

ministerial staff are in vogue in different Divisions of the Northern Railway;

(b) whether it is a fact that leave reserve strength is denied to some of the Divisions;

(c) whether it also a fact that due to the shortage of clerical staff, earned leave is denied to the ministerial staff on some divisions such as Ferozpur; and

(d) if so, the action proposed to be taken in the matter ?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI C. M. POONACHA) : (a) to (d). The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the Sabha.

ABSENCE FROM DUTY OF RAILWAY STAFF DURING PAKISTANI AGGRESSION

4623. SHRI M. S. MURTI : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that absence from duty of the Railway staff in the border areas during the days of Pakistan aggression in 1965 was treated as leave without pay;

(b) if so, whether any representation has been received by the staff concerned to treat this as leave due to them; and

(c) if so, the action taken thereon ?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI C. M. POONACHA) : (a) Yes.

(b) Yes.

(c) The cases were dealt with on their merits.

EXPORT OF COIR YARN

4624. SHRI K. M. KOUSHIK : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the export of coir yarn has declined; and

(b) if so, the steps taken by Government in this regard ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI MOHD. SHAFI QURESHI) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Compulsory pre-shipment inspection has been introduced. Research is being carried on for efficient operation of spindles to increase output and reduce costs. Apart from this, steps are being taken to popularise coir products abroad and these should generate additional demand for coir yarn.

EXPORT OF MANGANESE ORE

4625. SHRI K. M. KOUSHIK : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that India suffered a set back in the matter of export of manganese ore in the past; and

(b) if so, the position today as compared to the years of set back and also to the prosperous years ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI MOHD. SHAFI QURESHI) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) During 1957 exports of Manganese Ore reached peak level of 19 lakh tons. After this there was a decline in the exports which touched the low level of 9 lakh tonnes in 1962. The exports picked up gradually and reached 15 lakh tonnes in 1964. Thereafter it levelled off at 12 to 13 lakh tonnes. Exports during 1967 are likely to be around 12 lakh tonnes. The fall in exports is mainly due to the severe competition in Manganese Ore Market generated by the following factors :—

1. Less consumption of manganese ore in steel production due to technological advances and the consequent reduction in demand of the Manganese ore from steel industry.
2. Increase in the production of manganese ore consequent upon new sources of supply.
3. Closure of Suez Canal which has affected the freight rates and availability of vessels.