

(b) An amount of Rs. 650 lakhs has been incurred by Central Railway and Rs. 96 lakhs by Western Railway upto 31-3-80.

(c) Yes.

(d) and (e). Does not arise.

Private Catering Contractors on Railways

6356. SHRI R. K. MHALGI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a large number of private catering contractors are operating on Railways for continuously over 20 years;

(b) if so, the number of such contractors and the places where they are operating (stations); and

(c) the reasons prevailed upon Government for continuing these contracts over 20 years?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MALLIKARJUN): (a) Yes.

(b) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

(c) The basic and primary aim of the Railways is to provide satisfactory catering service to the passengers. This is why the rules provide that when the performance of a contractor is satisfactory, on the completion of a tenure, his contract should be renewed for a fresh term. Unless the contractor is assured of stability and continuity of his contract, he cannot be expected to make the required investments in his business and take active interest in providing satisfactory service to the passengers. This is why a number of good contractors have association with the Railways for over 20 years. It is also not desirable to render such contractors jobless when their performance is to the satisfaction of Railway Administration. Further, catering is a specialised

work and parties with long experience, render better quality of service.

Safety measures for human life and property lost by Railway accidents

6357. SHRI K. A. RAJAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Research Designs and Standards Organisation, Lucknow is doing any work on ensuring safety of human life and property lost by Railway accidents; and

(b) whether it is also a fact that the R.D.S.O. has not so far been able to invent any design and equipment which can effectively prevent derailments?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MALLIKARJUN): (a) Yes.

(b) Derailments are caused by a variety of factors acting either independently of each other or collectively. Efforts are made by R.D.S.O. and all other Organisations connected with improvement of railway working to minimise the incidence of accidents, including derailments, but to the best of knowledge no equipment has been developed anywhere in the World which can effectively prevent derailments.

Loss of human life and property during Railway accidents

6358. SHRI K. A. RAJAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Railway accidents and damages by them are in the decrease or increase during the last three years; and

(b) what are the total losses of human lives and property during the above period?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MALLIKARJUN): (a) and (b). The