

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI P. V. NARASIMHA RAO): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Based on the Indian draft text, the Declaration adopted by the Conference of Foreign Ministers of Non-Aligned Countries held in New Delhi from February 9—13, 1981, reaffirms the determination of non-aligned countries "to work for the success of the Conference on the Indian Ocean, scheduled to be held in Sri Lanka in 1981, to achieve the objectives of the concept of the Indian Ocean as a Zone of Peace, and to this end urged all Great Powers and other major maritime users to participate in the Conference in a constructive spirit...." During the current session of the Ad Hoc Committee on Indian Ocean in New York, India, in cooperation with other non-aligned countries which are members of the Ad Hoc Committee, is endeavouring to promote agreement on the convening of the Conference in Sri Lanka as scheduled.

Availability of wagons during 6th Plan

*161. SHRI M. V. CHANDRASHEKARA MURTHY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether no firm details are available with the Ministry about how many wagons will be available during the Sixth Five Year Plan;

(b) if so, whether his Ministry has also no information about how many will be required;

(c) Whether experts committee of Railways have advised the Railways to explore the ways to increase the manufacture of wagon capacity;

(d) whether his Ministry has also approached Planning Commission to allow the import of wagons; and

(e) if so, whether they have given their sanction and how many will be imported?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS AND IN THE DEPARTMENT OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI MALIKARJUN): (a) The Sixth Five Year Plan envisages procurement

of about 100,000 wagons in four-wheeler units.

(b) The requirement depends upon the quantum of traffic to be carried for which projections have been made in coordination with other Ministries.

(c) If reference to Expert Committee relates to Planning Commission no such advice has been received in this regard.

(d) No, Sir.

(e) Does not arise.

Corruption in booking of seats on western railway

*162. SHRI R. P. GAEKWAD: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that there is rampant corruption in booking of First Class and Second Class Berths/Seats on the Western Railway;

(b) whether Government are aware that there are Agents operating for booking of berths or seats and extorting exorbitant premiums from passengers;

(c) whether Government are also aware that corruption in the booking of berths or seats in First Class or Second Class is either connived at by the Booking staff or they are hand in glove with the Agents operating for the said purpose; and

(d) if so, the steps taken or proposed to be taken to check the corruption in the booking of berth/seats?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS AND IN THE DEPARTMENT OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI MALIKARJUN): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Some reports of unauthorised agents cornering reserved accommodation on fictitious names in the metropolitan cities including Bombay and then transferring the same at premium to other needy passengers have been received.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) A statement is laid on the Table of the Sabha.

Statement

Intensive checks are being conducted by the Vigilance and Commercial Organisations of the Railways on the reservation offices to detect irregularities in passenger train reservations and also to discourage the activities of touts and anti-social elements dealing in reserved accommodation. If any specific information is furnished about the functioning of these touts, with or without the conclusion of railway staff raids are conducted and follow up action is appropriately taken in conjunction with CBI. During the period from October to December 1980, 475 touts were prosecuted under various sections of Indian Railways Act on Western Railway. During 1980, about 2000 checks were conducted on trains by the Railway to detect travel on transferred tickets procured from touts/unauthorised agents, etc. The Special Squad attached to the Vigilance Directorate of the Railway Board conducted 44 checks at Bombay and other important reservation centres of Western Railway during the same period. 7 cases of major penalty and 70 minor penalty action have been initiated arising out of these checks.

2. Since many of the irregularities in reservation area stem from difference between demand and supply, endeavours have been made to reduce the gap between demand and supply by introducing new trains, augmenting the loads of existing trains, extending their runs, increasing the frequency of weekly/biweekly trains and running holiday specials on important routes to clear the rush of traffic. In addition, several steps have been taken to render better and more satisfactory service to the travelling public by way of streamlining the reservation procedures and arrangements like opening additional booking windows, reservation counters and extending working hours of reservation offices.

3. Persons found selling railway tickets unauthorisedly are taken up under Section 114 of Indian Railways Act 1890 which provides imprisonment for a term which may extend to 3 months or with fine which may extend to Rs. 250/- or with both. Passengers are instructed/warned through public address system not to purchase tickets from unauthorised agents. In addition, an amendment of Indian Railways Act has been processed to make procurement and transfer of reserved accommodation by unauthorised agents a cognizable offence and punishable with Rs. 1,000/- fine and/or imprisonment for 3 years. The draft bill for the new Indian Railways Act has been made out.

Solution of problem of stateless persons of Sri Lanka

*163. SHRI K. T. KOSALRAM:

SHRI K. MALLANNA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the 1964 Sirimavo-Shastri Pact about the stateless people of Tamil origin has ended on 31st October, 1979;

(b) whether the exchange of letters some time in 1974 between the Prime Ministers of India and Sri Lanka in this regard is being treated as a supplementary agreement, which also will lapse on 31st October, 1981; and

(c) if so, the steps that have been initiated to find a solution to this human problem of stateless people of Tamil origin in Sri Lanka?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI P. V. NARASIMHA RAO): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Government of India is in touch with the Government of Sri Lanka with a view to expediting grant of Sri Lanka or Indian citizenship to the remaining stateless persons of Indian origin. We are confi-