

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS (SHRI SHAHNAWAZ KHAN): (a) and (b). Salt is the concern of the Ministry of Industrial Development. Government will render necessary technical assistance for increasing the potentiality of salt production. Action has to be taken primarily by the State Government in this regard as the land belongs to the State Government and various private parties.

(c) and (d). No, Sir. However the State Government had made a suggestion in this regard to Hindustan Salts Ltd. who agreed to set up a salt work if sufficient land was leased to them.

Connecting Digha with South Contai and Contai Sub-Division with Kharagpur by Rail

5303. SHRI SAMAR GUHA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether many demands have been made for connecting Digha and South Contai Stations in West Bengal;

(b) whether Ramnagar area near Digha the only sea-resort of Eastern India, other than Puri, is a very rich Commercial Centre supplying 'pan' to all parts of India and rice, coconut, fish, Cashew nut and other articles to different parts of Eastern India ;

(c) if so, for promoting trade and commerce in the area whether Contai Sub-division is proposed to be connected by rail with Kharagpur; and

(d) whether any preliminary survey has been conducted or proposed to be conducted to connect Contai sub-division by rail with Kharagpur?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MOHD. SHAFI QURESHI): (a) Yes.

(b) to (d). A reconnaissance survey carried out in 1947-48 for a railway line

from Contai Road to Contai, showed that the project would be unremunerative. No surveys have been carried out thereafter, either to Contai or to Digha, because there has been no significant industrial development in the area. In view of this and also because of the financial stringency, no proposal for linking Contai Sub-Division to Kharagpur, is under consideration at present.

Revision of Minimum Wages Fixed for Casual Labourers

5304. SHRI Y. ESWARA REDDY : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether he is aware of the Labour Ministry's notification dated 25th April, 1973, revising the daily rates of wages under the Minimum Wages Act, in respect of casual labourers engaged on the permanent way ;

(b) if so, whether instructions have been issued to the Zonal Railways to revise the wage rates of Permanent way Casual Labourers;

(c) whether any Zonal Railway has revised the rates of wages accordingly; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MOHD. SHAFI QURESHI): (a) to (d). The Notification issued by the Department of Labour and Employment on 25th April, 1973 revising the minimum rates of wages payable to the categories of employees employed in employments in construction or maintenance of roads or in building operations, stone breaking, stone crushing, maintenance of buildings, etc., was circulated to all Indian Railways as well as the three Railway Production Units for compliance.

On 5th April, 1957, the Railway Administrations were advised that the employ-

ment on the construction or maintenance of permanent way of Railways was not an employment on "road construction" mentioned in Schedule I to the Minimum Wages Act, 1948.

In March 1968, the Bombay High Court allowed a claim of certain permanent way workers under the Minimum Wages Act. The Railway Administration has filed a special appeal before the Supreme Court against the judgement of the Bombay High Court. The decision of the Supreme Court as regards the applicability of the Minimum Wages Act, 1948 to the Permanent Way workers is awaited.

Pensionary and Provident Fund benefits to persons appointed against regular posts, Jaipur Division (Western Railway)

5305. SHRI Y. ESWARA REDDY : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether instructions exist that Provident Fund and Pensionary benefits are not admissible to daily-rated casual labourers and those holding temporary status;

(b) whether these benefits are admissible if the above said category of workers are appointed against regular posts ;

(c) the number of cases and the amounts paid as Provident Fund and pensionary benefits in the year 1972. Railway-wise to these category of workers who were retrenched or retired or medically incapacitated; and

(d) the number of such cases in the Jaipur Division of Western Railway who were (i) paid the Provident Fund/Pensionary benefits and (ii) who were denied the benefits as not admissible in the year 1972?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MOHD. SHAFI QURESHI): (a) Casual labour on daily rates are not entitled to any Provident Fund or

Pensionary benefits. Casual labour who have acquired temporary status are eligible like other temporary Railway employees to subscribe to the Provident Fund after one year of such service.

(b) Such workers when appointed (after selection) to regular posts, become entitled to the benefits admissible under the rules to regular Railway employees.

(c) and (d). The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the Lok Sabha.

Satyagraha by the Delegates of 'All India Convention of the Blinds' at Poona Station

5306. PROF MADHU DANDAVATE: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether delegates for 'All India convention of the blinds' had offered Satyagraha on the 4th November, 1973 on the Railway track at Poona Station because of the refusal of the Railway authorities to attach the promised special bogey to Manmad passenger train to carry the blind delegates;

(b) if so, whether any blind men received injuries during the satyagraha; and

(c) what steps have been taken to prevent the recurrence of such incidents arising out of the refusal of the Railway authorities to respect the promises given particularly to disabled persons like the blinds?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MOHD. SHAFI QURESHI): (a) to (c). While a request was received for accommodation on the train from the authorities of All India Convention of the Blind but no request for providing a special reserved bogie on 322 Manmad-Bombay passenger on 4-11-73 according to the rules, was received. However, it was agreed by the local station authorities to assist in accommodating the delegates in one train service coach of 324