

(c) To reduce the number of un-manned level crossings, the Railways carry out periodical census of road and rail traffic to review the need for their manning. Based on this, certain un-manned level crossings are earmarked for manning in consultation with the State Government taking into account various factors such as density of traffic, visibility, accident proneness, etc. as also the availability of funds. During the period from 1st April, 1973 to 31st March, 1976, 39 un-manned level crossings in Punjab State have been manned.

Production of Concrete Sleepers

2085. SHRI ARVIND M. PATEL:
SHRI VEKARIA.

(a) Will the Minister of RAILWAY be pleased to state whether concrete sleepers have been found to be more durable and economical in comparison to the wooden sleepers;

(b) if so, the difference in the manufacturing cost of concrete sleepers and wooden sleepers;

(c) to what extent the demand of concrete sleepers is being met; and

(d) the steps taken by Government to increase the production?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BUTA SINGH): (a) Yes. Concrete sleepers are more durable and economical than wooden sleepers in the long run.

(b) The present day cost of concrete sleepers is about Rs. 250/- each. Its anticipated life is 50 years. It has got an additional advantage that it can be used with long welded rails, which, by itself, prolongs the life of rails and also minimises wear and tear of rolling stock. A wooden sleeper without fastenings costs Rs. 75/. If

it has to be used in ordinary track, the cost with fittings will be about Rs. 100. If this sleeper has to be used with long welded rails and elastic fittings, the cost will be nearly Rs. 175/-. The normal life of wooden sleepers is only 12 to 15 years.

(c) At present, we are able to procure about two lakhs concrete sleepers in a year. We shall like to get more. Our normal demand for track renewals of concrete sleepers is about eight lakh numbers.

(d) Six factories are already engaged in the production of concrete sleepers, and these would be increasing their production capacities. More firms are being inducted. The Ministry of Railways are setting up a factory at Allahabad for the purpose.

Foreign Collaboration for Oil Exploration in Bombay High

2086. SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA:
SHRI RAGHUNANDAN LAL BHATIA:

Will the Minister of Petroleum be pleased to state:

(a) the nature of the proposal, as reported, to obtain French collaboration for exploration and drilling of oil in Bombay High; and

(b) whether any long-term, definitive plan has been worked out in respect of the total foreign collaboration which will be required in this year?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM (SHRI ZIAUR RAHMAN ANSARI): (a) and (b). A proposal in this regard has been received from CFP of France. It is not in the public interest to disclose any details in the matter at this stage.