiculous.

(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Let us see to it ...
(Interruptions)

SHRI JAGDISH PRASAD MAT-HUR: You are changing the procedure.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I am not changing the procedure.
(Interruptions)

SHRI JAGDISH PRASAD MAT-HUR: You are also creating precedents ...
(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: What has been done in the past ...
(Interruptions)

SHRI JAGDISH PRASAD MAT-HUR: I will not lose my turn. I do not mind getting two minutes less ...
(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: By this time he might have spoken.

SHRI JAGDISH PRASAD MAT-HUR: I am on a point of procedure. Unnecessarily you are changing it.
(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I am not changing it. I will get it examined and see if there is any change.
(Interruptions) You will get your chance.

SHRI S. W. DHABE: Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, a survey about Calcutta telephones was reported in the Statesman dated the 17th July, 1980. I will read only a very short paragraph:

"But subscribers remained sceptical about the department's performance. The residents of 61 exchange said that telephones in large areas of Narandrapur were out of order for weeks. When they complained to the local exchange, they were told that there was a fault in the underground cable and the exchange

lacked adequate implements to rectify it. They were told that they would have to wait until the instruments arrived from elsewhere."

Therefore, to say that it is due to monsoon does not seem to be correct. The real reason is that the Ministry does not have sufficient equipment to rectify the defects in the underground cables. Therefore, may I know from the hon. Minister in how many places rectification was not possible because the material was not available to rectify those corrects. Sir, two other things I will have to ask. Apart from the telephone bills, there is also a complaint about 197 and 198. When we want to have assistance, we find that there is nobody to reply. We want assistance many times, but assistance is not available on telephone. We do not get the connections. Thirdly, in view of the defective telephone system, what is the back-log of dead telephones today with the Ministry, which could not be set right? It is said that in Calcutta it was 17,000. I would like to know the back-log of dead telephones, in the last three months, which could not be repaired because the equipment is not available to rectify it. I was referring to 197 and 198.

1 P.M.

Now I would like to inform the Minister that telephone bills sent to Members of Parliament are often inflated. Mrs. Margaret Alva got a bill for the month of April and the bill was for Rs. 640.30. During this period the House was not in session and she was not here and the bill was for local calls. She received another bill for Rs. 542.80 in respect of the period from 1-5-1980 to 31-7-1980. Then there was another arrears bill for Rs. 481.75 in respect of the period from 28-1-1976 to 1-1-1980. I would like the Minister to find out whether there is any proper system of sending bills and to look into the question of inflated bills.

I have two more points. One is about press and news. Because the telephone system is not working well, messages and telegrams sent by the press to many places like Gauhati are received only on the next day by which time the news value of those telegrams are lost. This is because the system is not effectively functioning. These news telegrams should be received by the newspaper office the same day so that they can publish it the next day at least. But the telegrams are not sent in time. I would like the Minister to look into this also.

The Minister did not reply to the question of abatement to subscribers. Even yesterday the telephone was dead for half an hour in the lobby and we could not contact many people. This is the position in Delhi very often. When the telephones are dead and when the subscribers are not able to use their telephones, there should be some abatement or concession to the subscribers in the matter of rent. I would like the Minister to reply to this point also.

SHRI C. M. STEPHEN: I do not think any new points have been made. As far as rebate is concerned, it is not possible because this is in the nature of the thing. There will be breakdowns and there will be defects and time will be taken to rectify those defects. It is all in-built in it. There is no question of giving any rebate. If you are not satisfied you can surrender your telephone. This is the contractual position.

As far as billing is concerned, let us not make this the forum for setting quarrels about billing. There was an occasion when I explained the whole procedure during the Question Hour in this House. There are a large number of cases where rebates are given. There are cases where people have complained about their STD telephone bills without knowing that somebody without their knowledge was using their telephones. We have

[Shri C. M. Stephen]

a system of keeping such telephones under observation. If during this period of observation if we find that their telephones did not work, then we give the benefit of doubt to the subscribers and give them substantial rebate.

As regards telegram is concerned, there is no guarantee that it will reach in time. There are telegrams which are sent by post because the line cannot take load beyond a certain limit. In such cases we will tell the person concerned that there will be a delay. There is a rule saying that if the person asks for refund, the money can be returned to him. The telegram will be sent by post. If too many messages come on a particular line, it is natural that that line cannot take all that load. This is what I want to say.

SHRI S. W. DHABE: The reason for rectification of defects is not monsoon, but non-availability of materials. Is this correct?

SHRI C. M. STEPHEN: I have checked it up and there is not a single case of telephone defect rectification being held up for want of or lack of material. On the other hand, when the total monsoon cable collapse takes place, it is in a large measure and we do not understand. Suppose there is a one-thousand cable cut across. At that point, these cables will have to be connected. One person will be taken and you have to connect them. He has one thousand lines. Five persons cannot be put. Therefore, there is a question of calculation of movement in the system. Thousand cables will have to be patched up, patched up, patched up. Then this takes its own time and you cannot help. You cannot help if it takes its own time. That is why when a large cable collapse takes place during the monsoon, this becomes inevitable and I must say that the workers did a good job. Considering the quantum of cables, they did a good job and the whole thing is now back in working order more or less.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Yes, Mr. Ramanand Yadav. आप संक्षेप में ही सवाल करिए ।

श्री नागेश्वर प्रसाद शाही (उत्तर प्रदेश) : श्री रामानन्द जी और संक्षेप ?

श्री उपसभापति : आप सवाल तो पूछने दीजिए ।

श्री रामानन्द यादव (बिहार) : यह निश्चित बात है कि टेलीफोन की वर्किंग में गड़बड़ी आयी है. . . .

श्री जगदीश प्रसाद माथुर : आप सिस्टम बदल रहे हैं. . . (Interruptions). . .

श्री उपसभापति : जिस तरह से चल रहा है, चलने दीजिए ।

श्री जगदीश प्रसाद माथुर : हमारी पार्टी की तरफ से कौन बीला है ? (Interruptions)

श्री लाडली मोहन निगम : (मध्य प्रदेश) अगर इस तरह से चलाना है तो इस को खत्म करिए ?

श्री उपसभापति : जो चल रहा है उस को चलने दीजिए ।

श्री शिव चन्द्र झा (बिहार) : इसी से गड़बड़ी होती है ।

श्री सदाशिव बगईतकर : (महाराष्ट्र) : कालिग अट्रेशन में किसी पार्टी का सवाल नहीं है । (Interruptions)

SHRI RAMANAND YADAV: No one from my party has spoken.

SHRI LADLI MOHAN NIGAM: Sir, it is a strange system that you are adopting.

(Interruptions)

SHRI B. N. BANERJEE: Sir, I will give you an illustration. Just a minute,

Sir, If I give an illustration, you will understand the absurdity of the procedure which you are adopting. Suppose there is a Calling Attention Motion in the name of, say, Mr. Ramanand Yadav, first name, and the second name is that of Mr. Mathur. Now, Mr. Ramanand Yadav does not come to the House on that day. The Chairman calls Mr. Ramanand Yadav. But he is not there and the Chairman says "Not here". Immediately, from that side, Shrimati Habibullah stands up and says, "I belong to this party and I will put questions on this Calling Attention Motion." This is absurd. This way, Sir, a person gives his name for the Calling Attention Motion, but he does not come at all and the next man, who is there, is denied.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: This has not been done. *(Interruptions)*. This has not been done.

SHRI B. N. BANERJEE: This is the same thing.

(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I am sorry, Mr. Banerjee. You know the procedure.

SHRI B. N. BANERJEE: I know it. I know a little better than you also, Sir.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You know better than myself and I do not deny that. In this House, the Members who are mentioned here are not called, but the parties are called. You know it.

(Interruptions)

SHRI B. N. BANERJEE: I know it. But . . .

(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Please take your seat. *(Interruptions)*. you say whatever you want and then I will have may say. Or, I will say first. But this dialogue cannot go on. I cannot allow the dialogue to go on like this.

SHRI B. N. BANERJEE: But my point is this.

(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I cannot allow this dialogue. Please take your

seat. Let me make my observations and then you can say whatever you have got to say. Or, you say whatever you have got to say and then I will make my observations. You have been here as the Secretary-General. Mr. Banerjee, you have been the Secretary-General here and during your regime also Members were called because of the parties. We have followed this procedure. Each party will be allowed at least one Member, whether the name is there or not. Therefore, this has been going on.

SHRI JAGDISH PRASAD MATHUR: What is this system?

(Interruptions)

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You cannot go on like this. I request Mr. Mathur to speak later on. Do not have a dialogue here now. I have said that when Members were not present here on the party basis some other Members have been called.

SHRI B. N. BANERJEE: Including the first name?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Not the first name.

SHRI B. N. BANERJEE: Why not?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: I can tell from the proceedings that this was done when Mr. Banerjee was here.

SHRI B. N. BANERJEE: You kindly check up.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: It would be easier if we stick to this rule that the Members whose names are there will only be called, whether of the same party or of a different party.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI SITARAM KESRI): Sir, it had already been decided, during an earlier session when we were in the Opposition, that on a Calling Attention Motion, every party would be allowed. Suppose the name Prof. D. P. Chattopadhyaya is there and I want to put another Member

[Shri Sitaram Kesri]

Then he will be allowed in his place even when he is there. It is the Party's desire.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: This is followed every day.

श्री शिव चन्द्र झा : पार्टी का हो लेकिन जिसका नाम है वह पहले बुलाया जाना चाहि . . .

(Interruptions)

श्री उपसभापति : जिस का नाम नहीं होगा, जिस पार्टी का नाम नहीं होता वह भी बोलते हैं . .

(Interruptions)

श्री लाडली मोहन निगम : उनका नाम बाद में बुलाइये . . .

(Interruptions)

श्री उपसभापति : बाद वाले भी बुलाये जायेंगे । जिसका नाम है वे भी बुलाये जायेंगे (Interruptions) । शुरू में मैंने कहा था कि जो प्रक्रिया रही है मैं उसको देख लूंगा । क्या परम्परा रही है, क्या कन्वेंशन रही है मैं उसको देख लूंगा अगर उसमें सुधार की जरूरत हुई तो उसके अनुसार प्रगले दिन कार्रवाई की जाएगी (Interruptions)

The Chair is not doing anything new.

श्री रामानन्द यादव : उपसभापति जी, टेलीफोन डिपार्टमेंट की कार्रवाई में इन दिनों बहुत गड़बड़ हो रही हैं । खुशी है कि मंत्री जी काफी सचेष्ट हैं कि इस डिपार्टमेंट को ठीक किया जाय । उनके भाषण से और उन्होंने जो स्टेटमेंट दी है उससे मालूम होता है कि टेलीफोन की सारी समस्याओं से काफी परित्वित हैं और उनका ध्यान उस तरफ खींचा गया है ताकि वह सुधार कर सकें ।

उपसभापति जी, पहली बात मुझे यह कहनी है कि फुट चांस में जब हम टेलीफोन लगाते हैं, बात करते हैं तो वह लगता नहीं है । कुछ देर के बाद, चेष्टा करने के बाद 199 नम्बर पर कहते हैं कि इसकी लगा

दोजिए तो वह तुरन्त मिला देते हैं । 199 में भी कभी-कभी घंटों रिस्पोंस नहीं मिलता है, डायल बीच में कट जाता है । अक्सर यह भी देखा जाता है कि बाहर से कोई टेलीफोन करता है तो उसकी आवाज सुनाई नहीं पड़ती है । जब वह बेचारा यहां आता है मिलने के लिए तो वह कहता है कि साहब आप कल सारे दिन गायब थे । आपके टेलीफोन से कोई रिस्पोंस नहीं था जबकि हम लोग दिन भर वहां बैठे रहते हैं । जनरली यह होता है बाहर की आवाज सुनाई नहीं पड़ती, टेलीफोन वकिंग आर्डर में रहते हुए भी । क्या कारण है मंत्री जी जरा इसको फाईंड आउट करें ।

बारबार ऐसा होता है कि दो-तीन बाल आपस में कंस जाती हैं । उसके लिए घंटों बैठे रहना पड़ता है । या तो आप बगल के घर जाइये और वहां से टेलीफोन करके एक्जेंच से कहिए कि वह इसको वाट दे नहीं तो ब्रैट रहिए । एक्जेंच वाले किसी न किसी तरह से आपको छुड़वा पाते हैं । इससे बड़ी इन्फॉर्मेट बात मैं मंत्री जी को और बहाना चाहता हूं जिस पर इनका ध्यान पहले भी खींचा गया है । इन्होंने एक्ट में अमेंडमेंट करने की बात सोची है । वह बात है वैड बिलिंग । मैं अपनी कहानी बताता हूं । मैंने एक लेटर आपको पढ़ाया है जो मुझे आपके डिपार्टमेंट से अनेक्सी से मिला था । फरवरी, 1979 में यह बिल मेरे पास आया था । उसमें एक तो 136 रुपए का था और दूसरा 26 रुपए का था ; तीन बिल आए थे । एक आया था तीन आदमियों के नाम पर और दूसरा आया था एक आदमी के नाम पर । मैंने जब देखा कि कौन-कौन हैं और किन के यहां मैंने काल की तो मुझे पता लगा कि मिस्टर राठीर हैं जो जनता (जे पी) के हैं पहले जनता पार्टी के मेम्बर थे और बिहार असेम्बली में थे । उनके नाम पर ने मैंने बाल किया, रांची । मेरे से कहा गया कि आपने बाल की । जब

मैंने प्रोटेस्ट किया और कहा कि यह काल मेरी नहीं है आपने गलत कहा है तो उन्होंने जवाब दिया अनेकसी से कि फर्स्ट काल आपने राठौर की रांची में की। उनके नाम का 26 रुपए का बिल था। तीन काल जो आपने की हैं उनमें एक काल है कपूरी ठाकुर जी की। उस वक्त वह चीफ मिस्टर थे बिहार राज्य के। जो मेरी पार्टी के नहीं लोक दल के हैं, पहले जनता पार्टी के थे। मेरा उनसे कोई ताल्लुक नहीं। वह बिल भी मेरे नाम है। दूसरा उन्होंने कहा कि कपिल देव सिंह को आपने काल की जो उस वक्त एग्जीक्यूटिव मिनिस्टर थे कपूरी ठाकुर की रिजीम में। वह भी लोक दल में हैं। पहले जनता पार्टी में थे। इनसे मेरा कोई ताल्लुक नहीं। तीसरी काल जार्ज फर्नन्डीज साहब की की रांची में। इन से भी मेरा कोई ताल्लुक नहीं। यह लिख कर उन्होंने हमें भेज दिया और रांची में जार्ज फर्नन्डीज थे नहीं। वे तो दिल्ली में या तो मंत्री थे या एम० पी० थे He is not supposed to go to Ranchi. All these calls were made in Ranchi.

अगर व पटना में रहते तो इस प्रकार की बात समझ में आ सकती है। जब इस तरह का बिल मेरे पास आया तो मैं दफ्तर में गया। पहले मैं अपने मित्र चैयरमैन साहब के पास गया और उनको यह बिल दिखाया तो वे हंनने लगे। वह चिट्ठी इस वक्त मेरे पास नहीं है, नहीं तो मैं उसको दिखाता। आपको ताज्जुब होगा कि इस तरह के बिल हम एम० पी० लोगों के पास आते रहते हैं। इनसे मेन्टल टोरचर होता है और परेशानी होती है। हम कहाँ से इतने पैसे दें। हम लोगों को ही नहीं, अफसरों के और एम० पीज और एम० एल० एज० के पास भी इस तरह के गलत बिल आते रहते हैं। ऐसा लगता है कि इसमें इम्प्लाइज को बिजनेसमैन से मिला कर कांस्पिरेंसी रहती है। ये लोग बिजनेसमैन से मिलते रहते हैं और उनसे पगड़ी लेते हैं, पैसा लेते हैं। क्या कारण है कि

बिजनेसमैन को अगर कहीं बाहर टेलीफोन करना हो तो उसको तुरन्त टेलीफोन मिल जाता है, लेकिन हम लोगों को टेलीफोन नहीं मिलता है।

श्री उपसभापति : आप अब समाप्त करिये।

श्री रामानन्द यादव : श्रीमन्, मेरा कहना यह है कि टेलीफोन विभाग में जो बैड विलिंग होता है इससे आप हमारा पिंड छुड़ाइये। आपने कहा था कि आप इस बारे में एक कानून बनाने वाले हैं, जिसमें इस प्रकार के अपराधियों के लिए डिस्ट्रेंट पनिशमेंट होगा। आप यह काम कब तक करने जा रहे हैं? इसलिए मैं स्पष्ट रूप से मंत्री महोदय से जानना चाहता हूँ कि क्या आप इस बात का आश्वासन देंगे कि हम लोगों के, एम पीज० लोगों के पास जो गलत बिल आते हैं उसमें सुधार लाने के लिए आप क्या कर रहे हैं? मैं समझता हूँ कि अगर आप इस इनफ्लेटेड बिल की समस्या हल कर देंगे तो आप लोगों की बहुत बड़ी सर्विस करेंगे।

SHRI C. M. STEPHEN: Sir, I do not know what to say. This billing question came here earlier also. Let us not take specific bills and settle accounts before the House. The fact that out of the many trunk call bills he must have received, there are only two or three bills which he is challenging shows that by and large the bills are all right. There may be some exceptions. This part of the whole affair can be rectified if rectification is called for. We have got our records.

About 199, my friend stated that he could not get 199. It is an indication that so many calls are being made to 199. I will tell you about my own experience. Every morning I ring up this service to find out if everything is all right. I have three telephones. One morning I rang up 199 on all the three telephones. The telephones were

[Shri C. M. Stephan]

ringing and ringing for three, four or five minutes. Nobody was picking up. I immediately went to the exchange. Nobody knew me. I went in this dress. I was very angry. But I saw that all the girls present there were frantically trying to put the calls through. I saw nobody idle there. There were certain places which were not manned. I immediately ordered that more boards should be installed and more girls should be given there. That has now been arranged. I would ask Mr. Yadav to ring up 199. He will get immediate response.

श्री उपसभापति : अब श्री बागाईतकर प्रश्न पृष्ठ ।

श्री शिव चन्द्र झा : श्रीमान्, आपने कहा था कि पार्टीवाइज बुलाएंगे । इसलिए अब तो मेरा नम्बर आना चाहिए ।

श्री उपसभापति : उनका नाम लिस्ट में है ।

श्री शिव चन्द्र झा : लिस्ट में तो मेरा नाम भी है । इसी तरह से आपने श्री रामानन्द यादव को भी बुला लिया ।

(Interruptions)

श्री उपसभापति : पहले आप उनको बोल लेने दीजिये ।

श्री लाडली मोहन निगम : उपसभापति जी, मैं आपके माध्यम से टेलीफोन मंत्री का ध्यान दो-तीन मुख्य मुद्दों की ओर आकर्षित करना चाहता हूँ ।

पहली बात यह कि क्या यह सही नहीं है कि टेलीफोन इम्पलाइज यूनियन ने सरकार को एक चिट्ठी लिखी है । जो कामगार हैं उनको कहा गया कि जो दिल्ली में चार हजार टेलीफोन खराब पड़े हैं उनको सुधारो, तब उन्होंने आपको लिख कर दिया कि आप लोगों ने थौथी बाहवाही लूटने के लिये, सत्ता में आने के बाद, जो सामान मरम्मत के लिये स्टैंड बाइ में था, जो जब खराब

टेलीफोन हो, उनको सुधारने के लिये जिनका इस्तेमाल होता था उसका इस्तेमाल नये कनेक्शन देने के लिये कर दिया । अगर आप में ईमानदारी है और अगर मैं गलत बयानी नहीं कर रहा हूँ तो क्या आप सदन को बतायेंगे कि पिछले सालों के दौरान या पिछली सरकारों के दौरान कितने टेलीफोन के कनेक्शन दिये गये और इन 7-8 महीनों में कितने कनेक्शन दिये गये । यदि आप यह बता देंगे तो मैं कबूल करूंगा कि यूनियन झूठ बोलती है और मैं भी गलत बोलता हूँ । मेरा आरोप है आप पर कि इस वास्ते टेलीफोन खराब हैं क्योंकि टेलीफोन के मरम्मत करने के लिये जो सामान रखा जाता था हर साल, उसका इस्तेमाल नये कनेक्शन देने के लिये किया गया और उस सामान की पूर्ति आप पुनः नहीं कर पा रहे हैं ।

दूसरे, मैं आपसे यह भी पूछना चाहता हूँ, गलत बिलों के बारे में सभी सदस्यों ने कहा । मेरी सूचना है कि आपसे कुछ इसी सदन के सम्मानित सदस्य मिले थे और वहाँ आपने खुद कबूल किया कि यह बात ज़रूर है कि एस० टी० डी० के मामले में जो कर्मचारी है वे ईमानदारी नहीं बरत रहे हैं । किसी लाइन को कुछ चीजों के लिये किसी अन्य के साथ जोड़ देते हैं ।

मैं दो एक बातें और कह देना चाहता हूँ । मुझे यह पता नहीं था । हमने सुना है कि समाज में जितना भी दोष है, बुराईयाँ हैं वह बिना सरकारी प्रपत्र के चल नहीं सकती । यहाँ हर एक चीज का हफ्ता बंधा रहता है । अभी मैं इस सत्र के पहले जब बीच में बम्बई गया तो बम्बई में इत्फाक से एक साधारण आदमी के यहाँ टिफा । उसके पास टेलीफोन था परन्तु वह दो महीने से खराब पड़ा था । मैंने पूछा कि दो-दो महीने से यह खराब कैसे पड़ा है । मैंने वहाँ के जनरल मैनेजर को टेलीफोन करके बताया कि मैं यहाँ रह रहा हूँ । अस्पताल में डाक्टरों से बात करने को भी समय नहीं मिलता, आप

इसको ठीक करवा दें। मुझे बड़ी हैरानी हुई यह जान कर कि इत्तफाक से उसी बिल्डिंग में—अगर मैं मान लूं कि टेलीफोन 53 डिजिट वाली सीरीज खराब है, तो उस सीरीज के सभी टेलीफोन खराब होने चाहिए लेकिन उसी बिल्डिंग में अगर नीचे वाली मंजिल का टेलीफोन खराब है तो पहली मंजिल में रहने वाले का टेलीफोन ठीक है और फिर उसके ऊपर रहने वाले का टेलीफोन खराब है तो इसे क्या कहा जायें। एक ही मकान के चार तलों में एक ही डिजिट के टेलीफोन में एक टेलीफोन ही ठीक है तो मैंने इसका पता करवाया कि यह कैसे ठीक है तो उन्होंने कहा कि हम हफ्ता देते हैं, अर्थात् यह उनकी दस्तूरी होती है। बड़े आफिसरों की भी दस्तूरी होती है बड़ी कम्पनियों से। तो यह जो चीजें हैं इसके बारे में क्या आप कोई ऐसी निष्पक्ष व्यवस्था जो ये बुराईयाँ उभड़ कर सामने आ रही हैं—इसके बारे में सोचेंगे। क्या इसके लिये कोई संसदीय सदस्यों की एक कमेटी बना कर एक आम ऐलान करके कि जितनी शिकायतें आती हैं आपके महकमे की उसको सुधारने का इस कमेटी को अवसर मिले सके, आप कन्सल्टेटिव कमेटी की ही एक सब कमेटी बना दीजिये। ताकि देश भर में जो इस तरह की समस्याएँ हैं उनको खोज निकाल कर उसका समाधान निकालने की कोशिश करे।

तीसरी बात मैं यह कहना चाहता हूँ क्या यह बात सही नहीं है कि आज क्रस बार सिस्टम जो हम लोगों ने अख्तियार किया है वह दूसरे देशों द्वारा निकाल फेंका गया है। पिछले जमाने की रद्दी की हुई चीज हम खरीद लाये। हिन्दुस्तान इतना बर्दाश्तमान देश है कि हर देश का जो उत्तारा हुआ माल होता है, हम अपने यहाँ बना नहीं पाते, दूसरे देश अपनी टेक्नोलॉजी का विकास करके नई पद्धति को अपना लेते हैं और पुरानी पद्धति हमारे पिछड़े हुए देश के सर पर मढ़ दी जाती है। उसमें हिन्दुस्तान की नौकरशाही,

राजनीति करने वाले लोगों के सब के हाथ रंगे होते हैं। इस वास्ते मैं आपको कहना चाहता हूँ कि यह बात आपने बिल्कुल सही वही कि अलग-अलग महकमों में कोई आपस में समन्वय नहीं है। एक विभाग का दूसरे विभाग से समन्वय न होने से बेबल की चोरी होती है। यह आपकी मजबूरी है। मैं इसको भी मानता हूँ। क्या यह सही नहीं कि एक तरफ हम रोहिणी को आसमान में फेंकने की कोशिश कर रहे हैं और दूसरी तरफ एक बारिश होने के साथ आपके सारे इंस्ट्रुमेंट्स खत्म हो जाते हैं। इससे यह मतलब बिल्कुल साफ है कि हमारे और आपके तकनीकी ज्ञान में दोनों में कहीं बहुत बड़ा गैप है। इसको पूरा करने के लिए आप बुनियादी तौर पर क्या करते जा रहे हैं। जब तक यह तकनीकी गैप दूर नहीं करते तब तक ऐसी समस्याएँ जितनी टेलीफोन की हैं, रहेंगी। आपकी मजबूरियाँ रहेंगी। टेलीफोन कम्पनी पर कोई बन्धन नहीं। इसको सरकार चलाती है जैसे चाहेंगे वैसे चलायेंगे। यह तो मैं जानता हूँ आपके ऊपर बड़ा बोझ है लेकिन उस बोझ को दूर करने के लिए क्या आप तैयार हैं? दूसरा यह कि जो उधार लिया हुआ फैंका हुआ क्रस-बार सिस्टम है इसको बदलने के लिए क्या आप तैयार हैं। इस तकनीकी को लाने में जिन लोगों ने आज तक रिश्तत खाई है इन बड़े आफसरों को क्या आप देश के सामने सदन के उनके ऊपर मुकदमा चलाने की बात सोचते हैं। श्रीमन्, मैंने तीन बुनियादी प्रश्न पूछे हैं। पहला जो तकनीकी गैप है

श्री उपसभापति : आप दोहराइये नहीं। वे जानते हैं।

श्री लाडली मोहन निगम : वे तो तर्जुमा सुन रहे हैं, तर्जुमा भी साहब सलत होता है।

श्री उपसभापति : वे हिन्दी समझते हैं।

श्री लाडली मोहन निगम : मेरा पहला सवाल यह है कि यह जो हमारी तकनीक है, दूसरे मुल्कों के मुकाबले में बासी है, यह सारा

(श्री लाडली मोहन निगम)

सिस्टम दूसरी जगह से लाया हुआ है। अखबार वालों को मुसीबत है। दूसरा सवाल यह है कि छोटे स्टेशनों पर टेलीप्रिंटर की लाइन हमेशा खराब रहती है जिससे खबरों के आवागमन में कठिनाई होती है। कई सूचनाएं एक दूसरे को मिल नहीं पाती हैं। चार-चार, पांच पांच रोज बासी सूचनाएं मिलती हैं। टेलीक्स सर्विस और टेलीफोन का दोनों का चोली-दामन का रिश्ता है। इस वास्ते मैं चाहूंगा कि इस तरफ ध्यान देने की कोशिश करें।

तीसरा यह है कि टेलीक्स के बारे में बदमाशी चल रही है। जो समाचार एजेंसियाँ अंग्रेजी में चलती हैं उनको तो टेलीप्रिंटर जल्दी से मिल जाते हैं लेकिन जो भारतीय भाषाओं की या हिन्दी की समाचार एजेंसियाँ हैं वे यदि टेलीप्रिंटर लेना चाहें तो यह उनको नहीं मिलता इस वास्ते मैं यह जानना चाहता हूँ कि क्या आप इस संतुलित व्यवहार को दूर करने की कोशिश करेंगे ?

अंत में मैं बिलों के बारे में कहना चाहता हूँ। मैंने आपसे कह दिया है कि आप हम लोगों पर इस मामले में रहम खाइये। हम लोगों के ऊपर इतनी बड़ी मुसीबत आती है, दो-दो हजार रुपये का बिल आता है, कैसे भरे। इसके लिए भी कोई व्यवस्था कर दी जाए।

SHRI C. M. STEPHEN: Sir, the points mentioned by my friend are in the know of the department. There is nothing new. These things are there. About the teleprinters, a Hindi version of it, a committee has gone into it. We are trying to correct the technical problems. It is because of the difference in the language structure, between English and Hindi in the name-board there is some incongruity. This is a matter into which a committee has gone and we are trying to improve it and a new version we are attempting.

About the archaic system that is being used, I want to say that when the stronger system was introduced

strowger was the most advanced system in the world. When the cross-bar system was introduced, it was the most advanced system in the world. Even today in the electro-mechanical field, the cross-bar system is the best system. But initially under the Indian conditions there were some problems. Our boys went into it with the result that the I.C.P., the Indian Crossbar Product System, has come up. We are having very advanced systems, for example, the Crossbar from Japan and from Sweden are there that we have used here. They are giving perfectly good service. Electronics is coming into the world. It is not a completely advanced thing. It is advancing. It is not a question of our country using an archaic system. Whatever has come, we want to develop our self-reliance and to that extent factories are coming up.

With regard to the other point regarding corruption, I want to say that unless some specific cases are brought forward it will not be possible for me to give any answer. The department's policy and the Government of India's policy is absolutely clear and no Government, no self-respecting Government, can say that they will tolerate corruption. We are certainly taking steps. If specific instances are brought forward, we will look into them. But without specific instances nothing can be done at all. This is what I want to say.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Yes, Shri J. P. Mathur.

SHRI JAGDISH PRASAD MATHUR: Do you rely on the transaction or can you understand Hindi?

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Speak in English.

SHRI JAGDISH PRASAD MATHUR: Sir, the hon. Minister asked for specific complaints. I would only speak about Delhi because much pleading has been done on behalf of Calcutta—not pleading, of course grievances have been highlighted.

Sir, we have got exchange No. 20, 58 and adjoining exchange No. 85 for Ghaziabad. I would like to know whether it is not a fact that exchange No. 20 is always out of function. I am talking of exchange 20 which is in the trans-Yamuna area. When I ask them—I am not a technical man—they say that it was because of the cross-bar system. They have to be put under A condition; I do not know what it is. Their difficulty is that because the exchange is located in the area of U.P. State. Electricity does not go there from Delhi and power collapse is much more in U.P. So they are suffering. So I would request you—rather ask you—to see how you can mend it. Can you connect it by an electric transmission line from Delhi into the State of U.P.

Now I proceed to exchange No. 58. It has similar complaints.

Then you take exchange 85, that is, Ghaziabad Exchange. The other day, the D.M., Ghaziabad wanted to contact me; I also wanted to contact him and exactly for three days we could not contact each other. The hon. Minister while speaking on Calcutta said that most of the cross bar problems are due to thefts. I would like to know how many cases of theft have come to his notice in Delhi? Because I am afraid there is no such thing like that in Delhi I do not see any cases of thefts in Delhi; I have not seen any such press reports during the past few months that the collapse had been due to any theft of cables. I am not making a complaint but I am bringing to your notice one very funny example. I rang up one number; I did not get it. I rang up another number; I did not get that. Then I rang up 199. They said the numbers were out of order. Again I rang up 199 and got the same reply. Then I asked: Do you know whose numbers are they? These are Minister's numbers. And immediately I got the line. But it was not in your case; it was some other Minister.

Then I give you another case. My colleague, Mr. Jagannathrao Joshi requested for a second telephone in Delhi itself. I may recall that Mr. Jagannathrao Joshi is elected from Delhi and as such he has got the right to have two telephones. If a Member is elected from some other State, he gets one for his home State and one in Delhi. Since he was elected from Delhi, he wanted to have the second telephone at the BJP's office, which is his office also. He got a reply from your Secretariat saying that he could not get another telephone in Delhi and that they have to apply for it separately. This was the reply he got.

Now I tell you another thing. I got a telephone bill last year, that means in October—or September, 1979. I wrote to the Secretariat, to your Liaison Officer to please get it checked because it was inflated bill. There was no response. I again wrote to the Liaison Officer; then I wrote to Secretary General and he passed it on to the appropriate people. It is now more than 7 months that, I have received no reply as to what they have done. This is the efficiency.

Another thing: You see the telephone directory. There are classified advertisements. They look funny. I cannot find any number in the classified advertisements. It is almost like a cinema advertisement . . .

(Time bell rings).

SHRI SITARAM KESRI: Telephone is ringing here.

SHRI JAGDISH PRASAD MATHUR: I am completing you need not disturb me.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Please conclude now.

SHRI JAGDISH PRASAD MATHUR: Lastly, Sir, I would like to point out that a working group was appointed in 1975. Among other things, this working group made some

[Shri Jagdish Prasad Mathur]

recommendations in regard to the printing of telephone directory. I leave the question of directory apart. I would like to know what are its recommendations and what is being done in regard to those recommendations.

SHRI C. M. STEPHEN: On billing?

SHRI JAGDISH PRASAD MATHUR: This was a working group on all things. I would like to know about the recommendations of this working group.

Lastly, I read in a Newspaper that it has been decided that the widows of the senior officers will be given telephone. This was the decision. I have read this in your report. Do not be aghast. This is in your report. I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether he will extend this concession to the Members of Parliament and Members of State Assemblies, i.e. whether the relations of the deceased legislators or their next of kin would get a telephone. Or, is it only restricted to the Government officers? Have I made my point clear? Your decision, as per the report published by your department, is that in case of the death of an officer, his wife will get precedence. Will it be applicable to MPs and MLAs also?

SHRI C. M. STEPHEN: Sir, most of the questions do not relate to the question of deterioration which is the subject-matter of this Calling Attention Motion. He has raised the question in regard to two telephones for one Member of Parliament at the same place. I would like to inform the hon. Member that the Lok Sabha Secretariat have not been able to settle this question. I do not know about the position in the Rajya Sabha Secretariat. Now, a Member of Parliament is entitled to two telephones, one at his constituency and one at Delhi.

SHRI JAGDISH PRASAD MATHUR: His constituency is Delhi.

SHRI C. M. STEPHEN: He wants both the telephones in Delhi.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: He is a Member from Delhi.

SHRI C. M. STEPHEN: If he is a Member from Delhi, I do not think, there will be any difficulty at all. In regard to this question, I have taken a decision and I have passed an order that if a Member wants two telephones, anywhere in the country, he should be given subject to a final decision by the Lok Sabha or the Rajya Sabha Secretariats. As the decision was not forthcoming, tentatively I have passed an order that if a Member wants two telephones, wherever he wants them, he should be given. There should be no difficulty as far as this is concerned.

As far as the trans-Jamuna area is concerned, the problem is partly what the hon. Member has said. There is the electricity problem. This is in the U.P. area. As far as I know, the Delhi Electricity people are prepared to give power for the exchange provided the U.P. Government agrees to that. I have taken up this matter with the U.P. Government, for an arrangement so that the Delhi Electricity people may be permitted to give power for the exchange. Now, as far as the problem in regard to the trans-Jamuna and the Ghaziabad areas is concerned, it is cable. Finally, it comes to that. Now, we are laying co-axial cables. A very high-power cable system is coming up. This is being laid. This will be done by December. It is our calculation that the problem with respect to these areas will be solved by the time this is laid. Now, in regard to the cable collapse, I have already mentioned. Even in an area like Hauz Khas, where, everything was being corrected, suddenly, about thousand metres were taken away by somebody. They were digging. They found the soil very attractive. They struck away and about a thousand telephone lines went out of order. I said that whenever this is happening, we should go to the Press and announced it over the Radio, so that the blame may not come to us, so that the people may

know this is what has happened and they may not expect the connection for sometime. This procedure would be followed so that the subscribers may know what is happening and they may stand warned. This is all I have to say about this.

In regard to the directory, a committee is going into the whole question. The question whether we should have advertisements at all is a matter which is being considered. As far as the classified part is concerned, this is not merely advertisement, but this is intended to help people who would like to get into contact with particular types of business. Hence, we may keep the classified part of it. In regard to the advertisement part, we are inclined to give it away because of the bulk of the directory. After all, our responsibility is only to give the numbers of the subscribers. The other we are adding for their convenience. The question whether we should take over the burden and carry on is being currently gone into. The question whether we should have an advertisement section at all is being currently gone into. The question whether we are going to keep the advertisements in the directory is being gone into. This is all I have to say.

श्री शिव चन्द्र झा : उपसभापति महोदय कृपया के बारे में बातें उठाई गईं और दिल्ली के मुताबिक 30 तारीख, यानी परसों, बाबू कार्तिक ओराव का जवाब हुआ। दिल्ली की गड़बड़ियों के बारे में उन्होंने कबूल किया। अब मैं बिहार और नार्थ बिहार के मुताबिक उठाना चाहता हूँ। जब कभी मैंने मधुबनी को टेलीफोन किया है, जब कभी मैं मधुबनी लगाता हूँ, पटना के आपरेटर से जवाब आता है, दो घंटे के बाद, पटना से आगे लाइन खराब है। फिर थोड़ी देर बाद आता है -- पटना से आगे लाइन खराब है। फिर पटना से आगे हफ्तों, महिनो यही होता है। आदमी परेशान हो जाता है कभी वाढ़ आती है। लेकिन हमेशा यही कहते हैं

कि पटना की लाइन खराब है। एक घटना मैंने रंगे हाथ पकड़ी ये लोग जो पटना एक्सचेंज में हैं--दिल्ली में तो ये लोग काम करते नहीं हैं, इन्डि शियेन्ट है, लगा दिए हैं, गप्पें करते हैं, चाय पीते रहे और दो घंटे बाद कह दिया लाइन खराब है। अभी बटन दबाया और फोटो से तो देख नहीं सकते हैं। रंगे हाथ कैसे पकड़ा बता रहा हूँ। मैंने मधुबनी लगाया कुछ देर बाद उन्होंने कहा, पटना से आगे लाइन खराब है। फिर उसके बाद एक ट्रंक काल आ गयी, मधुबनी से आया उसी दिन थोड़ी देर बाद मैंने बात की। हम कहते थे कि यह कैसे आ गया, मुझ को तो कहा था लाइन खराब है, फिर मधुबनी से टेलीफोन कैसे आ गया? मैंने बातचीत की, उसके बाद दिल्ली एक्सचेंज वाला या वाली कहती है कि पटने से आगे लाइन खराब है। मैंने कहा, अभी मैंने मधुबनी से बात की है, मधुबनी से कैसे यहाँ आ गया दिल्ली, मैंने कहा दिल्ली से मैंने अभी किया तो कहां लाइन खराब है। यह कितना हास्यास्पद है?

श्री उपसभापति : आपने कोई कम्प्लेंट नहीं किया?

श्री शिव चन्द्र झा : मैंने लिखित बाबू सी० एम० स्टीफन को चिट्ठी दी है। तीन दिन से मैं लगा रहा था, फलानी तारीख को मुझ से कहा जाता है कि नहीं मधुबनी से लाइन है। आप दोनों जगह चैक करें। इक्वायरी करें क्या बात है। इससे बात साफ हो जाती है कि ये टेलीफोन एक्सचेंज वाले किस तरह की गड़बड़ी करते हैं, सुस्ती करते हैं।

मेरा सवाल है कि ट्रंक लाइन में, जहाँ आटोमेटिक सिस्टम है--जहाँ तक उसके कैबल का और ह्यूमैन एलीमेंट का सवाल है--उसकी डायरेक्ट लाइन को अप-टू-डेट करने के लिए वार फूटिंग पर करने के

[श्री शिव चन्द्र झा]

लिए कोई योजना है क्या ताकि आप एक्सचेंज को इफिशियेंट बना सकें ?

दूसरा मेरा सवाल यह है कि जिस जिला सेंटर में डाइरेक्ट डाएलिंग, आटो-मेटिक ट्रंक काल को व्यवस्था नहीं है, जिसमें हमारा मधुबनी भी है जहां डाईरेक्ट डाएलिंग सिस्टम नहीं है, उन सब जिला हड क्वार्टर को दिल्ली से डाइरेक्ट-डाएलिंग की व्यवस्था आप शीघ्रान्ति-शीघ्र करेंगे . . . (Time bell rings) . . .

ताकि ह्यूमन एलिमेंट के कारण से जो गड़बड़ी होती है वह नहीं होगी। यह तो शक नहीं होगा कि जहां यह बैठा हुआ है, बैठा हुआ है, हमारे लगाए नहीं लग रहा है, तो डाइरेक्ट डाएलिंग हंडक्वार्टर से हो जाएगा—इसकी योजना है या नहीं ?

दूसरे, मधुबनी टेलीफोन एक्सचेंज के बारे में (Interruptions) .. मधुबनी टेलीफोन एक्सचेंज स खास करक इन्क्वायरी करा दें।

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: You mean district headquarters or State headquarters—how is it possible? This relates specifically to Calcutta, and you are talking of other parts of the country.

श्री शिव चन्द्र झा : अदर पार्ट्स आफ द कंट्री है। अच्छा आप सुनिये। कलकत्ता के लिए तो है। उपसभापति महोदय टेलीफोन एक्सचेंज की जो शिकायत है (Interruptions) आप इन्क्वायरी कराएंगे।

चौथा और आखिरी सवाल है कि—यह विषय शायद आपका हो भी नहीं सकता लेकिन आप ही का है—सिविलियन परपज के लिए नागरिकों के इस्तेमाल के लिए हो। एक तो यों हो टेलीफोन की व्यवस्था खराब है, रेडियो टेलीफोन सिविल इस्तेमाल के लिए करने की व्यवस्था को आप बढ़ावों ऐसी आपकी कोई नीति या कार्यक्रम है कि नहीं ? ये 4 सवाल हैं।

You want the questions to be repeated in English? I can repeat them one by one.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: No, no. You have done it. He has heard them.

SHRI C. M. STEPHEN: With respect to the telephone call that he attended to, if he will give me all the details, I will investigate it and give a complete report. At what time it was put through, at what time it fructified etc. if he will give me all that information, I will have it gone through. I will request him to give me the details and I will give him the detailed information of what really happened. (Interruptions). I request you to give me the details.

As far as our policy about STD is concerned, you can get it only through automatic exchanges. Even if there are such exchanges, there is another instrument necessary to get the STD arrangement through. Our policy is to connect all the State capitals with Delhi and all the district headquarters with the State capitals. And that programme has gone through in a big way. There are a large number of district headquarters still remaining to be covered. This is the policy which we have laid down and we are proceeding according to that. That depends on the manual system and the automatic system.

SHRI SHIVA CHANDRA JHA: What about making the operators do their work efficiently.

SHRI C. M. STEPHEN: I must thank the hon. Member for giving me the advice that I must make the operators work efficiently. I could not have got a more salutary advice and it can be accepted without qualification.

SHRI SYED SHAHEDULLAH (West Bengal): I shall not repeat the reports of trouble that we are suffering because that will take time. That, however, does not mean that I have

not got my own experience. From my experience, I will tell you something about the internal working of the Telephone Department. When I became a Member of the House, a few young people came to me in Calcutta and told me that they had undergone training at Jabalpur and the Government had undertaken great expenditure for that purpose and also given them work after training. But suddenly they were told that they were surplus and they were put out of occupation. It so happened that I was also a member of the Consultative Committee attached to the Ministry of Communication and I raised the matter there. I enquired and I understood that there were some vacancies in the West Bengal Department and at Calcutta also. I thought if there were vacancies why these people were considered as surplus. For some time they remained without employment after the Government had incurred so much expenditure on their training and kept them employed for some time. I was surprised and I wrote to the Secretary, P&T Board. He informed me that he was taking action. He contacted the department at Calcutta and immediately within a month all those 38 people got their employment and the vacancies were filled. That means there was total absence of coordination between the different departments. There was a department which was looking for people for the vacancies to be filled up and the Government had trained these people at considerable expenditure; yet they were unemployed for some time. Unless the Union had brought it to my notice, this thing would have gone on for some time.

Secondly—this is also from my personal experience—I was going in Calcutta. In my neighbourhood, some people were digging. I just stood to find out what they were digging. Then from the talks I could guess that they did not know where the line to a certain number lay. That gentleman was known to me and because I was living in that neighbourhood I knew the lines sufficiently well because I

had earlier seen someone digging for the line there. Then I told them not to dig there and I would show them where the line was. When I showed them they dug it out and the line was set right. Then I learnt from them that there was nothing in the headquarters to point out which line was connected to which house and that the maps in the headquarters do not clearly show these points. What I mean to say is this. These are not the faults of the workers. Generally it is said that the workers are not doing their work, the subordinate employees are not doing their work. But it is due to a total absence of organisation and co-ordination among the different departments. From my own experience I have found that the internal cables department and the external cables department are at loggerheads. Somebody says it is an internal complaint and somebody else says it is an external complaint and all the time the trouble is there. Now there is absence of co-ordination among the different Engineering Departments. So things go on like this and, ultimately, in the absence of administrative efficiency, the blame is laid on the man who is digging there or the man who is attending to the exchange—subordinate staff. The entire thing is due to the absence of organisation among the top officers. Some speakers have already said that they multiply in numbers but not in quality. There is an absolute fall in quality. As the number grows, so the quality falls.

Then there is the question of materials also. For instance, polythene has been introduced. Now what happens? If there is a leak in the polythene somewhere, it will not be known and it goes on and on, spoiling the entire cable in a line. I understand that there are different processes which could reduce this trouble, but who is going to inquire about it? No body! The thing is, the Engineer who brings in this thing somehow or other handles it and makes a little money for himself. Probably he is

[Shri Syed Shahedullah.]

advising them to use this sort of thing. This may be there. It is because there is huge corruption in the Telephones Department. So, the materials selected also are of such quality which leads to expenditure on the part of the Government. And corruption is advantageous to them.

Sir, this entire question of corruption arises from cables. This is one thing which is very peculiar to us. I am not in the Telephones Union or in the Telephone Department. If you look at it, it is an interesting subject. Calcutta people who are acquainted with copper trade and all these things have a story to say. The story among them is that if you want to find a corrupt officer, look for the man who is very obedient to the Government. So far as political alliance is concerned, whichever Government is there it does not matter. Today it is this Government, tomorrow it is that Government. You will find that such a man is corrupt. He howls that labourers are on strike, they are fighting and they are corrupting the whole administration. He says that they are not doing work according to their orders. This sort of thing goes on and he brings it to the notice of the higher-ups, the superiors and ultimately the Ministers here. At the same time he is organising, at the bottom, blackleg workers who break the strikes and so on. He is the man who is absolutely organising the corruption line, and I do not know how far it reaches the top. At least, this is the line of corruption from top to bottom.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Now please conclude.

SHRI SYED SHAHEDULLAH: And one point about complaints. When a man complains, the complaint is not even acknowledged. Even a written complaint is not acknowledged. It is acknowledged only in the General Manager's house. It is very unfortunate that the complaints are not acknowledged. If there were an

acknowledgement by the exchange, it could be produced and it could be pointed out that on such and such date the complaint was made but the work has not been done.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: That will do.

SHRI C. M. STEPHEN: My friend has pointed out certain aspects of administration. As I said in reply to a previous question, these are matters which are very frequently aired. They have certainly come to our notice. These are all general matters. If any specific matters are given to us, we will look into them. The suggestion is that the functioning must be improved. These are all matters which have been taken note of. That is all I can say.

SHRI R. RAMAKRISHNAN (Tamil Nadu): Mr. Deputy Chairman, Sir, I do not know whether it is because Mr. Stephen comes from the South that I will give him bouquets for the functioning of the telephones in Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Kerala. I do not know about Andhra Pradesh. Perhaps there is a lot of *garbar*. I want to bring to his attention one thing. Nowadays horse races have become a very big business and it is dependent on the phones. A hot line communication is there between one centre and the other. Now, talking about Calcutta, the day before yesterday there were some horse races going on there, for which a lot of betting was going on at Madras, Bangalore, Bombay and other places. The hot line failed. It caused a lot of revenue loss to the Government by way of loss of taxes. At least the hot-line communication system for which the Department gets a very good amount by way of remuneration should be kept alive. This is one thing which I would like to bring to Mr. Stephen's attention.

SHRI C. M. STEPHEN: I have taken note of the suggestion.