

Palace on Wheels' Train

427. SHRI DHULESHWAR MEENA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the total earnings from the prestigious 'Palace on Wheels' train during the year 1983-84 and 1984-85 and whether any amount out of this has been given to the Rajasthan Government, if so, what are the details thereof;

(b) whether the train is presently being run only during a limited period, if so, what is the period; and

(c) what improvements are likely to be made in the out-fit of this train to make it more popular and revenue earning?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BANSI LAL): (a) The gross earnings during the season 1983-84 and upto 6th March, 1985 (during 1984-85 season) were Rs. 86.81 lakhs and Rs. 57.59 lakhs respectively. The earnings are proportioned between Rail ways and the Rajasthan Tourism Development Corporation in accordance with the agreed ratio.

(b) The train runs during October to March only.

(c) Steps are taken from time to time to improve the facilities provided on the train keeping in view the suggestions received from the tourists.

Survey on proposed Madurai-Cochin Broad Gauge Line

428. SHRI V. GOPALSAMY: SHRI L. GANESAN:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to refer to reply to Un-starred Question 3115 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 21st December, 1983 and state:

(a) whether the survey for Madurai-Cochin broad gauge has since been completed and report submitted;

(b) if so, when and what are its recommendations; and

(c) what action is being taken on the report?

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

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Scheme under the National Integration Project

429. SHRI K. VASUDEVA PANICKER: Will the Minister of EDUCATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a scheme under the National Integration Project through National Council for Educational Research and Training was launched by his Ministry in 1982;

(b) if so, what are the details of the scheme; and

(c) whether the scheme has been extended to all parts of the country and whether it has been able to achieve the desired results?

THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION (SHRI K. C. PANT): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A scheme for promotion of national integration through Community Singing was launched in 1982 with the following objectives:

(i) Community Singing should inculcate patriotism and pride in our country and its glorious heritage.

(ii) Children should learn to respect and love all the languages and cultures which are interwoven into the fabric of India, including the work of great poets in various Indian languages, the strengthening the spirit of national integration.

(iii) Children must be taught to think of the common interest of the country and its people.

(iv) Group singing should inculcate discipline and an attitude of cooperative participation.

(v) It should provide for a large number of people, an opportunity for artistic self-expression and pride in belonging to the community.

(vi) India's positive contribution to the cause of peace in the world should be brought out.

The main activities undertaken under this programme include organization of camps for training of teachers, preparation and duplication of cassettes containing selected community songs, free supply of cassettes and tape-recorders to teacher participants in training camps, free supply of tape-recorders and recorded cassettes to various schools in States/ U. T.s and Kendriya Vidyalayas, bringing out various publications, evaluation of the work being done by teachers in the field of community singing, etc.

(c) Yes, Sir. The scheme has been extended to all parts of the country and is progressing towards achieving the desired results.

Involvement of Air Force Officers in disposing of Coaldust

430. SHRI VIRENDRA VERMA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that some senior Air Force officers at Kasauli were recently found involved in disposing of about 2000 quintals of coal-dust without inviting tenders;

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

(c) what action has been taken by Government in the matter?

1732 RS—3

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI P. V. NARASIMHA RAO): (a) and (b) About 80 tonnes of coal-dust accumulated over a period of time after the issue of steam/soft coal to authorised personnel at Air Force Station Kasauli, was disposed of under the instructions of the then station commander without inviting tenders.

(c) Court of Enquiry convened by Headquarters Western Air Command did not hold anyone to blame. The case is presently under investigation by C.B.I.

Drop-out of SC/ST Students at Primary Level

431. SHRI JAGADISH JANI: Will the Minister of EDUCATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there has been a large scale dropout of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe students at the primary level in different States;

(b) whether such drop-out of SC and ST students has been on the increase in those States where there is heavy concentration of SC and ST population;

(c) if so, the main factors of such large scale drop-outs; and

(d) the remedial measures taken by the Central Government during the last two years?

THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION (SHRI K. C. PANT): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) The main factors responsible for large scale dropout of children of SC/ST and other economically weaker sections of society are:

(i) Socio-economic factors: