

**Scarcity of Kerosene Oil in Assam**

9402. SHRI AHMED HUSSAIN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the Supplies Minister of Assam has, recently alleged in the Assam Legislative Assembly that the present scarcity of Kerosene Oil in Assam was due to shortage of movement of wagons by the Railways;

(b) if so, whether the Government of Assam have ever asked the Railways to provide adequate number of wagons and ensure their movements and whether the movement of usual number of wagons have been given in the past; and

(c) if the usual movement of wagons have been stopped, the detailed reasons therefor and if additional wagons were called for by the State Government, action taken/proposed to be taken thereon?

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

(b) While no request has been received from the Government of Assam. Railways have supplied fully the wagons asked for by the Oil Industry for the movement of Kerosene. However, the Kerosene stocks have improved in April and wagon supplies have also been stepped up to match the requirements.

(c) Does not arise.

**Number of lightning strikes**

9403. SHRI VASANT SATHE: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the number of lightning strikes Zone-wise reported for 1977-78 and 1978-79 up to the 31st March, 1979 and the loss of mandays reported; and

(b) the major/important lightning strikes, details thereof, the reasons therefor and the issues settled/under settlement?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SHEO NARAIN): (a) and (b). There were no strikes as such during the periods in question, but there were stoppages of work by some categories of workers—all of which were minor in nature. The number of work stoppages and the number of mandays lost are given below:—

	During 1977-78	During 1978-79
No. of work stoppages	46	159
No. of mandays lost	1,059	Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

There was a major agitation, viz. a work-to-rule movement organised by a section of Traffic staff, mainly on the Eastern and N.F. Railways, which partially affected the train operations for varying periods from 20-3-79 to 12-4-79. On Central, Northern and N.E. Railways also, the movement was started, but it was limited to certain sections and did not have much effect on train operations. Talks were held with the representatives of staff on their grievances.

**Central assistance for roads in Arunachal**

9404. SHRI SIDRAMESHWARA SWAMY: Will the Minister of SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT be pleased to state the Central assistance towards the expenditure on construction of roads in Arunachal?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN CHARGE OF THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT (SHRI CHAND RAM): Expenditure aggre-

ingating Rs. 89.09 crores on the construction of roads in Arunachal Pradesh and Rs. 11.44 crores on their maintenance was incurred by Border Roads Organisation between 1960 and February 1979. In addition a sum of Rs. 229.79 lakhs on the construction and Rs. 10.71 lakhs on the maintenance of certain approach roads to Tengra Hydel Project financed by the Ministry. of Energy has also been spent.

**News item captioned "Skeletons in BPT Cupboard"**

9405. SHRI VIJAY KUMAR N. PATIL: Will the Minister of SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether attention of Government has been drawn to the news report appearing in the 'Indian Express' dated the 6th April, 1979 under the Caption "Skeletons in BPT Cupboard";

(b) if so, the reaction of Government to the various observations of serious nature made therein observation-wise; and

(c) details regarding facts of the matter and action taken?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN CHARGE OF THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT (SHRI CHAND RAM): (a) to (c) Two Trustees had resigned in March, 1979 from the Trusteeship of the Bombay Port, the term of which expired on 31-3-1979. Presumably, their resignation was to show their displeasure on the increase in the port charges on certain services, which were unremunerative. In this connection, it may be stated that the increase in Port charges was recommended by Mehta Committee, as one of the measures is to relieve congestion at the Port.

2. The cranes installed in Bombay Docks, though old, still remain under-utilised as the trade has not taken to modern cargo handling methods of

pre-linging and palletisation. A committee has been constituted to suggest methods of unitisation having regard to the nature and type of cargo to be handled.

3. M.V. 'Ocean Star' capsized and sank along side the berth at No. 13, Indira Dock on 6-12-1978. Action is being taken to remove the wreck of the vessel. However, it may be stated that the entire berth has not been immobilised on account of this accident.

4. A mechanical device for faster unloading of fertilizer has been installed by Department of Agriculture in 1977. It has not been possible to commission the facilities in view of a settlement with labour. A Committee of three Secretaries have been appointed to resolve the dispute.

5. There have been frequent strikes and stoppages in the recent past. In 1978, there were 28 strikes involving 36020 employees. In the first 3 months of 1979, there have been 14 stoppages so far. The number of man days lost in 1978 came to 2,98,000. Negotiations are being held from time to time to resolve the labour disputes which are mainly due to inter-Union rivalry.

6. The exports have not fallen as would be apparent from the following:—

	Exports (Tons)	
	1978	1979
January . . .	3,16,919	4,75,573
February . . .	3,38,010	3,57,179
March . . .	3,12,834	4,10,679

Special efforts were made in the month of March, 1979 to improve the exports by giving priority to export ships.

7. It is not true that the recent increase in port charges has caused unbearable burden on shipping.