

since got a report from the Indian Embassy in Washington; and

(c) if so, what action do Government propose to take to counteract the secessionist, malicious and false propaganda being carried on by a section of the 'Sikh Americans' in the United States ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI A.A. RAHIM) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Government has received the report from the Indian Embassy in Washington regarding the function.

(c) Before the function, the Indian Ambassador in Washington spoke personally to Congressmen and Senators pointing out that the function which was being held ostensibly to honour Sikh Americans was actually being utilized for political propaganda against India. The Ambassador had also written to U.S. legislators invited for the function explaining the real picture. The press, including the Indian community press were suitably briefed. The Embassy takes every opportunity to counteract secessionist propaganda effectively whenever it is necessary.

#### Conversion of New Jalpaiguri-Alipurduar Line

6695. SHRI SUBODH SEN : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether any proposal is under consideration for the conversion to broad gauge of the railway track between New Jalpaiguri and Alipurduar Junction via Mal (N.F. Railway) and also to extend it to New Alipurduar; and

(b) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI C.K. JAFFER SHARIEF) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

#### Steps taken to Check Malaria, Leprosy, T.B., Blindness and Cancer during 1984-85

6696. SHRI CHINTAMANI JENA : SHRI MOHAN LAL PATEL : Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that Malaria, Leprosy, T.B., Blindness and Cancer are the major diseases;

(b) if so, what steps have been taken during the years 1981-82, 1982-83 and 1983-84 to tackle these diseases in the country;

(c) whether it is a fact that weaker sections of the population are more prone to these diseases; and

(d) if so, what efforts are being taken to tackle these diseases during the year 1984-85 under the 20-Point Programme ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI MOHSINA KIDWAI) : (a) to (d) Malaria, Leprosy, T.B., Blindness and Cancer are major diseases of public health importance. It has also been observed that the people belonging to the lower socio-economic classes are more prone to these diseases, particularly Malaria, Leprosy and T.B. and Blindness, as they are malnourished and live in cover-crowded conditions which predispose these diseases. The Government of India has been implementing Programmes at national level for the control/eradication of these diseases. Besides, the control of Leprosy, T.B. and Blindness have been included in the 20-Point Programme and these central programmes have been accorded priority during the current Five Year Plan period. These central programmes are being suitably modified for effective implementation through Primary Health Caring System, thus ensuring that the benefits of these programmes reach also to the people living in remote areas and the rural surroundings also.