

opted for Pakistan, and who had later expressed their desire to be employed on the Indian Railways have not been taken back in service particularly on the Eastern Railway?

The Deputy Minister of Railways (Shri Shahnawas Khan): No. All those railway employees who had provisionally opted to serve Pakistan but later changed their option for India Final before 15-2-1948 were absorbed. Those who had opted Pakistan Final but did not proceed to that country and applied for employment were also re-employed on railways subject to the availability of vacancies and their being found suitable. In the case of those who had opted Pakistan Final and had migrated to that country but later returned to India and requested for employment, the Ministry of Railways decided that their cases may also be sympathetically considered for re-employment on railways subject to their being found suitable.

Railway Bridge

*746. Shri Jagdish Awasthi: Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to state:

(a) how old is the railway bridge on the river between Bilhaur and Araul Makanpur Railway stations on the North Eastern Railway;

(b) when the bridge was last checked by the Railway Engineering staff; and

(c) whether Government are satisfied about the safety of the bridge?

The Deputy Minister of Railways (Shri Shahnawas Khan): (a) Presumably the bridge referred to is at mile 35/0-I over the Shan nadi. If so, the bridge masonry is about 76 years old and the steel spans about 22 years old.

(b) This bridge was last inspected in August, 1957, by the Assistant Engineer, Bridges, North-Eastern Railway.

(c) Yes, Sir.

Damage to Assam Trunk Road

*747. Shrimati Maffia Ahmed: Will the Minister of Transport and Communications be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Assam Trunk Road (National Highway) between Sibsagar and Dibrugarh has been damaged during September 1957;

(b) if so, the reason thereof; and

(c) the steps taken in the matter?

The Minister of State in the Ministry of Transport and Communications (Shri Raj Bahadur): (a) Yes.

(b) The Section from Rajmaji Tea Estate to Demow Charali of the road was raised in level by carrying out some earthwork, because it used to be submerged under water during the rains and traffic had to be suspended for varying periods in past-years.

(c) The earth work has now got consolidated and should give no trouble in future.

Post Offices in Punjab

*748. Shri D. C. Sharma: Will the Minister of Transport and Communications be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Post Offices of all categories in the Punjab Circle are housed in the rented buildings;

(b) if so, the reasons thereof;

(c) whether there is any proposal to acquire sites for the construction of buildings for the Post Offices in all the districts under this circle;

(d) whether any proposal to construct quarters for the staff working in this circle is under contemplation; and

(e) if so, with what results?

The Minister of State in the Ministry of Transport and Communications (Shri Raj Bahadur): (a) to (e). A statement is laid on the Table of the Lok Sabha. (See Appendix III, annexure No. 25]