

Misuse of Fare Concession for Handicapped

†4373. SHRI BACHANILEKHRAJ : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that concession in fare given to the handicapped is being misused considerably;

(b) if so, whether Government are considering to take any concrete steps to curb the misuse of above facility; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH) : (a) to (c) On receipt of complaints regarding misuse of concessions to disabled persons, the certificates for grant of concession to orthopaedically handicapped/paraplegic, blind, deaf and dumb and mentally retarded persons were revised in May, 1998. The most important changes made were the provision of photograph and address of the concerned disabled person on the certificate.

Operating Ratio of the Railways

4374. SHRI NARENDRA MOHAN : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Operating Ratio of the Railways has consistently been rising during the last four years and this trend is propelling the Railways towards bankruptcy;

(b) if so, what are the reasons therefor; and

(c) what steps the Railways are adopting to make a conscious effort to reverse this slide?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Operating Ratio has been affected mainly from implementation of the recommendations of Vth Central Pay Commission and Government's decision thereon relating to wages and allowances to staff and higher benefits to pensioners. This has resulted in increase the working expenses. Further, in 1998-99 earnings were severely affected due to a reduction in freight loading as a result of economic slowdown.

(c) The effect of the spurt in staff costs and pension liabilities is likely to smoothen in the coming years. Measures to control expenditure by improving

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.