

The Minister of Commerce (Shri Manubhai Shah): (a) and (b). Not yet, Sir. The trade negotiations with the U.S.S.R. Trade Delegation who are already here are proceeding according to agreed schedules and are likely to be concluded shortly.

Diesel Locomotives

2263. Shri B. K. Das:
Shri S. C. Samanta:

Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to state whether in the face of uncertain prospects of import of diesel from abroad and the critical position in respect of foreign exchange, the Railway Board still maintains its earlier decision to discontinue steam locomotives and replace them by diesel locomotives completely by 1970-71?

The Minister of State in the Ministry of Railways (Dr. Ram Subhag Singh): A statement is given below:

Statement

The Railway Board have not taken any decision to discontinue steam locomotives and replace them by diesel locomotives completely by 1970-71. In this connection an extract from the answer given to Starred Question No. 101 in the Lok Sabha on 20th November, 1964, is reproduced below:—

“(c) and (d). It is not possible at this stage to state the time by which a complete change-over to electric locomotive manufacture may take place at Chittaranjan. There are possibilities, however of the manufacture of steam locomotives at Chittaranjan being tapered off gradually as and when the Indian Railways are able to:

- (i) switch over the production facilities at Chittaranjan to the manufacture of electric locomotives and equipment for them and other desired and appropriate purposes; and

- (ii) step up the production of electric and diesel locomotives to the level necessary to meet all needs.”

There is no material change in the position as explained above and the Railways intend to taper off the steam locomotive production only in gradual stages to suit the production schedule of electric locomotives in Chittaranjan Locomotive Works.

The Railways have a fleet of about 10,800 steam locomotives at present, of which about 2,900 locomotives have done over 40 years of service. Even at the end of the Fourth Five Year Plan (1970-71) after allowing for the retirement of the old and unserviceable locomotives, the Railways will have about 9,800 steam locos in service and this will still constitute a very high proportion of the total fleet of all the locomotives—steam, diesel and electric put together. No steam locomotive is being retired or replaced by diesel or electric locomotives unless it has outlived fully its useful and economic life.

As regards the use of diesel oil by the Railways, it has been assessed that the requirement of diesel oil as a result of the extension of dieselisation on important routes of the railway system will be of the order of 6.5 lakh tonnes only per annum at the end of the Fourth Plan, which, as compared to the anticipated indigenous availability of about 47 lakh tonnes in all the Indian Refineries in that year, will represent only about 14 per cent of the total availability of this fuel. The Railways' demand for diesel oil is thus but a fraction of the total Diesel oil demand of the country.

B.G. Outlet to Sahibganj Loop

2264. Shri P. C. Borooah: Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Assam Government have requested the Central Govern-