

for the development of the area, whereas Shri Ajoy Biswas, M.P. in his letter dated 27-5-81 had requested for early completion of survey for new line in Tripura. No mention was made by them for extension of railway line beyond Agartala upto Sab-room. Both of them were replied that a preliminary engineering-cum-traffic survey (updating) has already been sponsored by N.E. Council, at their cost and the N.F. Railway has been advised to complete the survey as early as possible. Further consideration to this project will be given after the results of the survey become known, subject to availability of funds and its clearance by the Planning Commission.

Expansion of Kumedpur-Borosoi-New Jalpaiguri-Raninagar Railway Line

346. SHRI DEBENDRA NATH BARMAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration for doubling of the railway line Kumed-pur-Borsoi New-Jalpaiguri-Raninagar, on N.F. Railway; and

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

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRIES OF RAILWAYS EDUCATION AND SOCIAL WELFARE AND IN THE DEPARTMENT OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI MALLIKARJUN): (a) and (b) Conversion of Katihar-Barsoi-Siliguri-New Jalpaiguri M.G. Section into B.G. (209.01 Kms.) as a part of doubling of Kumedpur-Barsoi-New Jalpaiguri-Raninagar section has already been approved and included in the Railway Budget for 1981-82 at an estimated cost of Rs. 42.70 crores, with an initial provision of Rs. 50 lakhs during the year. Engineering-cum-Traffic Survey for the proposed conversion sanctioned in July, 1981 is *in progress*. The construction work will be taken in hand after the survey is

completed and the project estimate sanctioned.

Introduction of Super Fast Train... between New Bongaigaon and Calcutta

347. SHRI DEBENDRA NATH BARMAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the demand of the people of North Bengal, Assam and Eastern Region for running a super fast train between New Bongaigaon and Calcutta;

(b) whether it is a fact that it was decided by the Railways to introduce such a super fast train;

(c) if so, what are the reasons for the delay to introduce the train; and

(d) by when such a train is likely to be introduced in the above line?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRIES OF RAILWAYS, EDUCATION AND SOCIAL WELFARE AND IN THE DEPARTMENT OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI MALLIKARJUN): (a) Yes.

(b) to (d) Introduction of Super Fast train between New Bongaigaon and Calcutta is not feasible on account of shortage of broad gauge coaching stock, saturated line capacity on sections enroute and inadequate terminal facilities both at New Bongaigaon and Sealdah/Howrah.

Palace-on-Wheels

348. SHRI DIPEN GHOSH: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a London firm, allegedly blacklisted by the ITDC, has been recommended for appointment as publicity agents for the proposed "Palace on Wheels" under the programme of "tourism attraction" by the Indian Railways;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the planning and implementation of the above programme of "tourism attraction" has been entrusted to the sole charge of an officer who has been promoted to the post of Director in the newly-created Directorate of Tourism under the Railway Board, superseding his seniors;

(c) whether the said officer had been given opportunities of travelling abroad circumventing the normal procedures to be followed for the purpose; and

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

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRIES OF RAILWAYS, EDUCATION AND SOCIAL WELFARE AND IN THE DEPARTMENT OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI MALLIKARJUN): (a) For undertaking Promotional campaign for tourism in India by rail including the pilot project for development of tourism in Rajasthan by rail, the Indian High Commission in London the Director, India Tourist Office, London have recommended a London based firm M/s. Kaul Prever Harle Simoes for undertaking preparatory work. This firm had earlier handled the promotional campaign for other Government of India agencies such as Tea Board of India, India Trade Centre (Jute Division) Brussel and Trade Development Authority. It has been confirmed by the Ministry of Tourism that the firm is not black-listed by ITDC or any other agency.

(b) No. The planning and implementation of the tourism programme is being done under the direction and control of the Railway Board which is taking corporate decisions on this matter. All policy decisions, including those involving financial commitments, are taken by the Railway Board. The officer has been posted to the post of Director in turn without superseding any senior.

(c) No. The report appearing in the *Blitz* of 10th October, 1981 in this regard is incorrect and malicious. The officer had gone abroad as a Consultant to the Asian Development Bank in his individual capacity on specific request from the Bank. His services were utilised by the Government for mustering support of a few South East Asian countries for Asian Railways Union Project. He was also selected by the Economic Development Institute of the World Bank on his own merit for attending a course. His visits abroad were duly sponsored, cleared and sanctioned. He has not gone abroad even once in connection with "tourism promotion".

(d) Does not arise.

Representation from the South Central Railway Employees Union, Poornanandampet, Vijayawada

349. SHRI PATTIAM RAJAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received a letter dated the 6th August, 1981 from the South Central Railway Employees Union, Poornanandampet, Vijayawada regarding the treatment of the period of medical examination as on duty;

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

(c) whether Government have also received a communication dated the 12th October, 1981, from any Member of Parliament on the same subject; and

(d) if so, what action Government have taken on the two representations?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRIES OF RAILWAYS, EDUCATION AND SOCIAL WELFARE AND IN THE DEPARTMENT OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI MALLIKARJUN): (a) and (c) Yes.

(b) The main point raised in the representation is that the absence of casual labour working on Projects