

broad gauge and the survey report was received in February, 1972. It revealed that the conversion project costing Rs. 3.79 crores at the then prevailing prices would not be financially justifiable, the return being of the order of 2.5 per cent.

The Government of Orissa have indicated their intention to set up a number of industries along this line and have proposed its conversion and accordingly the reconnaissance engineering-cum-traffic survey for conversion of Russa-Bangriposi narrow gauge line into broad gauge (89 Kms.) with extension to Chakulia on Tata-nagar-Kharappur section or Gurumahisani on Tatanagar-Onaljori-Gurumahisani line or some other suitable point (about 44 Kms.) was sanctioned in July, 1978. The survey work has been completed and the engineering-cum-traffic survey reports are being finalised by the Railway Administration and will be received shortly.

The survey reports are meant purely for the administrative use of the Railways and as such they are not placed on the Table of the House.

Blindness amongst Children and Adults

7256. SHRI CHINTAMANI JENA: Will the Minister of HEALTH be pleased to lay a statement showing:

(a) the number of cases of blindness amongst children and adults, separately, during the last three years;

(b) whether it is a fact that generally there is a increase in these cases amongst the weaker sections of the society, Adivasi and tribals in the backward areas;

(c) if so, whether Government have conducted any survey in this regard;

(d) if so, the names of such States in which such cases are increasing; and

(e) the steps which Government have taken to extend medical assistance to the States in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH (SHRI NIHAR RANJAN LASKAR): (a) to (d) No survey has been conducted during the last three years to estimate the incidence of blindness in the country.

(e) The Government of India has launched a National Programme for Prevention of Visual Impairment and Control of Blindness in 1977-78 with the main objective of providing eye health care, curative, preventive, promotive and rehabilitative services. This programme has delineated activities into three main sectors viz. peripheral, intermediate and Central. Under the peripheral sector, mobile units are being released to the State Governments to provide comprehensive eye health care to the people in the rural areas. The intermediate sector is providing first line of specialised eye care services at the Sub-divisional and district hospitals. The Central sector is covering medical colleges, Regional Institutes and an apex organisation mainly responsible for long term planning and evaluation, development of manpower, operational research in Ophthalmology and overall technical leadership. Material and equipments are being supplied to Primary Health Centres, District Hospitals, Medical Colleges and Regional Institutes as part of central assistance under the National Programme.

Highway Racing of Motor Cars

7257. SHRI S. M. KRISHNA: Will the Minister of SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to ban the highway racing of motor cars; and

(b) if not, the reasons thereof?