

prevailing market price then.

[*Translation*]

SHRI DEVI LAL: If you give a separate notice for it, I shall enquire and let you know. (*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

SHRI KADAMBUR M.R. JANARDHANAN: I am asking the question arising from your answer.

SHRI ERA ANBARASU: I would like to all the attention of the hon. Minister regarding the misuse of funds of the cooperative marketing society in Amreli by the hon. Minister, Mr. Manubhai Kotadia. This is regarding agriculture cooperative society.

MR. SPEAKER: This has nothing to do with jute and all this.

SHRI ERA ANBARASU: This is regarding selling gunny bags. (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

(*Interruptions*)

SHRI ERA ANBARASU: I do not make any allegation. I am only asking the adventure of the hon. Minister about the article that has been published in the *Illustrated Weekly*.

MR. SPEAKER: No. You give a separate question. Will you please take your seat?

(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: This is Question Hour.

SHRI ERA ANBARASU: What is the reaction of the hon. Agriculture Minister?

MR. SPEAKER: Next question.

### Record of Numbers Called through STD in Telephone Bills

\*518. SHRI ERA ANBARASU:  
SHRI MANORANJAN  
BHAKTA:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to modify telephone billing system under which all telephone numbers called through STD are automatically recorded and also communicated in subscribers telephone bills;

(b) whether such a system exists in several foreign countries; and

(c) the time by which the modified billing system will be introduced in India?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT AND MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI K.P. UNNIKRISHNAN): (a) Subscribers connected to E-10B type electronic exchanges everywhere are being provided telephone bills with details of STD calls beginning with December 1989.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) This facility is already available in the E 10B type of exchanges. Presently, it is not technically feasible to provide this facility in other types of exchanges.

SHRI ERA ANBARASU: Sir, I would like to know how many E-10B type electronic exchanges are there in India and in Central Madras, in particular, whether all the Exchanges will be covered by these types of electronic Exchanges, what time it will take to provide similar Exchanges throughout the country.

SHRI K.P. UNNIKRISHNAN: At the moment, we have about 57 E 10B Exchanges. I cannot tell you about the position of Madras without notice. I should certainly inform the House. It entirely depends on the

type of design of the switch and whether we have this facility or not. We have been historically having different multiplicity of technologies in relation to Exchanges in this country and, as a result, the electro-mechanical type of Exchanges which we have in use in many parts of India cannot be provided with this facility. It can only in the new electronic Exchanges that we have established where there is in-built facility with the design itself, that we can provide this facility. Therefore, E 10B technology which is worked on the French sources, has this facility and as and when we go along, I am sure we will have another type of design for this facility but it is still a hope.

SHRI ERA ANBARASU: The hon. Minister may be aware and even some of the hon. Members will be aware, that though we do not use the STD, we are getting huge amounts, and fake bills are coming. STD is being misused in connivance with the officials of the Telephone Exchange.

Therefore, in order to prevent this misuse of STD facility, will the Government come out with any device to prevent this misuse of the STD facility?

SHRI K.P. UNNIKRIISHNAN: I am aware of the complaints both from the hon. Members as well as from other subscribers, in many Exchanges. If there are any specific instances where officials of the Department or engineers are involved, we shall certainly take action. We shall not let any one frustrate. But, this is an entirely different question relating to the inbuilt facility in the design of the electronic exchange. As I have explained, as and when we go along, we will augment the existing capacity, with more electronic exchanges and we shall certainly have this facility and we shall endeavour, as I said, because STD is a very crucial component of our system to have this inbuilt design facility.

[*Translation*]

SHRI HARMOHAN DHAWAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the

hon. Minister the time by which the facility to check excess billing is going to be made available in the country as assured by the hon. Minister just now? I would also like to know discount to be given to the subscribers in case call is disconnected within ten to fifteen seconds as is given abroad in similar circumstances.

[*English*]

SHRI K.P. UNNIKRIISHNAN: The hon. Member has raised several questions, which I am sorry are not first of all quite related to this basic Question. As far as over-billing is concerned, there have been a number of complaints in the case of the subscribers or hon. Members. In many cases, it has been monitored and found not true. But, in some cases, there has been certain tampering and we have allowed certain discounts. I shall not say everything is all right with the Exchanges particularly in Delhi but, I can say that in Delhi the situation has considerably improved and in Bombay also, it has improved. But complaints still persist. We have many limitations, limitations of multiplicity of technologies which have been put into operation in different kinds of Exchange systems. Ours is the one country where the strowger system still works. Even for strowger parts, even to keep them as museum pieces, people are coming to India to buy. But we still use it. Just as we live in a world of bullock-carts as well as nuclear energy, we have to live with the situation. It shall be our endeavour to improve it. We shall not compromise with the technological excellence. Our endeavour is to improve this system.

SHRI RAM NAIK: Sir, the hon. Minister has stated as to how many E-10-B type of electronic exchanges are being used at present. I want to know the total number of STD exchanges all over India available at present. Is there a time-bound programme to convert all of them into electronic exchanges? What would be the cost of that? At least I want to know the total number of electronic exchanges which are there at present. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI K.P. UNNIKRISHNAN: I need a specific question on this subject. However, I have already stated that there are 57 E-10-B electronic exchanges; there are 29 PRX electronic exchanges and 106 NEAX electronic exchanges. I can only give this information. If the hon. Member wants separate break down and other details, he will have to give a separate question.

SHRI Y.S. RAJASEKHAR REDDY: Sir, it is a universal law that in case of an individual or in case of a Department whosoever commits a mistake he has to be penalised. But in the case of this Department this law is followed in breach. Take for example even a local call. If we dial a particular number and if it gives a different number, the charge will be put upon the subscribers. Is it not a very bad practice? Suppose in the case of a local call if the subscriber asks whether this is a particular number or not and if the reply comes that it is not that particular number, at least the Department should consider not to charge that particular call at least on the subscribers. Will it be considered?

SHRI K.P. UNNIKRISHNAN: Well, it is a very interesting suggestion. But unfortunately no such facilities exist. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI Y.S. RAJASEKHAR REDDY: Some device can be found out. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI BAL GOPAL MISHRA: Sir, just now the hon. Minister has admitted that in case of over-billing the Government has monitored certain cases and they have found out some truth in these allegations. So, I would like to know from the hon. Minister that in those cases what action has been taken so far and whether responsibility has been fixed on those errant officers.

SHRI K.P. UNNIKRISHNAN: I do not know why it is being loaded on the heads of officers. There are certain cases which have been found out in which there was overbilling and discounts have been provided to the subscribers. Whenever there was any specific allegation against any officer and when

it was proved, action had been taken.

[*Translation*]

SHRI GUMAN MAL LODHA: Mr. Speaker, Sir, this problem of overbilling is a serious problem of all India dimension. Hon. Minister evaded this issue by stating simply that whenever they receive a written complaint in this regard they take action. I would like to submit that whenever a complaint is made, a cyclostyied reply is sent stating that the meter has been checked and no fault has been found. Bills amounting to twenty to fifty thousand of rupees are received by the subscribers even when they do not make any S.T.D. call or their premises are closed. Thereafter injunctions are obtained from the court of law. The Government also suffers loss of revenue. There is a big racket involving businessmen and industrialists, who bribe telephone operators with large sums of money? I would like to know from the Government whether after the change of Government at the Centre, the new Government would take some effective and radical measures to check it?

[*English*]

SHRI K.P. UNNIKRISHNAN: Sir, I appreciate the concern expressed by the hon. Member in relation to overbilling. I am sure it reflects the concern of most of the Members of this House as well as the subscribers outside. I can assure you that I have myself been a victim of overbilling... (*Interruptions*) I have never gone anywhere. Therefore, I fully appreciate the concern expressed here. It is our endeavour and we have been trying to take corrective steps so that it does not occur again. We have certain basic difficulties arising out of the present level of technology that is available in the exchanges in India. That is what I was trying to say.

#### Waiting List for Telephone Connections in Trivandrum

\*520. SHRI T. BASHEER: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state: