

(a) whether it is a fact that the dak is abnormally delayed in reaching the destinations;

(b) whether it is also a fact that previously it used to take one day only to reach Madras, Bangalore, Calcutta etc., now the time taken is 48 to 72 hours; and

(c) what are the reasons therefor and what steps Government propose to take to tone up the working of the postal department in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI NARHARI PRASAD SUKHDEO SAI): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) The Postal Department is utilising all the available flights for conveyance of mails for Madras, Bangalore and Calcutta etc. If the letters are posted in a metropolitan city in time for the connecting flights these are delivered on the next day in the metropolitan city of destination. The Night Air Service which operated till 1973 was more advantageous than the existing evening flights.

The postal departmental carries out a continuous monitoring to improve the transmission of mails.

Contractors for cleaning cobwebs on telegraph and telephone wires and poles

1868. **SHRI PRANAB CHATTERJEE:** Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Department of Posts and Telegraphs engage contractors for cleaning cobwebs on telegraph and telephone wires and poles;

(b) if so, what is the amount spent in cleaning these cobwebs under each Post and Telegraph Circle during the years 1977-78 and 1978-79; and

(c) what are the names of the contractors?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI NARHARI PRASAD SUKHDEO SAI): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Retirement age of officers in I.T.I.

1869. **SHRI JAGJIT SINGH ANAND:** Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the age of retirement of officers in the Indian Telephone Industries Ltd. both in the case of indirectly recruited or those taken on deputation and later on absorbed permanently;

(b) whether it is a fact that these officers are being given extension of service beyond the retiring age of 58 either by re-employment or otherwise; if so, what are the reasons therefor;

(c) whether it is also a fact that this tendency blocks the chances of promotion of junior officers; and

(d) if so, what action Government propose to take to stop this practice?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI NARHARI PRASAD SUKHDEO SAI): (a) The normal age of retirement of all officers in the Indian Telephone Industries Ltd., including those taken on deputation and later on absorbed permanently in services of the Company, is 58 years.

(b) Extension of service beyond the age of 58 is given in a few cases where such extension is absolutely in the interest of the Company and where suitable replacements are not immediately available within the Company.

(c) As extensions beyond 58 years are given only where immediate replacements are not available within the company, such extensions do not generally block the chances of promotion of junior officers.

(d) Does not arise.