

and also due to the high dropout rates at the primary stage of school education. However, the percentage of illiterates to total population in the country has declined from 84.2 in 1951 to 70.6 in 1971.

(b) The drop-out rates from Class-I to Class-VIII for the two reference periods 1950-51 to 1957-58 and 1963-64 to 1970-71 are as follows :—

Reference Period	Drop-out Rate
1950-51 to 1957-58	81.1
1963-64 to 1970-71	77.9

*Note : The dropout rates have been worked out using the following formula.

Dropout rate from class-I to class-VIII during the year $\frac{\text{Enrolment in class VIII after 7 yrs.} - \text{Enrolment in class-I during the year}}{\text{Enrolment in class-I during the year}} \times 100$

Sale of Narrow Gauge Rail and other Equipments of Kosi Rail

2712. SHRI D. L. BAITHA : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is any proposal for sale or disposal of narrow gauge rail and other equipments of Kosi Rail, linking Bathnaha, in the district of Purnea on Katihar-Jogbani section of N. F. Railway, with Bheem Nagar, the Kosi Project Head Works in the District of Saharsa (Bihar); and

(b) if so, details of tenders invited by the Department or offer made by any party ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS AND IN THE DEPARTMENT OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI MALLIKARJUN) : (a) This line belongs to the Kosi project and not to Indian Railways. Ministry of Railways are not aware of its disposal.

(b) Does not arise.

12-hour Duty for Chowkidars

2713. SHRI ANANDA PATHAK : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the attention of Government has been drawn to the fact that the Chowkidars working in A. O. (T. A.)/JUC, Northern Railway, are forced to put in twelve hours continuous duty as Rest-House caretakers whereas the Chowkidars of DKZ office are performing eight hours' duty; and

(b) if so, what steps have been taken to remove this discrepancy ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS AND IN THE DEPARTMENT OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI MALLIKARJUN) : (a) and (b) : Chowkidars of Accounts office/Jullundur as well as those working at Delhi-Kishanganj Accounts office have been classified as 'Essentially Intermittent' by the Competent Authority under the Hours of Employment Regulations and are liable to 12 hours daily duty. However, the bulk of watch-keeping work in the Delhi-Kishanganj Accounts office has been taken over by Railway Protection Force, with the result the skeleton staff of Chowkidars left there are employed on 8 hours daily roster