

POLICE CIRCULAR ORDER NO. 197

Interrogation
of Posts &
Telegraphs
employees
while
investigating
into cases of
copper-wire
thefts

According to the present practice prevailing in the Posts and Telegraphs Department, the P & T line-staff should move out on interruptions to the lines and report to the Police authorities whenever the interruption is found to be due to a theft of wires. Several representations have been received by the Ministry of Communications, Govt. of India, New Delhi recently to the effect that the line-staff are being harassed by the Police during the course of interrogation, following reporting of thefts. Recently this matter was also represented to the Communications Ministry by the National Federation of Posts and Telegraphs employees during the course of an interview granted by the Chairman, Posts & Telegraphs Board.

While the law enforcing authorities should have full freedom of conducting investigation in any manner considered necessary with the ultimate objective of apprehending the culprits and thus reducing the magnitude of the problem of copper-wire thefts, at the same time it would be possible to instruct the field-staff to avoid any harassment of any nature or giving rise to a feeling among the Posts & Telegraphs men that they are being harassed as suspects or needlessly delayed at the Police Station. It will be desirable that conduct of search of houses/persons and/or interrogation in relation to Posts & Telegraphs employees, wherever possible could be done in the presence of a Posts & Telegraphs Officer who can provide information of a technical nature to the Investigating Officers for a proper appraisal of the facts of the case.

Ss.P. should therefore issue suitable instructions to the subordinate officers under their control. On the above lines, so that we can ensure enlightening co-operation from the linemen themselves. They could be encouraged to keep a look out for suspects moving on the lines or persons who could be reasonably tackled for the specific offence. Antagonising them as initio saps a source, which we should nurse.

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