

(b) Only those lines required on urgent operational and strategic considerations are proposed to be converted in a phased manner. At present only about 15966 kms. of metre gauge/narrow gauge lines have been identified for conversion during 8th and 9th Plan periods. No time schedule can be fixed for conversion of all metre gauge/narrow gauge lines as this will depend on availability of resources.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) Proposals were received from the Government of Gujarat for conversion of Rajkot-Veraval, Navlakhi-Wankaner-Maliya, Surendranagar-Bhavnagar, Viramgam-Mahesana-Patan, Bedi Port, Surendranagar-Rajula, Kolal-Vijapur, Ahmedabad-Himmatnagar, Dhrangadhra-Kuda, Gandhidham-Bhuj, Joravarnagar-Sayala, and Bharuch-Dehej. Out of these, Gauge Conversion of Wankaner-Dahinsara-Navlakhi and Dahinsara-Maliya Miyana and Viramgam-Mahesana is in progress through Private Capital under the BOLT Scheme and are targetted to be completed within this financial year. Gauge Conversion of Gandhidham-Bhuj at Rajkot-Veraval section would be started shortly. The remaining proposals are either under examination or could not be taken up due to unremunerativeness and constraint of resources.

(e) Yes, Sir.

(f) Details have been indicated in reply to part (d) above.

Black*Pepper Production

*380. SHRI RAMESH CHENNITHALA : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) the total percentage of black pepper production in the State of Kerala;

(b) whether the Government are aware that heavy incidence of pests, diseases, climatic vagaries and price fluctuation have acted as serious deterrents to the investment in the better crop management;

(c) whether the Government of Kerala has submitted any proposal for launching of Technology Mission on the black pepper; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the action taken by the Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (EXCLUDING THE DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING) (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA) : (a) The State of Kerala contributed 97.9 percent to the total black pepper production in India during 1994-95.

(b) During my visit to Kerala, low incidence of disease and pest was reported to me. However, no serious incidence of pests or disease of black pepper was reported in Kerala during 1994-95 and 1995-96. The average yearly wholesale prices of black pepper at Cochin have steadily increased from Rs. 2779/- quintal in 1992 to Rs. 7575/- quintal in 1995.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) The State Government has proposed a Technology Mission for black pepper for implementation as a state activity. The Mission envisages to pool available resources and efforts, and integrate the activities of all State and Central institution/agency located in the State and involved in development of this crop to work towards common objective of improving production and productivity of black pepper. The Ministry has endorsed the proposal in principle and made appropriate provision in the 1996-97 budget for implementing production oriented components.

[Translation]

Central Hindi Advisory Committee

3009. SHRI JAGDAMBI PRASAD YADAV : Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) the time by which the Central Hindi Advisory Committee is likely to be set up;

(b) the time by which the Hindi Advisory Committee as per the pattern of Hindi Advisory Committee of all the Ministries would be set up in the Prime Minister's Office to ensure the implementation of the official language;

(c) whether due to non constitution of the Hindi Advisory and official language Implementation Committees in the Prime Minister's office, the implementation of official language in the Public Sector in the country is suffering; and

(d) the steps being taken to improve upon the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MOHD. MAQBOOL DAR) : (a) There is no proposal under consideration of the Government to constitute any committee as Central Hindi Advisory Committee. Hon'ble Member of Parliament perhaps is referring to the Central Hindi Committee. Constitution of this Committee is under process.

(b) to (d). The position with regard to the Prime Minister's Office is different from that of other Ministries/Depts. It is a small Office which renders secretarial assistance to the Prime Minister. In view of this, it was not felt necessary to constitute a Hindi Advisory Committee and Official Language Implementation Committee in Prime Minister's Office. A Joint Secretary has been entrusted with the duty of implementing instructions issued for the progressive use of Hindi.

[English]

Life Line Express

3010. SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether any assessment has been made so far about the utility of the train called 'Life Line Express'?