

(d) to what extent assistance is proposed to be given by Belgian for the above purpose?

THE MINISTER OF ENERGY (SHRI VASANT SATHE) : (a) One of the Belgian Companies has recently shown interest for turn-key execution of some hydel projects. However, there is no detailed proposal under consideration.

(b) to (d). Do not arise.

#### Expansion of Rural Telecommunications in Seventh Plan

4807. DR. G. VIJAYA RAMA RAO : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) the approach towards expansion and strengthening of rural telecommunications in the country during the 7th Five Year Plan period ;

(b) the plan allocations made for this purpose ; and

(c) the targets fixed for expanding rural network in the Seventh Plan period ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA) : (a) For the expansion and strengthening of rural telecommunications, the Government has liberalised the policy for opening of small capacity exchanges and long distance public telephones. These facilities are being provided under this policy on a subsidised basis. Opening of exchanges and LDPTs would depend on fulfilling the criteria laid down under this policy.

(b) The plan allocations are met out of the lump sum grant provided to each telecommunication circle. However, about Rs. 100 crores for long distance public telephones and approximately Rs. 100 crores for the small capacity exchanges are provided.

(c) In the 7th Five Year Plan approximately 1.80 lakhs of lines and 9000 long distance public telephones are proposed

to be provided, subject to availability of the demand and equipment.

#### Opening of Electronic Exchanges during Seventh Plan Period

4808. DR. G. VIJAYA RAMA RAO : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) the policy relating to the sanction of Electronic Exchanges in general and to the industrial and growth centres situated in various parts of the country in particular ; and

(b) the targets fixed for opening Electronic Exchanges during the Seventh Plan ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI RAM NIWAS MIRDHA) : (a) Electronic exchanges are allotted to—

(i) Metro Telephone Systems

(ii) Major Telephone Systems

(iii) Places where digital Trunk Automatic exchanges are justified and getting installed.

(iv) Heavy telephone growth areas where large telephone demands to the extent of 10000 lines are to be met.

(b) Subject to availability of electronic exchange equipments from the ITI, Manakpur factory, about 147 exchanges are expected to be opened during the 7th Plan. In addition, 67 small electronic exchanges will also be opened during the 7th Plan.

#### Construction of Earth Stations to Link Units of ONGC and NTPC through Satellite

4809. SHRI P.M. SAYEED : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether his Ministry has received requests from Oil and Natural Gas Com-