

a result, through coaches from Durg to South have been rescheduled to run by 925/926 Mahanadi Express v-a Nagpur; halt of 29 Howrah-Bombay Express has been increased at Champa; appropriate connecting services have been provided for 1/2 Howrah Mail and 925/926 Mahanadi Express and passenger amenity works have been taken up for development of Korba station.

(c) The demand was considered but introduction of the proposed train was regretted for want of requisite resources.

(d) and (e) The memorandum does not mention any interim demands.

Rail Traffic between Madras and Madurai

1707. SHRI R. T. GOPALAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the difficulties being experienced by the Trade and Commerce of Madras and Madurai cities due to poor and slow rail traffic between these two important cities;

(b) what are the steps taken to convert the present M.G. line to B.G. line between these two cities; and

(c) whether any engineering operational survey has been conducted for the purpose?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): (a) Madras-Madurai route has six direct train services including 135/ 136 Vaigai Express which covers the distance of 492 Kms. in only 7 hours 40 minutes.

(b) Karur-Dindigul new B.G. line and Dindigul-Madurai parallel B.G. line is part of the approved project for BG rail link from Karur to Tuti-

corin. There is no proposal to convert the existing M.G. route to B.G.

(c) No, Sir.

Railway line between Kottayam and Dindigul

1708. SHRI R. T. GOPALAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state;

(a) whether Government propose to construct a railway line between Dindigul and Kottayam keeping in view the heavy pilgrim traffic to these two places to visit the famous Palani and Ayyappa temples in Tamilnadu and Kerala; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA):

(a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Electrification of Rail Line between Villupuram and Trichy

1709. SHRI R. T. GOPALAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to electrify rail line between Villupuram and Trichy; and

(b) if so, by when this project is likely to commence?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Purchase of ships from Japan by Tamil Nadu Government

1710. SHRI SAMAR MUKHERJEE: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the

Government of Tamil Nadu had purchased three ships from Japan;

(b) whether it is a fact that the Central Government had given clearance to the Government of Tamil Nadu for the purchase of three ships from Japan; and

(c) if so, what are the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI RAJESH PILOT): (a) to (c) M/s Poompuhar Shipping Corporation Limited a Government of Tamil Nadu Undertaking was given clearance by the Central Government to acquire 3 bulk carriers from Japan, for the specific purpose of carrying of coal for the thermal power stations of the Tamil Nadu Electricity Board from Calcutta/Haldia/Paradip/Vizag to Madras/Tuticorin.

Import of Railway Coaches

1711. SHRI R. SAMBASIVA RAO: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to import railway coaches in technology transfer agreement; and

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Tender for the import of 60 coaches with transfer of technology has been opened and is in the process of finalisation. In all, seven firms had participated in the tender out of which offers of four firms have been short listed for further processing. This import represents state of the art technology which is not available indigenously.

Railway expansion work

1712. SHRI R. SAMBASIVA RAO: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

1a) whether there is any proposal under (government's consideration to undertake the railway expansion work only in those States which are III-c. projected by trains and specially in backward areas of the country; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): (a) and (b) Provision of rail connection to remote and backward areas is one of the criteria for taking up construction of New Lines. Approved New line projects as per details given in Railway Budget include such lines.

Adoption of new technology by Railways

1713. SHRI R. SAMBASIVA RAO: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state;

(a) whether Government propose to adopt new technology to gear-up rail network in the country, and

(b) if so, what are the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Broadly, new technology is planned to be introduced in the following major areas;

(i) Higher Horsepower and more fuel-efficient electric locomotives.

(ii) Higher Horsepower and more fuel-efficient diesel locomotives.