

Applications pending for new telephone connections in Dakshina Distt. Karnada

963. SHRI B. IBRAHIM: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the number of applications pending for new telephone connections in Dakshina Karnada District;

(b) if so, what are the reasons for the delay in giving connections; and

(c) what steps are being taken to give connections?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI C. M. STEPHEN): (a) There are 2259 applications for telephone connections on the waiting list at present (31-5-80), in Dakshin Karnada (South Canara) district of Karnataka.

(b) The department is not yet in a position to provide telephone connections on demand because of limited investable resources and switching equipment available.

(c) The existing telephone exchanges are being expanded and new ones are being opened.

Problems of cocoa growers

964. SHRI B. IBRAHIM: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the problems faced by the cocoa growers recently; and

(b) if so, what steps Government propose to take to redress the grievances of cocoa growers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI R. V. SWAMINATHAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) To overcome the present difficulty of marketing of cocoa beans faced by the growers, the Kerala Gov-

ernment have nominated the Kerala State Cooperative Marketing Federation as the agency to purchase wet cocoa beans from individual farmers.

The Government of India have signed an agreement with the FAO for the services of an Expert to advise on the improvement of on-farm processing of cocoa beans, to enable cocoa growers to produce good quality beans.

Inadequate telephone service at Bhiwandi in Maharashtra

965. SHRI PANDURANG DHARMAJI JADHAV: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the telephone service in Bhiwandi township in Maharashtra is totally unsatisfactory;

(b) what are the reasons of defective service of telephones there;

(c) what steps are taken to redress the complaints to streamline telephone service;

(d) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to construct a separate telephone exchange at Bhiwandi; and

(e) what steps Government are taking to extend local service between Bombay and Bhiwandi as early as possible?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI C. M. STEPHEN): (a) and (b) No, Sir. The telephone service in Bhiwandi is not unsatisfactory. Some difficulty is however experienced due to heavy overhead alignments.

(c) The overhead lines are being progressively replaced by underground cables to reduce the incidence of faults.

(d) Yes, Sir. A plot of land has been acquired and the construction of a building for the new exchange has been planned in the sixth five year plan.

(e) There is no such proposal under consideration.