

plant load factor is the best in Andhra Pradesh, even the management of power is best in Andhra Pradesh. But in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar they suffer a loss of 22 per cent in the transmission. It is one of the major reasons of our losses. We are thinking how to improve the position of the Electricity Boards, how to increase the plant load factor and how to set right the transmission losses. If these things are set right, we can make improvements in the functioning of the Electricity Boards.

[English]

Service condition of Branch Post Masters and Extra Departmental Staff

*367. SHRI SRIBALLAV PANIGRAHI:
SHRI C. JANGA REDDY:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a judgement has been delivered by the Supreme Court recently in favour of the Branch Post Masters and Extra Departmental Staff for improvement of their service conditions; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the action taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI GIRIDHAR GOMANGO): (a) There is no recent judgement of the Supreme Court in favour of the Branch Postmasters and Extra Departmental Staff for improvement of their service conditions.

(b) Does not arise.

SHRI SRIBALLAV PANIGRAHI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the number of Extra Departmental staff in the Postal Department is about three lakhs out of a total of about six lakhs employees. Their service conditions are just miserable and awful. I would like to know, whether these ED staff also perform the same job as performed by the regular

employees and still the minimum facilities of annual increment, wage on *pro rata* basis, leave etc. are not granted to them. In a way, social and economic justice is denied to these employees in spite of the Supreme Court judgement in April 1977 when the Supreme Court had held that these people were also holders of civil posts and as such were entitled to benefits as available to the regular civil servants. Besides, recently the Supreme Court in its judgement of 27th October, 1987 has observed that the casual workers in the Postal Department should be made regular and that would also be applicable to these people.

Besides, there were several Extra Departmental Staff Committees appointed to look into the wage structure and service conditions of ED staff. Is it not a fact that they have recommended several things which have been ignored by the Government so far?

[Translation]

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BIR BAHADUR SINGH): So far as the decision of the Supreme Court is concerned, it has been received by the Government. A mention has been made to Casual labour there in. The people working in hilly areas, and in far-flung areas, work part time 2 hours, 3 hours or for 5 hours. This arrangement has been made to provide postal facilities at those places where opening of the post office is not economical viable. It is not possible to spend the money required to open a post office there. We employ part time workers for such far flung areas. They also do there other jobs like agriculture. This arrangement has been made by employing such people so that they may be able to do this work along with their other works. If they are taken as regular employees, arrangements made cannot continue and the system will collapse. Several committees were constituted to look after these facilities, they have submitted their reports. Some of their recommendations were accepted. The suggestion regarding grant of D.A. at par with Central

employees was agreed to. It will create a great problem if these arrangements are changed. We will have to think how these arrangements can be successful.

[*English*]

SHRI SRIBALLAV PANIGRAHI: Sir, the Minister observed that these people are part-timers. Sir, would it be correct to call them as part-timers when the old practice of appointing school teachers and other service holders is now withdrawn, and appointment is given to the unemployed educated youth and SC/ST people who do not have any other vocation? So, they are no longer part-timers.

Secondly, Sir, the ED Committee was appointed by the Government. I would like to know whether it is a fact that this ED Committee was appointed in 1984 and it submitted its report in 1986 after the Fourth Pay Committee's Report was published which recommended equal pay for equal work and payment of wages at hours rate to E.D employees, bonus, gratuity as per its regular employees and also their eligibility to Group Insurance and Employees Provident Fund. What steps Government has taken on the recommendations of the E.D. Committee and whether it is a fact that there were discussions between the Government and the concerned E.D. representatives on 9th and 10th July in which 5 points were agreed to? Out of those 5 points several points have not been implemented which is now the cause of restlessness and unrest among them. They are now staging dharnas, etc.

[*Translation*]

MR. SPEAKER: It is my birthday but who else is there you are talking about?

(*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

SHRI SRIBALLAV PANIGRAHI: You know, Sir, they are living a miserable life and the reply is quite misleading. That is why I am

putting this question.

[*Translation*]

SHRI BIRBAHADUR SINGH: Sir, there have been several committees and reports of all of them were received. Many of the recommendations made in the report submitted by Sabhoor Committee have been accepted. Many schemes were started in the villages, this facility was provided keeping in view, the need of the villages. Had all the recommendations been accepted, the entire arrangements would have collapsed. Saboor Committee has recommended:

[*English*]

1. Extra Departmental system to continue in postal set up for performing postal functions.
2. All extra-departmental branches, post offices (12662) working within 3 KM area in violation of the existing standard are to be closed
3. All extra departmental sub-offices (35374) which do not earn income equal to 20 per cent of the cost be closed and postal facilities to be provided through licenced postal agents.

[*Translation*]

If the suggestions made in the report submitted by the Committee had been accepted, the entire arrangements, which now have been made in the villages, would have to be discontinued. This would not have benefitted the people.

[*English*]

SHRI SRIBALLAV PANIGRAHI: I asked you about the recommendations of the Committee regarding equal pay and equal wages and about the bonus, gratuity and so on.

[*Translation*]

SHRI BIR BAHADUR SINGH: The Government has accepted the recommendations which were worth accepting and has rejected those which were not considered fit for acceptance. There is hardly one hour work in these post offices and if the employees are taken as regular, then it will not be economically viable (*Interruptions*) because it has been stated therein that these post offices should remain open at least for 3 hours ... (*Interruptions*)

[*English*]

SHRI V. SOBHANADREESWARA RAO: They have to walk a distance of four to five miles.

[*Translation*]

SHRI SAIFUDDIN CHOWDHARY: This exists in cities also. The provision of extra departmental employees was made for the villages...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI BIR BAHADUR SINGH: They are in the cities also but the number is more in the villages. Mr. Speaker, Sir, if we replace this arrangement and appoint permanent employees then it will lead to such a huge expenditure that there will be a great difficulty in maintaining those arrangements and as such these arrangements have been allowed to continue. We have increased the facilities in 1986. The salary of branch Post Master has been raised from Rs. 217 which they used to get prior to 86, to Rs. 275, and the salary of Additional Departmental Sub Post Master has been raised from Rs. 310-373 to Rs. 382-620. All this has been done with a view to make the arrangements a success. When the posts are advertised, it is stated that these are for the part time workers. This works has to be done in addition to their own jobs. If the appointments are made on a regular basis, the entire arrangement will have to be changed and it will result into a great loss.

SHRI C.JANGA REDDY: He means to

say that arrangements of post offices for other villages cannot be made if the salaries are increased. I have been writing letters to the Ministry for the last 4 years for a post-office. They say that they have no money. With the increase in salaries they are not a position to open new post offices. I have got one such letter with me. On the other hand they say that they cannot increase the salary because they have to open new post offices... (*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Janga, shortage of funds is the only obstancial. There is no other obstacle than this.

SHRI C. JANGA REDDY: When the postman carries the post in his bag, he woks minimum for 3 hours. Will you do something to increase the wages of these extra departmental employees? The post is received at 2'O clock. They do not have work before 2'O clock as well as after 2'O clock. What is the difficulty with you about the recommendation made for 3 hours?

MR. SPEAKER: There is nothing new in it.

SHRI BASUDEB ACHARIA: Reply has not been given.

MR. SPEAKER: There is no need of reply

[*English*]

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY: Sir, he has put a specific question with regard to opening of new post offices.

MR. SPEAKER: The repiy would be the same.

Use of Plastics In Agriculture and Food Packaging

*368 SHRIMATI BASAVARAJES-VARI: Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Union Government have a