

men. A close liaison is also being maintained with the State Police Authorities to safeguard the track.

Appointment of Confidential Assistants by the Northern Railway Headquarters

*701. SHRIMATI PRATIBHA SINGH:
SHRIMATI MARGARET ALVA:
SHRIMATI SARASWATI PRADHAN:
SHRIMATI SUSHILA SHANKAR ADIVAREKAR:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that no test for selection for appointment to the posts of Confidential Assistants in the scale of pay of Rs. 550—750 has been held by the Northern Railway Headquarters after March, 1976 and the vacancies which arose after filling up posts by the candidates who had qualified at the March, 1976 test were filled on *ad hoc* basis from amongst the Confidential Assistants in the scale of pay Rs. 425—700;

(b) if so, what is the number of Confidential Assistants in the scale of pay of Rs. 425—700 promoted on *ad hoc* basis in the scale of Rs. 550—750 and how many out of them belong to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes;

(c) whether due representation to persons belonging to the Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes at the time of making the *ad hoc* promotion to the grade of Rs. 550—750 was maintained; and

(d) if not what steps Government propose to take in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SHEO NARAIN): (a) Yes, Sir But a fresh selection has been initiated.

(b) Total number: 7. One Scheduled Caste candidate has now been promoted.

(c) and (d) The reservation quota is one Scheduled Caste and one Scheduled Tribe out of the 7 vacancies

filled. The Scheduled Caste vacancy has been filled up. As for the other vacancy, no Scheduled Tribe candidate is available in the cadre of stenographers.

South Asian Rail System

*702. SHRI RANBIR SINGH:
SHRDI CHARANJIT CHANANA:
SHRI JAGJIT SINGH ANAND:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have examined the feasibility of a South Asian Rail System like the Eurail System operating in Europe; and

(b) if so, with what results?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE): (a) and (b) A statement is laid on the Table of the Sabha.

Statement

The idea of Trans Asian Railway Project had been conceived by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (formerly Economic Commission for Asia and Far East) as the linking of Railways of the region with those of European and African systems would greatly contribute to and accelerate the region's economic, social and cultural development. In South Asia the missing rail links are in Indonesia, between Thailand, Burma and Bangladesh and between Pakistan and Iran, and these would involve very heavy capital investment. Studies for construction of the various missing links have been taken up in the past which were financed by the U. N. D. P. The drastic curtailment in U. N. D. P's budget has, however, adversely affected further progress of this Project.

India has no missing rail links in the Trans Asian Railway Project in the mainstream between Pakistan and Bangla Desh. India has from time to time supported this Project and offered to give technical assistance to the countries concerned in carrying

out the surveys for new rail lines, rehabilitation of railway network and modernisation of techniques.

Laying of Railway Lines in backward areas

*703. SHRI F. M. KHAN: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal under Government's consideration to give priority to the backward areas in the matter of laying of new rail lines in future;

(b) whether Government have also suggested to the private sector to provide the necessary infrastructure therefor by taking up development works in the backward areas; and

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

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE): (a) In their 171st and 191st Reports, the Public Accounts Committee had recommended that a comprehensive long term plan may be drawn up for the construction of railway lines in the hilly and backward areas of the country. This recommendation has been accepted by the Government and the matter is under active consideration of the Ministry of Railways in consultation with other concerned Ministries.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

Introduction of new passenger Trains

*704. SHRI LOKNATH MISRA:

SHRI NARASINGHA

PRASAD NANDA:

SHRI BRAHMANANDA
PANDA:

SHRI BHAIKAB CHANDRA
MAHANTI:

SHRI PATITPABAN PRA-
DHAN:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state the number, along

with the terminals, of the new passenger trains introduced during the last six months?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE): A statement is laid on the Table of the Sabha.

Statement

New trains introduced during June to November, 1977

BROAD GAUGE

1. 543/544 Jolarpettai-Erode Passenger.

2. 91/92 Tatanagar-Muzaffarpur Express (triweekly).

3. 29/30 Tirupati East-Hyderabad Rayalsema Express.

4. 303/304 Madras-Arakkonam Express.

5. 443/444 Arakkonam-Renigunta Passenger.

6. 455/456 Tirupati East-Renigunta Passenger.

7. 317/318 Miraj-Satara Passenger.

8. 7JF/12JF Jullundur City-Firozpur Passenger.

9. 51/52 Raipur-Waltair Link Express.

10. 1CB/2 CB Cuttack-Bhubaneswar Shuttle.

11. 59/60 Howrah-Bombay VT (via Nagpur) Gitanjali Express (biweekly)

METRE GAUGE

12. 135/136 Madras-Madurai Vigan Express (6 days in a week).

13. 69/70 Kacheguda-Ajmer Express (biweekly).

14. 237/238 Bikaner-Jaipur Express (to be introduced when breaches on Phulera-Degana are resorted)

15. 387/388 Visavadar-Junagadh Passenger.

16. 296/299 Birur-Shimoga Passenger.