

The Minister of Railways (Shri C. M. Poonacha): (a) Yes.

(b) Only the Government of Mysore have recommended its construction during the Fourth Plan.

(c) The Central Board of Transport recommended in 1952 the construction of the Chamarajanagar-Coimbatore alignment along with the Khandwa-Hingoli link to bridge the gap between the North and South Metre gauge systems.

(d) Yes; but both the routes were not financially justified.

(e) No. The Chamarajanagar-Sathyamangalam line was thought of as a link between the North and South MG systems. The Bangalore-Salem link was considered as a better alternative than the Chamarajanagar-Coimbatore/Mettupalayam link, and its construction taken up and is in progress.

Scholarships in Khurda Division of S. E. Railway

758. Shri Chintamani Panigrahi: Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to state:

(a) the number of scholarships awarded in Khurda Division of the S.E. Railway from the Staff Benefit Fund during 1962-63, 1963-64, 1965-66 and 1966-67;

(b) whether the number has been increased for 1967-68; and

(c) if so, to what extent?

The Minister of Railways (Shri C. M. Poonacha): (a) Eighteen during 1962-63; Twenty nine during 1963-64; Twenty eight during 1965-66; and Twenty eight during 1966-67.

(b) This will depend upon the applications for scholarships and these have not been invited so far.

(c) Does not arise.

Fertilizer Plant, Neyveli

759. Shri Seshiyan: Will the Minister of Steel, Mines and Metals be pleased to state:

(a) whether there was an outbreak of fire in the lignite dust of the fertilizer plant in Neyveli on the 13th February, 1967;

(b) if so, the damage caused to life and property;

(c) whether any enquiry has been conducted into the cause of the fire and the preventive measures available there; and

(d) if so, the steps taken by Government after the enquiry?

The Minister of Steel, Mines and Metals (Dr. Chenna Reddy): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Two employees—one Junior Plant Manager and one Semi-skilled worker died as a result of this accident. There was no damage to the property.

(c) and (d) The Factory Inspectorate of the Government of Madras and also a special Committee constituted by the Neyveli Lignite Corporation have investigated the matter. While the report of the former is still awaited, the recommendations made by the latter are under consideration of the Corporation. However, as an immediate measure, the Corporation have made some adjustments in the drier stack of the Gas Plant and this is expected to prevent the recurrence of similar accidents.

Manufacture of Passenger Cars

761. Shri Seshiyan: Will the Minister of Industrial Development and Company Affairs be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken a decision to curtail the expansion of production of passenger cars in the country;