

services between them on the basis of mutual benefit in bilateral economic relations. The two countries have also agreed to promote such cooperation through activities in third countries aimed at jointly implementing developmental projects in those countries.

The agreement shall be valid until December 31, 1985 in the first instance.

Catering Staff

4284 DR MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state

(a) the category-wise strength of catering staff in each of the Zones of Indian Railways and Railway Board;

(b) the number of staff in each of the categories who have been confirmed;

(c) the break-up of the above staff who have put in more than 5 years, 10 years, 15 and more years of service and who have not been confirmed and the reasons for not confirming;

(d) the number of commission bearers in the Catering Department of the Railways; and

(e) the steps being taken to ameliorate the conditions of the catering staff of the Railways?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SHEO NARAIN): (a) to (c). Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

(d) About 2000.

(e) The Commission bearers are progressively being absorbed in regular class IV scales of pay according to their seniority.

Conversion of M.G. to B.G.

4286 SHRI C. R. MAHATA Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have any intention for conversion of M.G. Railway line to B.G. Railway line between Kotshila and Puruha over S.E. Railways;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SHEO NARAIN) (a) to (c) There is no proposal at present to convert the Puruha-Kotshila narrow gauge section into broad gauge. A traffic survey for conversion of the line having a length of 35 Kms carried out in 1971 revealed that the project would not be financially viable on traffic considerations and roads can meet the traffic demand at a much cheaper cost to the economy

Number of stations without Electricity

4287 SHRI SHIDAVAKOM LAHANU Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state.

(a) the total number of stations in the country;

(b) the number of Railway stations where there is no electricity; and

(c) the number of stations where there is no existence of Platform?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SHEO NARAIN): (a) Total number of stations in the country is 7070 (excluding block-huts, branch booking offices, out-agencies and train halts).

(b) 2909.

(c) Platforms have already been provided on all the regular and halt stations of Indian Railways as per the norms prescribed for the purpose.