

[Shri B. N. Datar.]

separated from the entire administration of the State. Therefore, the two questions have to be understood separately and only one question cannot be solved, perhaps to the detriment of the claims of others. But I would point out that we are anxious to consider this question as early as possible and we are desirous of having a solution that would be satisfactory to the claims of all concerned, that is, so far as the pay scales of the university teachers are concerned.

Then so far as educated unemployment is concerned, as I have pointed out, we are taking a number of steps. Naturally this is a problem which cannot be solved overnight. It is to be a graduated course extending over a number of years and in addition to what I have told the House I may point out here that the Government have planned six workshops and one of these would be inaugurated, it is believed, in the last week of this month by Shri Nandaji. Then three industrial estates are also planned and they would be opened very soon. Then I would also point out that we are taking certain steps not only for relieving unemployment among the educated unemployed but also others as well because they are also entitled to some consideration in this respect.

So, these are the various points, Sir, on which some reference was made by some hon. Members. My friend, Shri Ismail has raised larger questions, Sir, regarding the reorganisation, regarding what is going to happen so far as Malabar is concerned, as to how public opinion has to be associated with the administration during the short period after the formation of the Kerala State and the introduction of the popular Government after the general elections are held. So far as all these questions are concerned, I should like to counsel patience Sir, because we have to consider all these questions not separately but as parts of a joint whole. All these questions are being considered and I would point out to the hon. Member that attempts would be made, Sir, to avoid all hardships to the different persons concerned or the categories of persons concerned except to the extent it is unavoidable, and at the proper time, Sir, it would be clear to the hon. Members or to the others as to what the Government propose to do so far as the association of public opinion with the administration is concerned.

That also is only for a short period, Sir, and naturally at the end of it the elections would be held and, as I have stated, a popular Government would come in, and the moment the popular Government comes in, we shall be extremely happy to hand over the reins of administration to the first popular Ministry in the new State of Kerala.

Thank you, Sir.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The question is:

"That this House approves the continuance in force of the Proclamation issued by the President on the 23rd March, 1956, under article 356 of the Constitution, in relation to the State of Travancore-Cochin and approved by resolutions passed by the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha on the 29th March, 1956 and the 24th April, 1956, respectively."

The motion was adopted.

THE INDIAN POST OFFICE (AMENDMENT) BILL, 1956

THE MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY
OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI RAJ
BAHADUR): Sir, I beg to move:

"That the Bill further to amend the Indian Post Office Act, 1898, as passed by the Lok Sabha, be taken into consideration."

Sir, as the House may be aware, section 7 of the Indian Post Office Act, 1898, empowers the Central Government to fix the rates of postage and other sums to be charged in respect of postal articles sent by the inland post, by notification in the official Gazette. The limitation prescribed by the section is that such rates shall not exceed the rates set forth for each class of articles in the First Schedule of the Act. With the passing of the Indian Coinage (Amendment) Act, 1955, these rates of postage will stand automatically converted in terms of the decimal system of coinage with effect from 1st April 1957, the date for the introduction of the new coinage as notified by the Government in Notification No. S. R. O. 1119, dated 11th May. The effect of the new coinage is that 16 annas, 64 pice or 192 pies will

be equal to 100 Naye Paise. Postage rates or postage stamps for 3 pies, 6 pies, 9 pies, 1 anna and 2 annas will be equivalent to 1.5625, 3.125, 4.6875, 6.25 and 12.5 Naye Paise respectively. Section 14(2) of the Indian Coinage Act as amended by the 1955 Act lays down that fractions may be rounded off to the next higher Naya Paisa if they are more than 0.5 and ignored if they are up to 0.5. Now, this rounding off is permissible only at the time of tender of the existing coins at one transaction. In other words, section 14(2) does not permit rounding off in the case of rates expressed in Rules, Notifications, Enactments, etc. So in respect of postage, a new tariff has been proposed and that tariff is embodied in this Bill. A new Schedule to replace the existing First Schedule in the Act is proposed here and the principle that we have kept in view is that there should be an approximate equivalence between the proposed rates in terms of Naye Paise and the existing rates. In rounding off the figures it became inescapable for us to either increase or decrease the rates slightly in respect of these postage charges. In some cases these new rates exceed, the existing ones by fractions while in other cases they are less than the existing rates. They are either more or less than the maximum prescribed in the First Schedule in many cases, and hence the need arises to amend the Indian Post Office Act so that the existing First Schedule may be adjusted to the needs of the new decimal coinage system.

Sir, I would like to point out what will be the effect of the proposed rates and I will first refer to the articles on which there will be an increase in rates.

	Increase per cent.	Increase in terms of n.P.	Increase in term of pies
Letters not exceeding 1 tola.	4%	0.5	1
Single postcard	6.6%	0.3125	$\frac{1}{2}$
Reply postcard	6.6%	0.625	1.2
Registered Newspapers Single copy (up to 10 tolas).	28%	0.4375	1
Registered Newspaper packets (for every 5 tolas in excess of 10 tolas).	28%	0.4375	1

The decrease or reduction will be as follows :

	Decrease per cent.	Decrease in terms of n.P.	Decrease in term of pies
Letters weighing more than 1 tola for every 1 tola.	4%	0.25	$\frac{1}{2}$
Book, Pattern and Sample packets			
First 5 tolas.	4%	0.25	$\frac{1}{2}$
For every addition- al 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ tolas.	4%	0.125	$\frac{1}{4}$
Registered Newspapers posted singly :			
Exceeding 10 tolas but not exceeding 20 tolas.	4%	0.125	$\frac{1}{4}$
Exceeding 20 tolas-for every 20 tolas.	4%	0.125	$\frac{1}{4}$
Registered Newspaper packets-for the first ten tolas.	4%	0.125	$\frac{1}{4}$

Now, Sir, certain articles of stationery also will be affected. For example in the case of inland letter cards there will be an increase of 6.6 per cent. and in the case of Registration envelope it will be 1.5 per cent. And in terms of Naya Paisa the increase will be 0.625 and 1.125 respectively. It will thus be observed that the principle that we have kept in view, namely, of securing the most approximate equivalence between the existing rates and the proposed rates, has been maintained. Sir, the House is aware that for some time both the coinages will be in circulation side by side. The existing coins will go on with the new coins for about a period of three years, and the stamps also can be purchased in terms of either coinage.

I will now come to some of the main postal articles. Let us take the case of letters as perhaps it might be an instance where some explanation is needed. The new rate proposed is 13 Naye Paise and the existing rate is two annas which is equivalent to 12.5 Naye Paise and for every additional tola it will be 6 Naye Paise, though it is equivalent to 6.25 Naye Paise. Thus it will be observed that whereas in the first case there has been a slight increase of 0.5 Naya Paisa, in the latter case in the place of 6.25 Naye Paise we will

[Shri Raj Bahadur.]

he only charging 6 Naye Paise. The additional gain that would come out of this is Rs. 20·08 lakhs and the gain per letter will be about 0·3336 Naya Paisa. I think I should say something about why we have raised the ratio to 13 Naye Paise, and why we have not brought it down to 12 Naye Paise. If it is fixed at 12 Naye Paise, the loss that would result would be of the order of Rs. 40·12 lakhs. We know that the postal side of the Department has been running at a loss for a number of years and that is so, partly because of the enormous expansion that has taken place in recent years, particularly in rural postal facilities. We know that the number of post offices in the country has increased from about 22,000 in 1947 to about 56,000 in 1956. The enormous cost that this expansion has entailed upon the Department to provide services to our folk living in villages has to be borne and therefore we cannot devise any system of postage charges which will add to the already existing losses. So in order to avoid that loss of Rs. 40·12 lakhs we had to fix it at 13 Naye Paise.

SHRI KISHEN CHAND (Hyderabad): The hon. Minister said that the gain will be only Rs. 20 lakhs but he says that the loss will be Rs. 40 lakhs though it will be only half Naya Paisa more or half Naya Paisa less. How is it?

SHRI RAJ BAHADUR: Because it depends upon the letters sent. That is a matter for calculation.

Now, the postcard may also be taken. There also there is some increase. Nine pies are equivalent to 4·6875 Naye Paise and we have raised it to five Naye Paise. The total estimated loss in lowering the rate to four Naye Paise will be 42·08 lakhs of rupees. The loss already being incurred by the Department on account of the postcard traffic is of the order of Rs. 158 lakhs. The handling charges for one postcard are as much as 13·9 pies, while we charge only nine pies, and the result is that on every postcard the Department loses as much as 4·9 pies. That causes this accumulated loss of 158 lakhs. If we bring down the price further to 4 Naye Paise, instead of 4·6875 which is the equivalent of a pies, the loss will be 42·8 lakhs—and the total loss will mount too on this

particular item of postal article, and will be about 200·08 lakhs. So, it is obvious that we cannot embark upon a further reduction of the rate on postcards. On the other hand the rate proposed for local postcards will result in some further loss to us because 6 pies are equal to 3·125 Naye Paise, and we have reduced it to 3 Naye Paise for the local postcard; so this will result in a further loss to us which will be of the order of about—one lakh. It may perhaps vary from 1 to 5 lakhs. I might draw the attention of the House to another aspect of the matter. There are a large number of items like money orders, V. Ps., registration, etc., on which we are already losing heavily. Then, as a result of these adjustments now, the need for which arose out of the passing of this Indian Coinage (Amendment) Act, 1955, we would not like to lose further on a large number of articles.

Keeping everything in view this measure has been proposed. I think, Sir, I can commend the measure with confidence to the House.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Motion moved:

“That the Bill further to amend the Indian Post Office Act, 1898, as passed by the Lok Sabha, be taken into consideration.”

DR. RAGHUBIR SINH (Madhya Bharat): Mr. Deputy Chairman, the Bill before us is a very necessary one and as such nobody can have any complaint or any opposition to the same. There may be a few points of detail on which a person may disagree. To be frank I am not very happy over this 13 Naye Paise business, which is the rate decided upon for an envelope. Not because, Sir, I am superstitious, not because I resent the little increase it entails over the present charge for the same envelope. But I say this for a completely different reason which I want the hon. Minister to take note of. Probably he has not had the same experience and probably he may not be able to realise the difficulty that I have faced many times. I have dealt with many out of the way post offices and I have asked them for two annas stamps. Now there are post offices where these are not always readily available, and hence they have invariably given me four 6 pies stamps or two 1 anna stamps. Now I know fully well that the Postal Department are

printing postal stamps of 13 Naye Paise. But the chances are that many times either individuals may run short of its supply or the out of the way post offices will run short of supply of this particular stamp. This being the case, I would very much like to know as to how this much worth of postal stamps will be made up, because from what I see, Sir, stamps of the value, which will be ordinarily needed and hence readily available, will be of 13 Naye Paise, 6 Naye Paise, 3 Naye Paise and 2 Naye Paise, out of which again 2 Naye Paise stamps will be required only by persons or post offices dealing with registered newspapers. Therefore, ordinarily 2 Naye Paise stamps will not be supplied to ordinary post offices. The only stamps that the post offices may usually have are 13 Naye Paise, 6 Naye Paise and 3 Naye Paise. I will like to know from the hon. Minister how he will make up a total of 13 Naye Paise stamps when you have available only 6 and 3 Naye Paise stamps, because 2 Naye Paise stamps will not be supplied by those post offices where they are not used.

SHRI KISHEN CHAND: There are 5 Naye Paise stamps which are used for postcards.

DR. RAGHUBIR SINH: I may inform him that 5 Naye Paise stamps will be ordinarily sent only to those post offices where people are accustomed to use not the usual postcard which is sold by the Postal Department but where people use their own blank cards. In ordinary villages, in ordinary small towns, blank cards are not generally used and therefore the 5 Naye Paise stamps may not be sent to those post offices. I know the Postal Department does not supply stationery or other things to places where they are not used. For instance, I can say that 'express delivery' slips are not to be found in any small post office. So, Sir, I would like to know as to how he is going to make up a total of 13 Naye Paise stamps used on an envelope when there are no 13 Naye Paise stamps and also no 2 Naye Paise stamps.

I have got one more point to which I would like to draw the attention of my friend and that is this. I would like my friend to appreciate the point not merely because the customer is necessarily always right. There is no point saying that. The customer will not be satis-

fied by mere repetition of that truism. We do not resent a little increase in the postal charges but what we resent is the continued inefficiency in the Postal Department. The other day a friend of mine in the Constitution House told me that just for a general check-up he posted four letters addressed to himself at the Constitution House Post Office. Will you believe me, Sir, when I say that only three were delivered to him? One was lost. I can say that even express delivery letters are either lost and never delivered or are delivered very late. There have been reports of good many cases like this in Punjab. Then, Sir, incidentally this postcard was handed over to me this very morning while I was coming here. This was posted at Travancore on 31st August. It arrived at Delhi on 1st September. Will you believe me, Sir, when I say it was handed to me after six days? Why? Because even though Constitution House was written on it, the postal people sent it on to the Baroda House. How do I know? From the endorsement on it. It lay somewhere in Baroda House and it was again sent back and now after six days' delay this postcard has been received by me. So, it takes six days for a postcard to travel from Baroda House to Constitution House which is not more than a hundred yards or so distant, while it takes only one day for it to traverse the entire sub-continent from Travancore to New Delhi. I think that is a state of affairs that needs to be looked into and immediately remedied. Thank you.

SHRI KISHEN CHAND: Sir, this is a very necessary Bill, but I would like to draw the attention of the hon. Minister to two facts. Firstly, certain rates have been increased. The hon. Minister pointed out that the Department was losing money and therefore these rates were being raised. The Government has introduced the new coinage system with the idea of facilitating transactions, etc. But that is no reason why the postal rates should be increased and the general public should suffer.

Sir, letters and postcards are used by almost everybody in the country, and particularly postcards. The poor man who is now paying only three quarters of an anna for a postcard, or who is paying Re. 1 for more than 21 postcards, will have to pay Re. 1 for

[Shri Kishen Chand.]

only 20 postcards under the new system. I think that the hon. Minister will be well-advised to keep the postal charges for a postcard at 4 Naye Paise instead of 5 Naye Paise. After all, Sir, it will be only a small variation. These postcards are sent by air-mail, and if he reduces the weight of the postcard to some extent, it will be possible to carry more postcards by the aeroplane, and thereby, the charges for the transport of the postcards will be reduced. In this way he can reduce the loss to the Department, and so make it cheaper for the common man to use the postcard.

Then, Sir, another way in which he can reduce the loss to the Department is to do away with the local postcard altogether. After all, the local postcards are not used by the villagers or by the common man. The local postcards are used by big business houses in the shape of information or in the shape of advertisements. So, if he removes the local postcards which are not used by the common man and if he makes it a uniform rate of 4 Naye Paise for the postcard, whether local or outstation, and if he reduces the weight of the postcard, I am sure that the loss which he has pointed out in the delivery of postcards will be considerably reduced, and the villagers will benefit by paying only 4 Naye Paise instead of 4½ Naye Paise, which is the equivalent of the present charge.

Similarly, Sir, in the matter of letters, at the present rate of exchange, it should have been 12½ Naye Paise. Now we do not have any half Naye Paise coin. So, either it has to be reduced to 12 Naye Paise or it has to be raised to 13 Naye Paise. The hon. Minister pointed out that if it is raised to 13 Naye Paise, the income will be increased only to the extent of Rs. 20 lakhs, but if it is reduced to 12 Naye Paise, the loss will be to the extent of Rs. 40 lakhs. I do not know how he arrives at the figure of Rs. 40 lakhs as a loss to the Department. I thought that the loss would be just the same, i.e., Rs. 20 lakhs.

Here, I would suggest another alternative. After the passing of this Bill, it will come into operation on the 1st of April. We have referred to a Joint Select Committee another Bill pertaining to weights and measures. In all probability, that Bill will be passed very shortly, possibly before the 1st of April,

1957, as the Joint Committee is expected to report by the 20th of November. So my suggestion to the hon. Minister is this. Now he is passing the amending Bill, and probably when the weights and measures are also changed, he will have to come again to the House for passing another Bill. We are adopting international weights and measures which are existing at present. So, what is the harm in saying that instead of one tola it should be ten grams? Now one tola is equivalent to twelve grams, and if you bring it down to ten grams, the loss that you are likely to suffer by reducing the charge from 12½ Naye Paise to 12 Naye Paise will be more than compensated by a corresponding reduction in the weight to be allowed for that letter. If the letter exceeds ten grams, naturally some additional amount will have to be paid. As I pointed out before, all mail is carried by planes, and when it is carried by air, weight becomes a very important factor. We know, Sir, that for inland letters a special concession is allowed by the Government. At present, the inland letter charge is 1½ anna, whereas the letter charge is 2 annas. The reason for this difference is, that the inland letter is much lighter in weight, and the inland letters can be bound up in a small packet. So I suggest that the following provision should be substituted for the existing one.

"For a weight not exceeding ten grams... 12 Naye Paise," I think the Department will not lose much by this change, because the slight reduction in the charge will be compensated by the reduction in the weight of the letter. Similarly, Sir, the charge for the inland air-mail letter is 1½ anna. For that I have suggested 10 Naye Paise. Here the Department will gain, and in that way, the loss to be sustained by the Department in one case, will be compensated in another case.

Now, Sir, I come to the question of newspapers. Here the increase is tremendous. At present, a registered newspaper has to pay only a quarter anna, and now instead of that quarter anna, that same registered newspaper will have to pay two Naye Paise. That will indeed be a very heavy charge for it. As provided in the Bill, there are two categories as follows:

"For a weight not exceeding ten tolas	2 Naye Paise
For a weight exceeding ten tolas and not exceeding twenty tolas	3 Naye Paise"

I have suggested that the hon. Minister may show some concession in the case of small newspapers, say, two-sheet newspapers or one-sheet newspapers, which are very light. I have stated the figures in grams. I have suggested that for a weight not exceeding sixty grams, it should be one Naya Paisa, and for a weight exceeding sixty grams and not exceeding one hundred and twenty grams, it should be two Naye Paise. The hon. Minister can by all means put it in terms of tolas, if he does not like to put it in terms of grams. Sir, on the one hand, we find that the Government is trying to help the small regional language papers by giving them concessions through the price-page schedule, etc., and on the other hand, we find that they are being deprived of such concessions in this indirect way by raising the postal charges on these newspapers. I submit, Sir, that it is most unfair. Further, in the case of more than one copy of the same issue of a registered newspaper being carried in the same packet, the charge has been considerably increased, for which there is no justification at all. I therefore hope that the hon. Minister will carefully examine this matter and do something for the small newspapers.

Sir, I once more request him that all these weights in terms of tolas should be replaced by those in terms of grams. We are going to have the kilogram as our standard weight. And the hon. Minister may have to come again to this House for changing these things in terms of grams.

SHRI P. D. HIMATSINGKA (West Bengal): How will it be an improvement?

SHRI KISHEN CHAND: Well, it will be an improvement to the extent that another Bill will not be necessary.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Anyway, it is all premature now.

SHRI KISHEN CHAND: Sir, it is an international system. For the sale of electricity, etc., we are adopting the international unit. It is not part of our Constitution at present. There is nothing wrong in adopting an international unit. That will not go against our Constitution.

Similarly, Sir, in the matter of registration, the charge is very excessive. The hon. Minister has not stated any

details about registration. Probably it will come in some other amending Bill where he will provide for charges in respect of money-order and registration and so many other things of the postal department.

What is the point in not bringing it into this Bill and then coming forward later on with another Bill for regulating the rates about that also, because there also the rate charged is six annas? Six annas are now equivalent in exact measure to 37½ Naye Paise. The hon. Minister will have to make it either 37 or 38; in either case, he will have to take the permission of the Parliament. So, I do not see any reason why he has not introduced regulations about charges for money-orders, V.P.P., registration and so many other things of the Postal Department. They could easily have come in a consolidated Bill and they could have been provided for. With these words, I support the Bill, but I will move my amendments later on.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: We will have to finish this Bill by 4.45 P. M.

SHRI B. K. MUKERJEE (Uttar Pradesh): This is a very simple measure, and there has been no opposition, and nobody can oppose this measure, as it is a consequential amendment of the original Act. But since there have been some amendments suggested by my friend, Shri Kishen Chand, I am inclined to put forward my views also in this matter. Mr. Kishen Chand is an industrialist and he knows how his finished goods are to be priced, but unfortunately in this matter he brings forward a theory which is contradictory to his own. While we are discussing this Bill, I wish the Government had come forward with an amendment of their rate policy. Their rate policy in this regard is wrong, because the Postal Department sell their articles and their labour not at cost price but at a much lower price. Therefore, this was an occasion when they could have improved the situation but instead of that, they try to keep the same rates for all the articles that they have enumerated in this Bill. A further reduction is contemplated or suggested by Mr. Kishen Chand. I am opposed to that. I would like the hon. Minister to raise these rates, at least to supply them at cost price. They have about 54,000 post offices in this country, and a

[Shri B. K. Mukerjee.]

majority of them are unremunerative, but they are there in the interests of the country. Therefore, they have had to open them. We are running these extra-departmental post offices either at the cost price or at a loss. Then, again, if we see the articles that are handled by the Postal Department, about 6 million letters are handled daily, and out of this, about 21 per cent. come from about a dozen cities in the country like Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Bangalore, Nagpur, Lucknow, Kanpur, Patna, etc. Now, these cities are also linked by air services. For five Naye Paise, the Department will carry 100 words from Calcutta to Bombay by air, and therefore this Department will cause loss of revenue to the telegraph and telephone departments. If a man sends a telegram from Calcutta to Bombay, for each eight words, he has to pay 13 annas, whereas now he can send 100 words for five Naye Paise from Calcutta to Bombay by air. So, the Department is losing, but Mr. Kishen Chand wants to reduce the existing rates also for postal articles carried by air. I am opposed to it. If we want to send a letter from here to London, or New York, by air, we have got to pay something more than for a mail sent by sea. If we send a letter from Delhi to Bombay or to Hyderabad, by ordinary mail, it will take three days, but we now post a letter today and expect the addressee to receive it the next morning. Therefore, I oppose the reduction suggested in the rates. On the other hand, I say that the Government should have increased the rates, so that they serve the people at the cost price. I do not want the Department to make a profit, but they should at least make up their cost. This costing is a matter of accounting. I do not know whether the Communications Ministry is employing any cost accountant. I hope they will hereafter appoint a cost accountant to go into this question of the materials needed, the cost of the materials, and the cost of the service they rendered, and then fix these rates.

SHRI H. P. SAKSENA (Uttar Pradesh): The Posts and Telegraphs Department to which this amending Bill relates is a public utility service and as such, it deserves all encouragement at our hands. I heard a very superior officer of the P. & T. Department once complaining that nobody sends any letter of appreciation for the millions of articles, letters and postcards which

are sent by post, but that if perchance one letter miscarries, or is mis-delivered or mis-directed, they receive a complaint. This is the condition in which the P. & T. Department works. I am not at all concerned, so far as this Bill is concerned, with that aspect of the Department, but then I am sorry that the decimal coinage which at the instance of my friend, Mr. Kishen Chand, the country has adopted or is going to adopt, is the cause of the serious confusion that is going to take place in our day to day life, and the confusion will be worse confounded especially during this Plan period. This Plan period gives us a warning that our energy and attention should be concentrated and principally directed to the implementation of the Plan itself. There was no necessity for multi-point changes to be introduced at the present moment when they could have easily waited for some time. The hon. Minister for Communications, when introducing the Bill, explained what difficulties he is experiencing at this very initial stage. There is no decimal coinage introduced yet. There is no change yet introduced in the rates and the scales of the postal matters. Yet there is a lot of confusion and the confusion will grow immeasurably when this new system of scales of the postal articles is put into execution.

As a means of putting this to a trial and to a test I should have thought that instead of putting this Postal and Telegraphs Department, which was working most satisfactorily, into this position, we should have simplified and we should have directed our attention to simplifying things just as we did in Uttar Pradesh when we were in search of finding out a Hindi name for our State. We stuck to the idea of calling it Uttar Pradesh by which we retained both the letters of 'U' as well as 'P' and thus lakhs and lakhs of rupees which would have otherwise been spent on changing the badges of the policemen and postal men in order to indicate that they belonged to the State of Uttar Pradesh were saved. Similarly if a little imagination would have been used, then this fraction and decimal system of converting the old pie into new Paise and *vice versa* would have been removed.

SHRI RAJ BAHADUR: Sir, I think after the two speeches that have been just delivered, I don't need say much in defence of the postal services. I do appreciate the remarks that have been

dropped by my hon. friend Dr. Raghbir Singh. He complained about the inefficiency. He complained that out of four letters sent by a particular friend of his, only three reached him and he also complained that one letter reached him in six days. I will take note of that complained and.....

DR. RAGHUBIR SINH: They are only samples.

SHRI RAJ BAHADUR: But I will remind him that those samples have come out in millions and millions of letters which are dropped every day and delivered everyday. My difficulty is that my postmen can be held responsible for letters which are dropped and which are delayed in delivery but sometimes letters are not at all dropped and yet a delivery is expected. How can I be responsible for such things? I think my friend has been expecting some letters and has not got them but I assure him that so far as I am concerned, I will make it a point.....

DR. RAGHUBIR SINH: I only wish that he takes care of those letters.....

SHRI RAJ BAHADUR: I will take particular care that whenever any letter is dropped which he is expecting, that will be definitely delivered in good time safely.

He also expressed concern and apprehension about the non-availability, the supposed and anticipated non-availability of postal stamps of 13 Naye Paise series. He does not know how by simple arithmetic he can buy the postal stamps which may be calculated to a total of 13 Paise in case the 13 Naye Paise stamps are not available and he knows and perhaps he has been already informed in the House that the new series that we are publishing for new postage stamps are 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 10 and 13 denominations and by any process of simple arithmetic, he can get what he likes.

DR. RAGHUBIR SINH: That information has never been supplied.

SHRI RAJ BAHADUR: That has already been there, so far as I remember. But in case he did not have that information, he should not have anticipated the difficulty. First of all I think there will be very few occasions when for some reason or other he will not find stamps worth 13 Naye Paise in any

given Post Office. There is no reason why we should have any such difficulty. If in any case at all in any post office such stamps are not available, we shall make it a point that they are made available. It will be easy for him to get them.

Then he said something about express delivery slips and V. P. P. slips. I will not refer to them after all that has been said in defence of the Department by Mr. Mukerjee. Now I will come to Mr. Kishen Chand's remarks.

These may be classified broadly into two categories. First he says that there should be reduction.....

SHRI KISHEN CHAND: Postcards and letters.

SHRI RAJ BAHADUR: Postcards, letters and newspaper. He says that instead of 21 postcards we shall be giving only 20 for a rupee. I have already mentioned that we are suffering a loss of Rs. 158 lakhs on post-card traffic. Our losses will mount up by another Rs. 42 lakhs in case we reduce the price from 5 to 4 Naye Paise. Then he asked me a question how, if the price is raised from 12.5 Naye Paise in the case of letters to 13 Naye Paise, the gain is only Rs. 20 lakhs and if it is reduced to 12 Naye Paise, the loss mounts to Rs. 40 lakhs. Our average gains on the letter, which happens to be one of two or three postal articles on which we get some profit,—will be reduced and therefore, the amount of loss will go up to Rs. 40 lakhs. I don't think he will advise us to do that. I will come to registered newspapers and newspaper packets. The average cost of handling is 23.3 pies as against an average revenue of 3.29 pies. We are charging only 3.29 whereas the cost of handling a newspaper is 23.3 pies. The amount that we realise against the handling charge is almost negligible. Thus we are already giving a considerable sum to newspapers by way of concession. Our loss on newspaper traffic is Rs. 118 lakhs and out of the new change that we propose to make we will get only Rs. 5 lakhs. So I don't think it can be said that we have resorted to any method of indirect taxation. I can assure the House that it has not been our intention—it has been remotest from our mind—to take this opportunity to impose any taxation particularly by this indirect method. Our anxiety was to be prepared in time

for the change-over. We have got to get the new stamps printed and distributed in good time before the appointed date so that when the change comes, they may be available in the remotest corners of this country, in all post offices well in time. That is why we have come forward with this particular Bill.

Then he referred to the need for change-over from the present system of weights and measures to the metric one—from tolas to grammes. I can only say that first of all if we want to make the change, we shall have to provide the various post offices with the new weights and new weighing scales. Secondly we should have some accepted measure or standard weights by which we should go. That question is yet in the melting pot. My hon. friend will be aware that the Standing Metric Committee under the Chairmanship of my colleague Shri N. Kanungo, the Minister for Consumer Industries, has already set up a sub-Committee called the Sectional Weights and Measures Committee. We expect the report of that Committee to come soon. Apart from that, hon. Members are aware that the "Standard Weights and Measures Bill" is under the consideration of the Joint Select Committee. So, unless both the Houses of Parliament accept and lay down for the whole of the country a new system of weights and measures, it will not be appropriate for the Postal Department to embark upon a project which may not be in keeping with the ultimate recommendations of the Joint Select Committee as accepted by both the Houses of Parliament. We shall have to stay put there, so long as a final decision is not made in this behalf. Once a decision is taken, there should not be any difficulty in adopting the final change-over. If there is any need we shall come to the Parliament too for this purpose. Apart from all that, a study will have to be made to determine what particular weights we require, what size of weighing scales we require, etc. All that will take time. I can only assure him that in good time we shall come for that also. Then he referred to the question of book packets. I am glad he referred to it, because.....

SHRI KISHEN CHAND: No, I did not refer to book packets. I referred to registered newspapers and newspapers sent in bundles.

SHRI RAJ BAHADUR: I am sorry. About newspapers, I would only refer once again to what I have said at the beginning about registered newspapers. Registered newspapers up to a weight not exceeding 10 tolas will have an increase of 4375 Naya Paisa. For over 10 and up to 20 tolas there will be a loss of 125 and for every 20 tolas or part thereof it will again be a loss of 125 Naya Paisa. So when there is gain in respect of one unit there is loss in another. Therefore, I say it is not for the purpose of increasing the tax or our charges for carrying the newspapers that we have recommended any variation in the rates in terms of the Naye Paisa.

I would further inform the House that so far as the book packets and pattern packets are concerned, the new rates provide substantial concessions and reductions in the case of these particular items of postal articles. For the first 5 tolas there is a decrease of 25 Naya Paisa and for every additional 2½ tolas there is a decrease of 125 Naya Paisa. The loss to the Department on the basis of the new rates will be Rs. 38.5 lakhs. That is the estimated reduction in our revenue. So it will be appreciated that while on certain items we have gained something, on other items we have lost substantially. Particularly on book packages there is an estimated loss in revenue of Rs. 38.5 lakhs. This will satisfy I think, a longstanding demand that we have been receiving from publishers, booksellers and others for the reduction of the rates on the book packages. I think they will take note of it. We do not say we have taken this occasion deliberately to do it, but this demand was also at the back of our minds. There was this demand from the booksellers and publishers and we have met it substantially through this Bill. With these words, Sir,.....

DR. RAGHUBIR SINH: On a point of information, Sir. The hon. Minister told the other House that the Government had not yet taken a decision with respect to the Report of the Committee specially appointed to go into the matter of book packets, and that when the decision is taken it will be placed before both the Houses. I very much wonder whether he says now that this reduction is as a result of that Committee's recommendation.

SHRI RAJ BAHADUR: I am sure the House will not see any inconsistency in my observations in the two Houses. The report of that Committee has been submitted only about a month ago and it is under examination. But incidental to the changes that became necessary on the passage of this new Act, the Indian Coinage (Amendment) Act, 1955, we took note of the demand that was there and we will now be charging only 6 Naye Paise and 3 Naye Paise on the first 5 tolas and every additional $2\frac{1}{2}$ tolas respectively instead of 6.25 Naye Paise and 3.125 Naye Paise. And this reduction will, as I said, mean a reduction of Rs. 38.5 lakhs in revenue to the Department. Therefore, there is no inconsistency. We have taken note of this demand. Just as we did in the case of postcards and letters, we could have taken this item also forward to the next higher Naya Paisa to avoid further losses. But we took note of this demand. That does not mean that we have anticipated the recommendations of this Committee or that we have anticipated our ultimate decisions on their recommendations. We have incidentally taken advantage of this change that we are embarking upon.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The question is:

"That the Bill further to amend the Indian Post Office Act, 1898, as passed by the Lok Sabha, be taken into consideration."

The motion was adopted.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: We now come to the clause by clause consideration of this Bill. There are eleven amendments proposed to clause 2, by Shri Kishen Chand. Do you move them, in spite of the reply of the hon. Minister?

SHRI KISHEN CHAND: Yes, Sir. I will not take long.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: But we have already exceeded the time limit fixed for this Bill, by ten minutes.

SHRI KISHEN CHAND: But the hon. Minister took such a lot of time out of the 45 minutes allotted.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: All right, one minute.

Clause 2—Substitution of a new schedule for the first schedule to Act 6 of 1898

SHRI KISHEN CHAND: Sir, I move:

1. "That at page 1, for line 13, the following be substituted, namely:—

'For a weight not exceeding ten grams....12 Naya Paisa,"

'For a weight not exceeding ten grams....12 Naya Paisa,"

2. "That at page 1,—

(i) in line 14, for the word 'tola' the words 'ten grams' be substituted; and

(ii) in lines 14-15, for the words 'one tola' the words 'ten grams' be substituted."

3. "That at page 1, after line 15, the following be inserted, namely:—

'Inland Air Mail Letter....
10 Naye Paise'."

4. "That at page 1, line 17, for the figure and words '5 Naye Paise' the figure and words '4 Naye Paise' be substituted."

5. "That at page 1, line 18, for the figure and words '10 Naye Paise' the figure and words '8 Naye Paise' be substituted."

6. "That at page 2, line 2, for the words 'five tolas' the words 'fifty grams' be substituted."

7. "That at page 2,—

(i) in line 3, for the words 'two and a half tolas' the words 'twenty-five grams' be substituted and

(ii) in line 4, for the words 'five tolas' the words 'fifty grams' be substituted."

8. "That at page 2, for lines 6 to 10, the following be substituted, namely:—

'For a weight not exceeding sixty grams 1 naya paisa,

For a weight exceeding sixty grams and not exceeding one hundred and twenty grams. 2 naye paisa.

For a weight exceeding one hundred and twenty grams and not exceeding two hundred grams 3 naye paisa.

For every two hundred grams or fraction thereof exceeding two hundred grams. 3 naye paisa"

9. "That at page 2,—

(i) in line 14, for the words 'ten tolas' the words 'one hundred and fifty grams' be substituted;

(ii) in line 15, for the words 'five tolas' the words 'one hundred grams' be substituted; and

(iii) in line 16, for the words 'ten tolas' the words 'one hundred and fifty grams' be substituted."

10. "That at page 2, line 21, for the words 'forty tolas' the words 'five hundred grams' be substituted."

11. "That at page 2, in lines 22 and 23, for the words 'forty tolas' in both places where they occur, the words 'five hundred grams' be substituted".

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The clause and the amendments are now open for discussion.

SHRI KISHEN CHAND: Sir, the hon. Minister raised the objection that if the Postal Department was losing under any particular item, there should be no reduction. I would submit, Sir, that is not the practice in any business concern even. No businessman will hope to make a profit on every one of his items. He will only see if on the total business he had made a profit or a loss. Here when the Postal Department is on the whole making a profit.....

SHR: RAJ BAHADUR: No, no.

SHRI KISHEN CHAND: Yes, they are making a profit, if you include the Telephone Department also. For last year it was stated that on the whole, taking the Telephone Department and the Telegraph Department and the Postal Department, all the three together, they were making a profit. Of course, I should be very glad if this profit goes up. The hon. Minister hopes to have 56,000 post-offices within a year or so and these will bring him more profits. The lowering of the rates will not mean that the profits will be lower. I think when the rates are lower, there is going to be greater profit, because the Department is expanding. Because of the opening of

new branches there may be a temporary loss for a short time, but with larger number of offices working and with the lowering of the rates, there will be greater business and I am sure the Department will run at a profit. The department will continue to make profit.

As regards the weighing machines, the hon. Minister has stated that the present units of weights are in stock. But I have suggested the international standard weights. They can easily be obtained and the hon. Minister can easily provide them. I am reducing the weight and the result will be that the Department will not lose.

SHRI RAJ BAHADUR: Sir, I need only point out that the Postal Department has been losing during the last three years. In 1953-54 there was a loss of Rs. 5 lakhs, in 1954-55 the loss was Rs. 23 lakhs and in 1955-56 it is Rs. 49 lakhs. So it is going up year by year. On the Telegraphs side, in 1954-55 there has been a loss of Rs. 82 lakhs. We have to extend our telegraph lines and also increase the number of post offices. Of course, on the Telephone side, we make some profit. But it does not mean that the Telephone side should suffer because of the losses on the other sides.....

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Therefore, you are not accepting the amendments?

SHRI RAJ BAHADUR: No, Sir. They are not acceptable. And so far as the question of weight is concerned, I do not think it will be advisable for the Government to anticipate the findings of the Joint Select Committee on the particular measure that is now before them.

Sir, I am not able to accept the amendments.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The question is:

1. "That at page 1, for line 13, the following be substituted, namely:—

'For a weight not exceeding ten grams...12 Naye Paise'."

The motion was negatived.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The question is:

2. "That at page 1,—

(i) in line 14, for the word 'tola' the words 'ten grams' be substituted, and

(iii) in lines 14-15, for the words 'one tola' the words 'ten grams' be substituted."

The motion was negatived.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The question is:

3. "That at page 1 after line 15, the following be inserted, namely:—

'Inland Air Mail Letter....10 Naye Paise.'

The motion was negatived.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The question is:

4. "That at page 1, line 17, for the figure and words '5 Naye Paise' the figure and words '4 Naye Paise' be substituted."

The motion was negatived.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The question is:

5. "That at page 1, line 18, for the figure and words '10 Naye Paise' the figure and words '8 Naye Paise' be substituted."

The motion was negatived.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The question is:

6. "That at page 2, line 2, for the words 'five tolas' the words 'fifty grams' be substituted."

The motion was negatived.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The question is:

7. "That at page 2,—

(i) in line 3, for the words 'two and a half tolas' the words 'twenty-five grams' be substituted; and

(ii) in line 4, for the words 'five tolas' the words 'fifty grams' be substituted."

The motion was negatived.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The question is:

8. "That at page 2, for lines 6 to 10, the following be substituted, namely:—

'For a weight not exceeding sixty grams 1 naya paisa.

For a weight exceeding sixty grams and not exceeding one hundred and twenty grams 2 naye paise.

For a weight exceeding one hundred and twenty grams and not exceeding two hundred grams 3 naye paise

For every two hundred grams or fraction thereof exceeding two hundred grams 3 naye paise."

The motion was negatived.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The question is:

9. "That at page 2,—

(i) in line 14, for the words 'ten tolas' the words 'one hundred and fifty grams' be substituted;

(ii) in line 15, for the words 'five tolas' the words, 'one hundred grams' be substituted; and

(iii) in line 16, for the words 'ten tolas' the words 'one hundred and fifty grams' be substituted."

The motion was negatived.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The question is:

10. "That at page 2, line 21, for the words 'forty tolas' the words 'five hundred grams' be substituted.

The motion was negatived.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The question is:

11. "That at page 2, in lines 22 and 23, for the words 'forty tolas' in both places where they occur, the words 'five hundred grams' be substituted."

The motion was negatived.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The question is:

"That clause 2 stand part of the Bill."

The motion was adopted.

Clause 2 was added to the Bill

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: There are no amendments to clause 1, the Enacting Formula and Title of the Bill.

Clause 1, the Title and the Enacting Formula were added to the Bill.

SHRI RAJ BAHADUR: Sir, I move:

"That the Bill be returned."

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The question is:

"That the Bill be returned."

The motion was adopted.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: Now we take up the Bill of Mr. Shah. That is a very short and non-controversial Bill.

DR. RAGHUBIR SINH: We can take it up tomorrow, Sir.

THE MINISTER FOR REVENUE AND CIVIL EXPENDITURE (SHRI M. C. SHAH) : It will not take long.

SEVERAL HON. MEMBERS : We may take up that Bill tomorrow.

MR. DEPUTY CHAIRMAN: The House does not seem to be in a mood to take it up now. So the House stands adjourned till 11 A.M. tomorrow.

The House then adjourned at five of the clock till eleven of the clock on Saturday, the 8th September 1956.