

smuggling of wildlife products.

[English]

Improvement of Passenger Earnings

889. SHRI DATTATRAYA BANDARU:
Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to evolve definite strategies to improve passenger-earnings and to plug the leakage of revenue;

(b) if so, the strategies proposed;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the quantum of total loss incurred by the Railways during the first 9 months of the current financial year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI K.C. LENKA): (a) and (b) The following are some of the strategies adopted by the Government to improve passenger earnings:

- (1) To introduce more trains and services including short distance shuttle and Diesel Multiple Units,
- (2) To reduce the queuing time by introducing Self Printing Ticket Machines, both electro-mechanical and micro-processor based, and
- (3) To ensure availability of tickets in booking counters.

To plug the leakage of revenue, measures like frequent inspections, intensive ticket checking and preventive vigilance checks are conducted.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) There was a shortfall of Rs. 170.58 crores in the earnings from passenger traffic during the first 9 months of the current financial year as against the Budget Estimates for the said period.

Fast Speed Trains

890. SHRI SHRAVAN KUMAR PATEL:
Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Railways is still confident of achieving their target of introducing trains with the speed of 160 Km per hour by the year 2000;

(b) whether any review has been made of the progress in the development of infrastructure to take on such speed; and

(c) if so, the results thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI K.C. LENKA) (a) to (c): Presently the maximum speed of passenger trains has been pegged at 140 kmph. While as a corporate objective, the Railways have mentioned that the speed of 160 kmph by the year 2000, it is premature at this stage to say that such trains will be run. Financial constraints and need to conserve line capacity by increasing the speed of freight services would have to be accorded greater priority.

[Translation]

Farmer Service Centres

891. SHRI RAM KRIPAL YADAV: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose