

Surcharge on tickets to and from Sher Halt

50. SHRI D. N. TIWARY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that surcharge at six paise per ticket to and from Sher Halt (in Varanasi Division of N.E.R.) is levied;

(b) whether it is a fact that this surcharge is not levied on any other halt started before or after the start of Sher Halt; and

(c) if so, the reasons for this discrimination?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SHEO NARAIN): (a) Yes.

(b) Surcharge has been levied on a number of halts, started before and after Sher Halt.

(c) Does not arise.

Railway Refreshment Service

51. SHRI R. MOHANARANGAM: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the Railway refreshment service both at the trains and at the station canteens continue to be unsatisfactory and call for considerable improvement; and

(b) the concerted efforts made by Government to improve the amenities to passengers in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SHEO NARAIN): (a) The standard of catering service on trains and in static units is fairly satisfactory. There is, however, scope for improvement and every effort is being made to further improve the standard of catering services on trains

and in static units. If specific complaints or suggestions are brought to the notice of the Government, appropriate action will be taken.

(b) Railways have taken a number of steps such as adoption of modern culinary techniques, use of modern kitchen gadgets and equipments, setting up of base kitchens to provide 'ready to serve' meals on trains, procurement of raw material ingredients from standard sources, training of catering staff in suitable Institutes, etc., to further improve the quality of service and food on the Railways. To ensure supply of hygienically prepared wholesome food on trains, base kitchens have been set up as cooking, cleaning and washing of utensils were not considered satisfactory in the cramped space of dining cars. Checks and surprise inspections are carried out regularly by Inspectors and Officers to ensure service of good quality food, tea, coffee, etc., to the travelling public both by departmental as well as privately managed catering establishments. Any failure on the part of staff or contractor is taken up promptly and corrective steps are taken to guard against lapses in future. A very close and constant watch is kept on these activities.

Passenger Services between Kalyani Township and Sealdah-Ranaghat Railway Line

52. SHRI SHYAMA PRASANNA BHATACHARYYA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Central Government have received a communication from the Government of West Bengal regarding the introduction of passengers services between Kalyani Township and Sealdah-Ranaghat Railway Line:

(b) whether Government have considered the importance of the proposals in view of requirement of increased transport in the region; and