

due to various incentives offered by the State Government and the Central Government. As such, number of industries are coming up in the area. Therefore, demand for telephone connections from the industrial houses, trade centres as well as the public has increased considerably.

The present Telephone Exchange with a capacity of 1900 lines has the MAX II Type of equipment. This equipment is presently loaded upto 96% of its capacity, and due to heavy loading and the out-dated equipment, the telephones generally remain out of order during the peak hours, or do not function properly, resulting in receiving wrong numbers, thereby putting the subscribers to great difficulty.

The Department is constructing a new building for Nanded Telephone Exchange which is likely to be completed by March, 1988, but the department proposes to instal I.C.P. Cross bar type of equipment. But as per the Annual Report for the year 1986-87 of the Department of Telecommunications, in order to improve the telephone services in the rural areas, action was taken to procure digital Electronic Exchanges for automisation of some of the district headquarters and important towns. It is learnt that the equipment has been imported and installed in some of the district headquarters. I, therefore, strongly urge the hon. Minister of Communications to consider installing Electronic Equipment in the new Building of the Telephone Exchange at Nanded, which is the Headquarters of the District, situated in the backward region of Maharashtra State.

(viii) Need to expedite clearance to the Karatia-Nagartala Basin drainage Scheme pending with Ganga Flood Control Commission.

SHRISANAT KUMAR MANDAL (Joynagar): Under Rule 377, I am making a statement.

Sunderbans area in West Bengal is one of the most backward areas in the country lacking in any developmental activities or *infra structure* for any rural industries or

employment. Although nature has been bountiful to this area in the matter of flora and fauna, it is frequented by floods, cyclones and tornado at times which cause havoc in the absence of any proper drainage system in this area. The only avocation which can be gainfully pursued by the rural folk in this area is agriculture. For promotion of agriculture, it is essential to have a proper drainage system. The Karatia-Nagartala Basin Drainage Scheme in the district of 24-Parganas was drawn up after detailed investigations and surveys about 6-7 years ago and the scheme is now being processed with the Ganga Flood Control Commission. All the technical details and other points on estimates raised by the Ganga Flood Control Commission have already been attended to by the State Government from time to time. This scheme is now to be processed by the Planning Commission and ultimately approved by it as soon as forwarded by the Ganga Flood Control Commission. This scheme when executed in phases will help removing drainage congestion of nearly 215 sq. km. in P.S. Minakha, Canning and Basanti in my constituency and thereby increase additional agricultural production of 9171 m.t. of kharif paddy. I would urge the Government of India kindly to expedite clearance of this scheme and thus afford the much needed relief to the poverty stricken people of Sunderbans area.

(ix) Need to ensure to support price to the farmers for their produce damaged in the rains of May 1987.

SHRI BALWANT SINGH RAMOOWALIA (Sangrur): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, during May, 1987 due to unseasonal rain in Northern Region of India i.e. in Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and U.P., the crops in field were destroyed and damaged. The wheat which was brought to markets for sale was also damaged. As a result of this, the farmers were put to great loss. Today the farmers have got no money to meet their day to day requirements and have not got adequate resources to lead their life. This destruction is almost there in the whole of

[Sh. Balwant Singh Ramoowalia]
Northern region but Punjab is specially affected.

The Government has estimated the loss of Rs. 400 crores but in reality, it is far above this estimate. The representatives of Punjab Government possessing limited resources have decided to assist the farmers, but this assistance is very limited. Today the Government agencies responsible for the purchase of farmers' commodities are not purchasing them at the declared rates though the Government has directed the agencies to do so. In Punjab, the procurement agencies and private traders are purchasing the damaged wheat at the rate of Rs. 80 to Rs. 90 per quintal.

The farmers' position is deteriorating day by day. I request the Union Government to intervene and take steps so that the farmers get the support price for the produce.

(x) Need to release funds for Vidya Sagar University Midnapore for opening more departments

SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE (Panskura): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, Vidyasagar University in Midnapur, West Bengal was established for relieving Calcutta University from being over-burdened with huge number of students, as well as giving students post-graduate training with agricultural and rural bias. It will have a large number of students passing B.A. and B.Sc. Part II examination next year. But due to paucity of funds, it has been able to open only six post-graduate courses with altogether 250 seats up till now. They are yet to open at least six more departments to accommodate even a reasonable percentage of intending students. With the present six, it cannot accommodate even one per cent of the intending students.

Vidyasagar University has not received any grant from the UGC since it was started in 1983. UGC, it is reported, is insisting on amending the University Act for having a say

in the election of Vice-Chancellor, who is now elected according to the Act by the Court of the University. This election is perfectly within the democratic norms.

I earnestly request the Minister of Human Resource Development to take it up with the University Grants Commission so that funds are released for Vidyasagar University named after one of the best sons of India with a laudable purpose so that it can open adequate number of departments to accommodate at least a reasonable percentage of incoming students.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Now, we will take up item No. 10—Further discussion on the drought situation in the country.

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (DR. G.S. DHILLON): Mr. Deputy-Speaker...(Interruptions.)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: The Minister wants to say something. Let him say.

DR. G.S. DHILLON: I will mention about one fact.

Shri Balwant Singh Ramoowalia has made a statement that I have nothing to do with the discussion on the drought. Can I say a few words to him? Will you allow me to make a clarification?

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: It is 377. Not necessary.

DR. G.S. DHILLON: I wanted to make it clear to him.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Not necessary.

(Interruptions)

DR. G.S. DHILLON: I would not have reacted to it but you come from the same State as I do. when there was a damage to the crops, our representative went there and found four districts, Gurdaspur, Amritsar, part of Jullundur and Hoshiarpur were affected. They showed two samples of it and