

organisation scheme was to take over private-owned Railway Companies by the Government;

(b) when did the lease of the Shahadara-Saharanpur Light Railway expire last;

(c) has the lease been renewed; and

(d) if so, the reasons thereof?

The Minister of Railways and Transport (Shri L. B. Shastri): (a) No. The taking over of privately-owned Railways is regulated by contracts with the parties concerned.

(b) to (d). The last option to Government to take over the Shahdara (Delhi) Saharanpur Light Railway occurred on 18-4-48 but was not exercised on financial grounds. There is no question of renewing the lease as according to the terms of the existing contract the option, if not exercised, is automatically postponed and recurs after every 7 years.

RAILWAY LINK FROM GARO HILLS TO ASSAM RAILWAY SYSTEM

*2154. **Jonab Amjad Ali:** Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to refer to the reply given to starred question No. 1741 (c) asked on the 14th July, 1952 and state:

(a) whether any preliminary survey was made for the railway line from the main Railway System of Assam to the projected coal fields of Garo Hills and if so, from which place to which place;

(b) what is the estimated cost of the proposed Railway;

(c) whether the cost of constructing a bridge over Brahmaputra between Jogighopa and Pomeharatna was also estimated; if so, what was the total estimate; and

(d) when were these estimates made?

The Minister of Railways and Transport (Shri L. B. Shastri): (a) Preliminary engineering survey was made for a Railway line from Pandu to Darangiri in the Garo Hills via Amjanga.

(b) The line was estimated to cost Rs. 529.91 lakhs.

(c) The hon. Member's attention is invited to the reply given by me to his question No. 1111 on 23rd June 1952, when he was informed that no estimate for the construction of the bridge was prepared.

(d) The estimate for the rail connection between Pandu and Darangiri was prepared in 1950.

SCHEDULED AND BACKWARD CLASSES

*2155. **Shri Elayaperumal:** Will the Minister of Home Affairs be pleased to state whether the Government of India have appointed any Commission to investigate the conditions of Scheduled Classes and Backward classes?

The Minister of Home Affairs and States (Dr. Katju): The matter is under consideration and a decision will be taken shortly.

MATCH WOOD AND SEMAL TREES

538. **Shri Hem Raj:** Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government put into operation the scheme for the plantation of Match wood and semal trees;

(b) which State possess the most suitable soil for these plantations;

(c) what share the Central Government is contributing to the State Governments for its implementation; and

(d) what sums have been allotted to different States under this scheme?

The Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri Kidwai): (a) Yes.

(b) In every State there are suitable localities in reserve forests for match-wood species.

(c) Central Government have agreed to contribute 50 per cent. of the total expenditure incurred by each State.

(d) For the year 1952-53 we have allocated the following sums to different States:

	Rs.
(1) Uttar Pradesh	78,000
(2) Assam	50,000
(3) Bombay	60,000
(4) Travancore-Cochin	40,000
(5) Madras	7,000
TOTAL	2,35,000

IMPORT OF FOODGRAINS (FREIGHT)

539. **Shri Jhunjhunwala:** Will the Minister of Food and Agriculture be pleased to state:

(a) the quantity and value of food-grains imported into India in the year 1951 from different countries;