

Shri Kidwai: I am prepared to accept the complaint from the hon. Member, and I will look into it, if any further details are supplied.

STRATEGIC RAILWAYS

*1078. **Shri K. C. Sodhia:** (a) Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to state the total length of strategic Railways, zone-wise?

(b) What is the total capital invested on these Railway lines?

(c) What are the factors taken into consideration to class a railway line as strategic?

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Railways and Transport (Shri Shahnawaz Khan): (a) 26:87 miles on the Northern Railway only.

(b) Rs. 3.77 crores approximately.

(c) Defence needs of the country.

Shri K. C. Sodhia: Are all these strategic lines running at a loss?

Shri Shahnawaz Khan: As I have said, there is only one strategic railway. Strategic railways are meant primarily for the defence needs of the country, and not for making any profits.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: In view of the fact that the hon. Parliamentary Secretary stated that strategic railways are meant for defence purposes, are the railways which run along the border between Pakistan and India also considered as strategic railways?

Shri Shahnawaz Khan: No, they are not considered as strategic railways.

Shri C. R. Narasimhan: What is the profit and loss account of this strategic railway?

Shri Shahnawaz Khan: I want notice.

Shri M. L. Dwivedi: If loss be incurred on this railway, will it be defrayed by the Defence Ministry or the Railway Ministry?

The Minister of Railways and Transport (Shri L. B. Shastri): This is yet to be decided.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: What actually is the railway which is regarded as strategic?

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: There is only one railway.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: Which is that only railway?

Shri Shahnawaz Khan: This railway line runs between Mukerian and Pathankot.

TRIPARTITE STANDING COMMITTEE OF PLANTATIONS

*1081. **Shri K. P. Sinha:** (a) Will the Minister of Labour be pleased to state whether a meeting was held at Shillong on the 27th February, 1953 of the tripartite Standing Committee of Plantations?

(b) If so, with what result?

(c) What were the subjects discussed in the meeting?

The Deputy Minister of Labour (Shri Abid Ali): (a) to (c). A special meeting of the Standing Plantations Committee was held at Shillong on the 27th February 1953 which discussed the question of conversion of food-grain concessions in tea gardens into cash payments. There was general agreement at the meeting on the principle of conversion. But no agreement could be reached on the exact quantum of compensation to be paid in lieu of the concessions. However, the difference between industry and labour was considerably narrowed down as a result of the discussions.

Shri K. P. Sinha: What was the difference?

Shri Abid Ali: The difference was about As. 2½.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: What actually was the result finally about these cash grain concessions?

Shri Abid Ali: No decision could be reached at that conference.

Shri K. P. Sinha: Was leave with pay agreed upon?

Shri Abid Ali: This item was not included in the agenda of the conference.

Shri T. K. Chaudhuri: May I know whether it is a fact that the tea plantation owners wanted to refer the question of cash compensation to their respective principals? If so, have they submitted any reply? Are the Government aware of this?

Shri Abid Ali: Yes, Sir. The representatives of the planters wanted to consult their constituents. Subsequently they have written to us that they were not prepared even to accept As. 7½.