

(b) During the above period an average of about 800 cases were referred to the Ministry annually.

(c) In the case of an application endorsed with Verification Certificate from a competent authority passport is issued within a fortnight. In other cases the time taken on an average is eight weeks.

(d) No, Sir.

(e) and (f) There is already the system of informing an applicant when his passport is ready if a self-addressed postcard is provided by him. Passports are also sent to the holders if registration postal charges are pre-paid.

(g) The functioning of the Regional Passport offices is kept under constant review and the procedures are revised as and when necessary. Staff strength is being increased.

#### Central assistance to Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh for National Highways

\*390. SHRI SAWAISINGH SISODIA :

SHRIMATI LAKSHMI KUMARI CHUNDAWAT :

SHRI MAHENDRA BAHADUR SINGH :

Will the Minister of SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT be pleased to state the amount of Central assistance sought by the Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh Governments for developing and maintaining National Highways during the last three years, year-wise, and the actual amount allocated thereof?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT (DR. G. S. DHILLON) : A statement giving the required information is laid on the Table of the Sabha. [See Appendix XCVII, Annexure No. 82]

#### Extra Departmental Delivery Agents in the P & T Department

903. SHRI BAPURAOJI MAROTRAOJI DESHMUKH : will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) What is the monthly expenditure on account of pay and allowances of Extra-Departmental Delivery Agents working in the Posts and Telegraphs Department;

(b) whether any fresh measures have been taken to improve their remuneration; and

(c) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (DR. SHANKER DAYAL SHARMA) : (a) The average monthly expendi-

ture on account of payment of remuneration to the Extra-Departmental Delivery Agents was Rs. 58,94,086 during the financial year 1975-76.

(b) and (c) Yes, Sir. The minimum and maximum limits of remuneration payable to the Extra-Departmental Delivery Agents are periodically revised. Two revisions with effect from 1st September, 1973 and subsequently with effect from 1st September, 1975 as indicated below have taken place :

	Upto 31-8-73	from 1-9-73	from 1-9-75
	Rs. P.	Rs. P.	Rs. P.
Minimum	55.50 p.m.	60.50p.m.	75.00p.m.
Maximum	77.50 p.m.	85.00p.m.	105.00p.m.

#### Houses for Employees in P and T Department

904. SHRI BAPURAOJI MAROTRAOJI DESHMUKH : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that class III and Class IV employees of the Posts and Telegraphs Department have recently made a demand that Government should construct more houses for them in order to solve their housing problems; and

(b) if so, what action Government have taken in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (DR. SHANKER DAYAL SHARMA) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) With the funds allotted for this purpose, it is proposed to construct 6900 quarters in the 5th Plan for the staff. 1000 have already been constructed and the balance is proposed to be constructed during the remaining period of the Plan.

#### Telephone Connections

905. SHRI SANAT KUMAR RAHA : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) the requirement of new telephone connections in the country at present;

(b) the State-wise number of telephone connections installed during the year 1975-76; and

(c) what is the percentage of increase in telephone connections during the last three years?