

SARI S. M. GURADDI : Sir, our hon. Railway Minister always comes and says that there is financial stringency. May I know whether the Railway Minister or the Railway Department had not taken up any conversion of metre gauge lines into broad gauge for the last three or four years ?

SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA : Sir, the conversion cost of metre gauge into broad gauge comes to about Rs. 30 lakhs per kilometre whereas the laying of a new broad gauge line comes to approximately Rs. 40 lakhs. This, of course, depends entirely on the terrain, but I am giving it on an average. Therefore, sometimes it is considered more worthwhile to lay a broad gauge line instead of conversion. This, of course, again differs from case to case. There have been conversions which the Railway Ministry have undertaken.

MR. SPEAKER : Question Hour is over.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[English]

Summer Specials Between Bombay and Saurashtra

*490. **SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH** : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Railways have decided to stop running of Summer Specials between Bombay and Saurashtra ;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor ;

(c) whether any representations have been received against such a decision ; and

(d) if so, the reaction of the Railway thereto ?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BANSI LAL) : (a) No, Sir,

(b) Does not arise.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Scholarships to SC/ST Students

*495. **SHRI SATYANARAYAN PAWAR** : Will the Minister of EDUCATION be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is any proposal under the consideration of Government to grant scholarships to every student belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes to raise the standard of their education in the country ; and

(b) if not, reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION (SHRI K. C. PANT) : (a) and (b) At the elementary stage education is free for all children including those belonging to Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe communities. Students belonging to these communities are also given free books and stationary and free uniforms in the case of girls.

2. Some of the State Governments are also giving scholarships/freeships to students belonging to SC/ST communities for pre-matriculation studies.

3. As regards posts matric studies, scholarships are given to eligible students belonging to Scheduled Caste/Scheduled tribe communities. These scholarships are given by the Ministry of Home Affairs under a Centrally-sponsored scheme. The scheme is an open ended one. This scheme covers all SC/ST students who are eligible for this award, subject to certain conditions and restrictions governing the award of these scholarships.

4. Scholarships are given to students at different rates depending upon the courses of study. The following rates are in operation at present :