

Booking Clerks

* 628. **Shri M. S. Gurupadaswamy** : Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to state :

(a) whether attention of Government has been drawn to the grievances of Northern Railway Booking Clerks regarding the avenues of promotions, residential accommodation and other difficulties ; and

(b) if so, the action that the Government have taken or propose taking in the above matter?

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Railways and Transport (Shri Shahnawaz Khan) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The matter is under consideration.

Shri M. S. Gurupadaswamy : May I know whether the recruitment policy of the Railway Board has prejudiced the clerks working already in the Northern Railway?

Shri Shahnawaz Khan : No, Sir.

Shri M. S. Gurupadaswamy : May I know whether it is a fact that the recent recruitments to the clerical cadre have overlooked the seniority of the clerks working in this region?

Shri Shahnawaz Khan : A number of grievances from the clerks of the Northern Railway were received in the form of a memorandum and all those points are receiving attention.

Shri V. Muniswamy : May I know whether any decision taken on this memorandum will be applicable to Northern Railway clerks only or to clerks working on all the railways?

Shri Shahnawaz Khan : I should request my hon. friend to have a little patience until the decision is taken and then raise this question.

Shri T. N. Singh : May I know whether avenues of promotions have already been found in corresponding or similar services like ticket collectors and others only a few months or a year ago, and if so, why the chances of promotion in regard to these booking clerks and commercial clerks were also not taken up at the same time to avoid any heart-burnings?

The Deputy Minister of Railways and Transport (Shri Alagesan) : That is one of the demands. One of their demands is that their channel of promotion is limited. That is also being examined. Whereas other categories are allowed to appear for accounts examinations, they are not permitted to do so. All those things are being looked into.

Shri T. N. Singh : Among the commercial clerks themselves, the booking clerks and those working in the claims office, there is already a discrepancy regarding chances of promotion. Is that so?

Shri Alagesan : I am not able to say off-hand.

Shri T. B. Vittal Rao : The Railway Minister while presenting the budget announced that he was going to increase the number of higher grades. At what stage is that proposal and when is it likely to be finalised?

The Minister of Railways and Transport (Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri) : That is being considered by a few directors of the Railway Board. They have formulated certain tentative proposals. My difficulty has been that we have not been able to consult the Federation in this matter so far. We do not want that we should get their opinion before making any formal announcement, but in case it is not possible to do so or it takes time then perhaps the Government at their own initiative will have to announce their decision after some time.

Private Railways

* 629. **Shrimati Renu Chakravarty** : Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to state :

(a) the findings of the special officer appointed to examine the Howrah-Amra and Howrah-Sealkhala Light Railway of Martin and Co., and possibilities of its being taken over by Government; and

(b) whether Government has arrived at any decision and if so, what is it?

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Railways and Transport (Shri Shahnawaz Khan) : (a) and (b). The question of taking over the Howrah Amra and Howrah-Sealkhala Light Railways was not referred to the Special Officer appointed by the Eastern Railways at the instance of the Railway Board. Under the contract the authority empowered to acquire the Light Railways are the local District Boards and Municipalities.

Shrimati Renu Chakravarty : Is it not a fact that the special officer appointed by the railways to enquire into this matter gave his opinion that it could be nationalised as part of the Howrah Yard Development and Electrification Scheme?

Shri Shahnawaz Khan : No, I do not think there was any such recommendation.

Shrimati Renu Chakravarty : In view of the fact that this railway is a very old railway and yet caters to a very