

SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN: They might have gone to the workshops for repair.

QUARTERS FOR ESSENTIAL STAFF OF THE RAILWAYS

*430. SHRI S. N. DWIVEDY: Will the Minister for RAILWAYS be pleased to state whether Government propose to provide quarters for the essential railway staff employed at all big stations like Howrah, Sealdah, Bombay and Delhi?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS AND TRANSPORT (SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN): The Railways' policy to build quarters at stations where there is serious shortage of private accommodation or where quarters are required for housing the essential staff is being implemented, but the programme for the provision of quarters each year takes into account the urgency of the requirements of quarters at various stations on each Railway as a whole.

SHRI S. N. DWIVEDY: Is it not a fact, Sir, that only 2 out of 200 booking clerks in Howrah have quarters and that others have not even a rest-house?

SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN: It is true that in big cities like Howrah and Delhi there is great scarcity of accommodation and we are trying to overtake the arrears as much as possible.

SHRI S. N. DWIVEDY: The hon. Deputy Minister stated just now that "the programme for the provision of quarters each year takes into account the urgency of the requirements of quarters at various stations", etc. Am I to take it that there is no urgency as regards Howrah over this question and therefore there is no need there?

SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN: We do realise the urgency and in fact the Eastern Railway spends the largest portion of the amount allotted for the purpose of building staff quarters. I think last year they spent about Rs. 135 lakhs.

DIWAN CHAMAN LALL: What is the extent of shortage of housing in Delhi for the railway staff, particularly Class IV and Class III?

SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN: Even in Delhi we are building quarters.

DIWAN CHAMAN LALL: What is the extent of the shortage?

SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN: I would require notice.

DIWAN CHAMAN LALL: Is it not a fact that the shortage is exceedingly serious?

SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN: I have no difficulty in admitting that there is a great shortage and we are trying to overtake it as much as possible.

DIWAN CHAMAN LALL: May I ask my hon. friend what particular steps are being taken in order to meet this particular shortage in Delhi?

SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN: Unless I give the information as to how many quarters were built each year the answer may not be complete and that information I don't have with me now.

DIWAN CHAMAN LALL: What I am asking is this. Is there any special attempt being made to set up a committee especially to investigate this matter or are steps being taken to build quickly accommodation for Class III and Class IV Railway employees in Delhi?

SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN: As the House is aware, we are spending between 4 to 5 crores of rupees on building of staff quarters and the Northern Railway has its due share. They are allotted funds from time to time and they spend the money. In fact it is not even shortage of money but shortage of materials at times which hampers our programme. In spite of all this we are trying to forge ahead.

DIWAN CHAMAN LALL: May I ask my hon. friend if he would be pleased to lay on the Table of the House a

detailed statement regarding the shortage in Delhi?

SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN: I can supply the information to the hon. Member.

SHRI B. GUPTA: In view of the shortage of quarters for the lower staff may I know why big palatial buildings with lawns attached to them are being provided to the high railway officials in Calcutta?

SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN: Lawns?

SHRI B. C. GHOSE: Although we are aware that houses are being built I should like to know, in pursuance of the general policy enunciated by the Government, if the hon. Minister could indicate the time by which the requirements of these people at Howrah could be expected to be met?

SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN: That information also relating to the position at Howrah, I can supply to the hon. Member.

INTEGRATION OF BARASAT-BASIRHAT LIGHT RAILWAY WITH THE EASTERN RAILWAY

*431. **SHRI S. N. DWIVEDY:** Will the Minister for RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to integrate the Barasat-Basirhat Light Railway with the Sealdah Division of the Eastern Railway; and

(b) whether Government have received any representation in this connection?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS AND TRANSPORT (SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Yes.

SHRI S. N. DWIVEDY: Is it not a fact that since 1951 this particular Railway is being managed by Martin, Burn & Company, and the Central Government is paying some money for it?

SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN: It is true that both the Central Government and the Government of West Bengal have each advanced this Company a loan of Rs. 3 lakhs.

SHRI S. N. DWIVEDY: Is it not a fact that the management is most unsatisfactory and is it not a fact that the West Bengal Government has recommended to the Central Government to take over its administration as early as possible?

SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN: In fact it is on the recommendation of the West Bengal Government—the Chief Minister of West Bengal went into the affairs of this Company and constituted this new Board of Directors—that the Central Government and the West Bengal Government have granted this loan.

SHRI B. C. GHOSE: The question was whether the West Bengal Government has not made a recommendation that this should be taken over by the Central Government?

SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN: It is true that they desire that the Railway Ministry should construct a broad-gauge line from Barasat to Basirhat. We are examining the proposal. It is a small branch line and we do not know whether it will be economical.

SHRI B. C. GHOSE: Will the hon. Minister indicate, in view of the representations received from the interests concerned in the matter and also in view of the recommendations of the West Bengal Government, as to what has been standing in the way of their taking over this Railway?

SHRI O. V. ALAGESAN: If we construct the line, the chances of recovering the loan will recede. That is one of the things that we have asked the West Bengal Government to examine.

SHRI B. C. GHOSE: If the Central Government do not take over this Railway will they be able to realise