

EXPANSION OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS

*689. SHRI KRISHAN KANT† :
SHRI R. P. SINHA :

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have finalised any scheme for expansion of Telecommunications during the Fourth Five Year Plan Period; and

(b) if so, what targets have been fixed?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI I. K. GUJRAL) : (a) No, Sir. We had submitted certain proposals for consideration of the Planning Commission. They have felt that the proposals are rather high keeping in view the constraints of total resources and have suggested scaling down the targets. This is being examined.

(b) A statement giving the targets proposed earlier is placed on the table of the Sabha. These may, however, have to be scaled down substantially.

STATEMENT

TARGETS PROPOSED FOR TELECOMMUNICATIONS, IV PLAN

Local Telephones	. 15 lakhs
Trunk auto exchanges	40,000 lines.
Coaxial cable systems	10,000 route Kms.
Microwave systems	. 12,000 route Kms.
Cable carrier systems	2,400 channels.
Open wire carriers	. 10,000 channels.
Teleprinter Exchanges	20,000 lines.
Rural Combined Offices	. . . 4,000 lines.
Long distance Public Call Offices	. 4,000 lines.

These proposals had been submitted in September, 1968 to the Planning Commission. An outlay of Rs. 846

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Krishan Kant.

crores was envisaged. However, in view of overall constraint of financial resources, the targets as well as the financial outlay may have to be scaled down substantially.

SHRI KRISHAN KANT : Sir, may I know from the Government, in order to meet the rate of growth of 5 per cent in agriculture and 7 per cent in industry, whether they have worked out how many telephones will be required to meet that growth and whether they will be able to achieve that target? Secondly, along with this, may I know what is the backlog for which telephones have to be given? And with this present rate if you do not agree to that, how many people will there be on the waiting list after five years?

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL : Sir, we have worked out a paper that if there is a growth at the rate of 6 per cent in industry, obviously the demand for telephones will go up in the same proportion, because we have visualised that industrial activity is linked to a great extent with telecommunications. Keeping that in view, Sir, our estimate was that by the end of the Fourth Plan period the total number of telephones required in this country would be 71 lakhs, and at the moment we have about 11 lakh working connections. It is our estimate that by the time the Fourth Plan starts in the next year, the total connections being 11 lakhs, there will be a gap of over 59 lakhs if industries keep up 5 to 6 per cent rate of growth. We have already worked out that if we can keep up this present growth of demand that is 16.3 per cent compound, then the total demand at the end of the Fourth Plan would be 47 lakhs. That also needs that we should be able to provide about 36 lakh telephones during the Fourth Plan period. But the difficulties do remain, and our resources being what they are, suggestions have been made by us to the Planning Commission that we should be able to provide about 15 lakhs of telephones which leaves a substantial gap; but since 15 lakhs may not be possible, it seems the Planning Commission is thinking in terms of 6 lakh telephones. So, compared to 71 lakh telephones based on 6 per cent growth we will be able to give only 17 lakhs in all.

SHRI KRISHAN KANT : May I know from the Government whether the production capacity of the Indian Telephones and Cables Ltd. at present, according to the Government, will be able to fulfil the targets? What is their present production and what will be required and how will they fulfil the gap in regard to telephones and cables? They were thinking of raising public bonds to finance the telephone expansion. It is still there? Thirdly 20,000 teleprinter exchanges are proposed according to the statement. May I know in order that the teleprinted facilities may be available to small papers so that they may not be killed by the monopoly papers, whether this target will be maintained and even extended so that a number of small papers are also covered?

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL : Taking the last point first, the main point is whether teleprinters are meant for small papers or small scale industries, it depends on what is our total outlay in the Fourth Plan. The 20,000 mentioned is based on the assumption that the Planning Commission is willing to allot us the amount of the order of Rs. 900 crores for the Fourth Plan but if that is scaled down, not only the telephone connections will be scaled down but even teleprinters will also be scaled down. Therefore we will decide after the allotment is known, how much can go round. Even now we are willing to give preference to the smaller papers for teleprinters if they choose to have those connections. So far as the manufacturing capacity is concerned, based on our estimate of 15 lakh telephones and switching equipments, our estimate is, the need will be Rs. 183 crores worth of goods and out of this with the present factory plus the one factory which we plan to have, we should be able to manufacture goods worth Rs. 110 crores. Similarly in transmission equipment the ITI will manufacture Rs. 26 crores and our total requirements will be of Rs. 78 crores. Even if we increase it to Rs. 38 crores, the gap will be of Rs. 40 crores. In Cables also the total required will be 80,000 KM and in the two factories—the one working and the one that we visualise to put up—we will get roughly 40,000 KM leaving a gap of 40,000 KM. About floating public bonds, one of the proposals suggested to the Planning Commission is that we should be in a position to raise funds from

the market. The Planning Commission has not yet come to any decision.

SHRI G. RAMACHANDRAN : In view of what the Minister has said that there is a very heavy demand for telephones and we are unable to cope up with the demand, will he examine the possibility of instituting an enquiry into the superfluity of the telephones in many of the public and private establishments—there are too many in many of them—so that there might be a better distribution of the available telephones? I have seen this in many public and private establishments . . .

SHRI ARJUN ARORA : Four telephones on each Minister's table.

SHRI G. RAMACHANDRAN : I am not complaining about the Ministers.

SHRI DAHYABHAI V. PATEL : You shut your eyes about the wrong things done by the Ministers. Are they different?

SHRI G. RAMACHANDRAN : You may have your attack in your turn. I am mentioning the general practice. I mentioned the public sector, I mentioned the private establishments. There is a terrific superfluity in many of these, even in New Delhi and round about and in the capital of India. Make an enquiry and find out whether there could be a better distribution of telephones.

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL : My friend has expressed a very noble sentiment but one point has to be kept in view. We are a telephone giving organisation and we want to encourage the use of telephones but since there is shortage, when any public organisation, whether private or public, takes a telephone, we assume they do so according to their needs. Our estimate is that for a good efficient service of a telephone connection, there should not be more than 20 calls per day and in the European countries and in America where the phone is more efficient, the average calls are 10 per day per telephone. In India they are more than 30. That is one of the reasons why the telephone service is not as efficient. Therefore our effort should be to give more connections so that the entire system does not get bogged down but if my friend wants that we should look into the public enterprises and the governmental organisations and how many connections they should have, we will do it.

सरदार रघुबीर सिंह पंजहजारी : क्या माननीय मंत्री जी यह बतलायेंगे कि एग्रीकल्चरल प्रोग्राम को ध्यान में रखते हुये देहात में कितने टेलिफॉन्स दे रहे हैं और इंडस्ट्रीज को कितने देंगे और उस का परसेंटेज क्या होगा ।

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL : It is for the first time that we are paying attention to this aspect. I must confess that till now it has been a mostly urban biased telephone service. We are now trying to introduce the rural bias also because we are keen that the farms must get modernised. For this we are trying now a scheme. We have now evolved a radio telephone district so that we are able to connect the far-off farms by telephone. Secondly, we are working on a pilot project in Maharashtra, to have rural telephone exchanges. Our entire approach is that wherever modern farming was coming up and the farmer needs to connect the veterinary surgeons and other services, the telephone should be available to him at a reasonable cost.

SHRI ARJUN ARORA : May I know if the Minister is aware of the fact or rather he has not forgotten the fact that worst torture in the country today is the long-distance telephone call. If he cannot give adequate number of phones to people, can he improve the services in such a manner that the telephones service is more satisfactory and at least the long distance calls are not the torture that they are? Secondly, what is he doing to improve other avenues of communication? Take, for example, the delivery of dak in the rural area. There are still villages in the country where the dak is delivered only once a week and that too is not done very satisfactorily. May I know what he is going to do about that? He mentioned the good beginning made to provide some telephones to some fortunate people in some rural areas of some State but what is he doing or going to do to deliver dak, particularly in the rural areas, more quickly and more promptly? Thirdly, may I know whether he will arrange that the telegrams in Delhi are delivered during the day and not at night alone.

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL : So far as the first question is concerned regarding the trunk call difficulty, the Member, will appreciate that it is not so much because the service is not improved but

it is because the traffic has increased substantially, more than the service has improved. What we are doing is, in the last 2 years 8000 KM have been connected by micro-waves and another 8000 by coaxial cables. In the next plan, if finances permit, we intend adding 10,000 KMs of micro-wave and 12,000 coaxial cables.

Secondly, along with that Subscriber Trunk Dialling is being increased substantially, and with the substantial increase in Subscriber Trunk Dialling it is our aim that during the Fourth Plan forty per cent of the entire trunk traffic should be taken over by the subscriber Trunk Dialling.

Regarding postal improvement, Sir, I would like to submit to my friend to understand that when we became free we had about 20,000 post offices. Now we have 1,10,000 post offices. There are very few villages, if I may submit, which do not have daily dak service. And wherever daily dak service is not possible, it is because those villages are not adequately connected either by road or by rail. So therefore, wherever adequate communication facility is available, the dak is delivered daily and satisfactorily.

So far as delivery of telegrams at night is concerned, Sir, we are just now examining a scheme that people like Mr. Arjun Arora are not disturbed at night.

SHRI M. P. BHARGAVA : Why this partiality?

SHRI SUNDAR SINGH BHANDARI : The reply has taken more than ten minutes, Sir.

SHRI DAHYABHAI V. PATEL : The working of the Telephone Department in this country is a shame inasmuch as even after twenty years of independence in a large country like ours we have this sort of telephone service. What is the use of saying that after independence we have made so much progress? In other countries they have made much more progress in five years and seven years. Why does not the Government relax its monopolistic grip on the telephone industry so that telephones could be had everywhere? Why this Government wants to manufacture telephones itself? When it is not in a position to supply enough

instruments, enough equipment, why don't they take the help of or allow the State Governments to do it? And several State Governments will do it. Sir, the wrong policy of the Government is very evident from one simple thing. Now, telephones are required by industrial towns but there is a shortage of telephones there. The Government is setting up a telephone factory in Kashmir. I am not against the setting up of a factory in Kashmir. But, side by side, other factories are necessary in industrial towns where the telephones are absolutely necessary. It is a shame that Government does not open its eyes to this. Ministers have P.As. who can sit down for hours and go on dialling and telling the Trunk to give them the line clear messages. But what about ordinary people? Even Members of Parliament suffer for days together; you cannot get trunk telephone calls, even ordinary calls. When are they going to end this situation? And if you cannot manage it, give it over to people who can manage it. When do you propose to do it? What is the use of this swan song, singing every time that we are a large country, that after twenty years we had so much, so much? If you cannot manage it, give it over to people who can manage it, and let them do it. Why do you sit upon it like a dog in the manager and don't allow the country to progress?

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL : Sir, I am in agreement . . .

(Interruptions) 347

SHRI DAHYABHAI V. PATEL : I have not finished. Their public sector telephone industry is making hundred per cent profit for the poor service that they give. This is their greed and that is why progress is not made in the matter of telephone facility in the country.

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL : Sir, I am in agreement with my friend that there are some things which are a matter of shame. But the matter of shame is that we do not take pride in the growth of the country. The matter of shame is not that the country has not grown, and I make a bold claim that in telecommunication, this country has made progress more than any other country. Compared to the position obtaining before we attained independence in 1947, not only have we expanded many times,

we have more or less become self-sufficient not only in manufacturing but in research and development also, I would invite my friend to kindly visit sometime the communication facilities that we have provided and see them with an open heart, and then he will realise that the country which his father laid on sure foundation after independence is progressing as his father wished it to, and therefore we are proud that this country is progressing.

So far as the monopoly is concerned, Sir, it is the policy of this country, and correctly so, that communication should be a centralised subject, and even by decentralising it, by giving it to the States, the resources do not get multiplied. In the totality of plan, the Planning Commission, and this Parliament particularly, have to decide how much they will allocate to communication. If my friend and this House in its wisdom decide that more money should be spent on communication, there shall be more expansion. But I may assure him one thing, that in this country not only have we expanded, not only have we given better service, we are running one of the most sophisticated systems in the world today.

श्री राजनारायण : हमारा पाइंट आफ आर्डर है श्रीमान् ।

SHRI DAHYABHAI V. PATEL : He has not answered my question. Is their telephone industry not making hundred per cent profit? Profiteering and greed of the Government in this come in the way of progress. They are making hundred per cent profit on telephones.

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL : Let me remove this impression. (Interruptions) One minute, Mr. Rajnarain.

श्री राजनारायण : डाह्याभाई जी ज़रा हमारी बात सुन लें ।

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL : Just one point I would like to make.

श्री राजनारायण : हमारा पौइन्ट आफ आर्डर यह है श्रीमान्, कि कृपा कर आप हमको इस समय बतायें कि प्रश्न और प्रश्न का उत्तर

कैसे सुनियोजित हो, क्योंकि अब हमारे माननीय मंत्री जो "व्हाट आर दी सव्जेट्स आफ शेम" इस पर हमको यह बताना चाहते हैं कि इस देश के लिये लज्जा के विषय क्या क्या है। इस पर लेक्चर दे गये पांच मिनट। तो हमको एक घंटे का आप समय दें, हमें बताये कि इस देश के लिये लज्जा का विषय है कांग्रेस को सरकार, इस देश के लिये लज्जा का विषय है प्राइम मिनिस्टर पर होने वाला रोजाना खर्चा, इस देश पर लज्जा का विषय है गरीबी, इस देश में लज्जा है भुखमरी।

MR. CHAIRMAN: There is no point of order.

श्री राजनारायण : मैं आपसे रिक्वेस्ट कर रहा हूँ।

MR. CHAIRMAN: If you want, you may put a question. But there is no point of order.

श्री राजनारायण : तो हमारा सवाल यह है कि आप कृपा करके श्रीमान्, हमेशा के लिये एक व्यवस्था कर दे कि मंत्री लोग डेफिनिट, क्रेकट और छोटा उत्तर दिया करें। जब वह लेक्चर देते हैं तो प्रश्नकर्ता को भी लेक्चर करना चाहिये...

MR. CHAIRMAN: I expect questions also to put their questions briefly and I expect the Treasury Benches also to straight answer the questions.

श्री राजनारायण : तो हमारा सवाल यह है कि सरकार जब यह कहती है कि भारतवर्ष में टेलीफोन का एवरेज 30, और अमरीका में 10 काल का है, तो अगर सरकार के पास कोई आंकड़ा हो तो कृपा करके बताये कि इस समय भारतवर्ष में टोटल नम्बर आफ टेलीफोन कनेक्शन कितने हैं, और अमरीका में टोटल नम्बर कितने हैं, आबदी के मुताबिक क्या रेजियो है। दूसरा सवाल यह है कि क्या अब भी इस सरकार ने इस असंगति पर विचार किया कि क्यों दिल्ली से सीधा काल बनारस तक नहीं है और क्यों दिल्ली से सीधा काल पटना तक है। क्या सरकार इसकी जांच

करायेगी कि जो मशीन आई, शुरू शुरू में जो प्रस्ताव बना था वह दिल्ली से बनारस के लिये सीधे काल के लिये बना था, उसके लिये मशीन आई थी मगर बाद में चूकि संचार मंत्री महोदय पटना गये थे इसीलिये वह बनारस के लिये मशीन को उठाकर पटना के लिये लगा दिया गया और यह सत्य है। मैं चाहता हूँ सरकार इसकी जानकारी कराये।

SHRI I. K. GUJRAL: My hon. friend has mentioned about the total number of telephones. The total number of telephones in this country at the moment is in the proximity of thirteen lakhs—the number of telephones working—but the total number of direct telephone connections is in the proximity of eleven lakhs. The total number of telephones in America at the moment, for that I am not in a position to give the exact number but I will be in a position to give this information if my friend so needs.

So far as the S.T.D. to Patna and Banaras is concerned, I am not aware of such diversion of scheme, but I will look into it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Next question.

DR. RAM SUBHAG SINGH: Sir, I may be permitted to add, वह पटना के मंत्री संचार मंत्रालय के मंत्री नहीं रहे हैं और इस ढंग की जो व्यवस्था की गई है वह राजधानी के आधार पर की गई है, हर राजधानियों पर टेलीफोन लग रहे है...

श्री राजनारायण : यह क्या कहा जा रहा है समझ में नहीं आता।

(Interruptions)

डा० राम सुभग सिंह : पटना, अहमदाबाद और हर जगह टेलीफोन लाइन से जोड़ी जा रही है और राजनारायणजी का भी समय आयेगा तो बनारस को भी जोड़ दिया जायेगा।

श्री राजनारायण : श्रीमान्, पटना मानी बिहार है। श्री सत्यनारायण पहले थे, बाद में राम सुभग सिंह आए हैं।