

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SHEO NARAIN): (a) No. However, as a result of unplanned movements on the Railways on account of increased imports of fertilizers and cement, Railways have been called upon to undertake the movement of long lead traffic resulting in increased turnaround of wagons which has also been affected adversely by detentions for loading, unloading etc., leading to marginal shortfalls and complaints regarding wagon supplies from certain sectors.

(b) Movement of important commodities like coal, fertilizers and cement is programmed in advance in consultation with the concerned Ministries and there has been no shortfall in movement against the target fixed both for fertilizers and cement. There has, however, been some shortfall in respect of some commodities including coal for reasons indicated above.

(c) and (d). The daily requirements of wagons is approximately 35,000 cumulatively for both broad and metre gauge originating traffic and the effective wagon fleet is approximately 4,75,000 both broad and metre gauge cumulatively in terms of 4 wheeler wagons.

(e) To cater to the targeted tonnage of the current year, at the increased leads as during last year, additional wagons are required to be procured. The present programme for procurement of wagons during the current financial year has already been increased to 13,000 wagons and in the next year this will be further increased.

Tea Stall Contracts in Central Railway

1227. **SHRI BHAUSAHEB THORAT:** Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the policy of Government in giving contracts of tea stalls etc. to vendors in Central Railway;

(b) whether the percentage for giving such stalls to SC/ST vendors is being observed in Central Railway; and

(c) if so, what is their total number in the Central Railway?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SHEO NARAIN): (a) For the award of vending contracts, applications are invited through press notifications and notices displayed at conspicuous places at Railway Stations. The applications are then scrutinised by a Screening Committee consisting of 2 or more officers, taking into consideration, the suitability, experience, financial standing etc. of the candidates. The Screening Committee recommends suitable candidates on merit to the competent authority, who after taking into consideration the recommendation of the Screening Committee awards the contract to the most eligible candidate. These rules apply to all the Railways including Central Railway.

(b) No percentage has been laid down. Under the existing rules, Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe candidates get preference for allotment of catering/vending contracts. Small catering/vending contracts upto half a unit are allotted to Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe candidates straightaway if they are found capable of doing the work. For catering/vending contracts bigger than half a unit, Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe candidates are given first preference, other things being equal.

(c) There are 33 catering/vending contractors belonging to Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes on the Central Railway.