

FORTY-SECOND REPORT
PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE
(1985-86)

(EIGHTH LOK SABHA)

RAILWAY RECRUITMENT BOARDS

MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT
DEPARTMENT OF RAILWAYS
(RAILWAY BOARD)

Presented in Lok Sabha on 29.4.1986

Laid in Rajya Sabha on 29.4.1986

LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI

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PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE (EIGHTH LOK SABHA)

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*Not printed. One cyclostyled copy laid on the Table of the House and five copies placed in the Parliament Library.

ABBREVIATIONS USED

R.S.C. - Railway Service Commission
R.R.B. - Railway Recruitment Board
R.R.C. - Railway Reform Committee
E.B. - Efficiency Bureau
NTPC - Non-Technical Popular Categories

COMPOSITION OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE
(1985-86)

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1. Shri N. N. Mehra—*Joint Secretary*
2. Shri K. H. Chhaya—*Chief Financial Committee Officer*
3. Shri Krishnapal Singh—*Senior Financial Committee Officer*

INTRODUCTION

1, the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee, as authorised by the Committee, do present on their behalf this 42nd Report of the Committee on Para 41 of the Advance Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India for the year 1983-84, Union Government (Railways) regarding Railway Recruitment Boards.

2. The Advance Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India for the year 1983-84, Union Government (Railways) was laid in Lok Sabha on 10 May, 1985.

3. In this Report, the Committee have found that instead of setting up a limited number of Railway Recruitment Boards, each with a large number of examination Centres, the Railways have opted for comparatively larger number of Railway Recruitment Boards each with small examination centres. Though a scientific study of the economics of the two systems has not been conducted it is evident that the additional cost per Railway Recruitment Board is in the region of Rs. 6 lakhs per annum. Audit has estimated that additional cost per annum due to establishment of 10 more Boards is Rs. 58 lakhs per annum. The Committee have recommended that a review with a view to winding up the Railway Recruitment Boards set up after 1963 and where the quantum of work has not picked up, may be undertaken.

4. One of the objectives of the policy laid down by the Railway Board for setting up Railway Recruitment Boards is to bring the recruiting agencies nearer to the candidates in the far flung areas and interior of States. The Committee have pointed out that the Railway Recruitment Boards at Bhopal in the State of Madhya Pradesh serves *inter alia* areas under its jurisdiction in the Bilaspur Division, which are as far as 700—800 kms. (Railway line distance) from the location of the Board. The Committee have also found that most of the Recruitment Boards are located in the Capitals of the States whose location because of historical reasons is far from the interior of the States coming within their respective jurisdiction. The locations of such Railway Recruitment Boards are therefore not in conformity with the declared objective of bringing the recruiting agencies nearer to the candidates from the far flung and

interior areas of States. The Committee have come to the conclusion that the Railway Recruitment Boards have not been established with any clear conceptual policy much less foresight.

5. The Committee have observed that one of the major reasons for poor performance of the Railway Recruitment Boards is the excessive time taken by Railway Recruitment Boards in finalising selection. It is noticed that the time taken by the Railway Recruitment Boards from the date of advertisement to the date of final selection is four years as against the prescribed time limit of six months or a year. In evidence, the Member (Staff), Railway Board conceded that "it was a matter of concern to them". The Committee have been constrained to observe that this is not a satisfactory state of affairs. Creeping of malpractices cannot be avoided in the face of such long delays.

The Committee consider that there can be no excuse for such delays. The process of recruitment should never be allowed to exceed twelve months and should normally be six months. It is also unwise to assume that a candidate applying to Railway Recruitment Boards could afford to wait for four years. The Committee have recommended that the Ministry of Transport should carry out a thorough review of the working of the Railway Recruitment Boards and restructure the system to speed up the selection and intimation to the candidates.

6. The Committee are astonished at the Railway Board's failure to ensure that the personnel of the Recruitment Boards are appointed in a proper manner and in accordance with the rules framed for the purpose. There is no justification for adhocism in such matters.

7. The Public Accounts Committee (1985-86) examined this paragraph at their sitting held on 30 October, 1985. The Committee considered and finalised this Report at their sitting held on 23 April, 1986. The Minutes of the sittings form Part II of the Report.

8. For reference facility and convenience, the observations and recommendations of the Committee have been printed in thick type in the body of the Report and have also been reproduced in a consolidated form in Appendix II to the Report.

9. The Committee would like to express their thanks to the officers of the Ministry of Transport (Department of Railways) (Railway Board) for the cooperation extended by them in giving information to the Committee.

10. The Committee also place on record their appreciation of the assistance rendered to them in the matter by the office of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India.

NEW DELHI;
25 April, 1986
5 Vaisakha, 1908 (Saka)

E. AYYAPU REDDY,
Chairman,
Public Accounts Committee.

REPORT

RAILWAY RECRUITMENT BOARDS

Audit Paragraph

1.1 Railway Service Commission* (RSC) cater to the recruitment needs of Group 'C' staff for the Zonal Railways. In addition to the already existing nine commissions located at Allahabad, Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Bangalore, Secunderabad, Gauhati, Muzaffarpur and Patna, Railway Board set up (September 1982) seven more RSCs at Jammu & Srinagar, Chandigarh, Ajmer, Ahmedabad, Bhopal, Bhubaneswar and Trivandrum with a view to further decentralising the recruitment process and affording opportunity to the candidates in far flung areas. The standard composition of a RSC is a Chairman (Rs. 2000—2250), a Member Secretary (Rs. 1500—2000) and an Assistant Secretary (Rs. 650—1200) with about nine supporting staff. Considering that multiplicity of Commissions involves, *inter alia*, administrative and communication problems, the Railway Reforms Committee (RRC) recommended (June 1983) reverting back to nine commissions—one for each Railway, which would be both a workable and economical arrangement concomitant with the National character of Railways. However, contrary to the above recommendation, the Railway Board set up (July 1984) three more RSCs at Malda, Ranchi and Gorakhpur. These commissions have been functioning since last year, although necessary sanction to the creation/operation of the posts for them is yet to be accorded.

1.2 In absence of any ban, the candidates are free to apply to more than one commission the jurisdiction of which may not even cover their home towns. This has the effect of not only manifold increase in the workload of the commissions but also of the proliferation scheme being rendered to little practical utility so far as its objective of affording opportunity to the candidates in far flung areas is concerned. The same objective could have, however, possibly been well achieved by setting up more examination centres at suitable places instead of proliferating the commissions from nine to nineteen. The establishment of ten RSCs in excess of those (nine) recommended (June 1983) by the RRC involves a financial implications of Rs. 58 lakhs (approx) per annum (based on assessed cost of three commissions set up in July 1984).

*Renamed as Railway Recruitment Boards (RRB) from January, 1985.

1.3 The RSCs conduct mass examinations for filling up vacancies on the Railways under their respective jurisdiction. Certain shortcomings noticed in this regard in the RSCs at Allahabad and Bombay are mentioned below:

- (i) Despite receipt of applications several times more than the advertised vacancies the requirement of the Railways could not be fully met during the period 1975-76 to 1981-82, the actual coverage in some year being not even 50 per cent of the demands as would be seen from the details below:

Year	No. of vacancies	No. of applications received	No. recommended	Ratio of applications/vacancies.	Percentage of selections made to the vacancies advertised
(1) RSC/Allahabad					
1975-76	2,518	1,05,243	1,250	42 : 1	49.6
1976-77	2,515	4,87,086	1,349	193 : 1	53.6
1977-78	1,387	32,623	1,224	24 : 1	88.2
1978-79	4,634	4,98,006	1,983	107 : 1	42.7
1979-80	4,047	4,80,000	2,876	118 : 1	71.0
1980-81	—Not available—				
1981-82	—Not available—				
(2) RSC/Bombay					
1975-76	3,096	16,122	1,730	5 : 1	55.8
1976-77	4,248	1,41,790	2,307	33 : 1	54.3
1977-78	5,429	1,86,985	2,174	34 : 1	40.0
1978-79	5,303	1,92,380	1,166	36 : 1	21.9
1979-80	11,721	63,086	5,062	5 : 1	43.2
1980-81	15,160	3,28,285	5,952	22 : 1	40.0
1981-82	2,350	..	854	..	37.0

The continued shortfall in coverage of their requirements led to the Railways filling up the vacancies by ad hoc promotions of the staff from lower categories often without formal selection, thereby defeating, by and large, the objective of direct recruitment of better personnel through RSCs.

- (ii) The RSC, Allahabad invited (March 1981) applications for recruitment of Group 'C' staff to 970 non-technical posts on Northern Railway. A written examination was scheduled to be held on 25-10-1981. When all arrangements had been completed for holding the examination and delivery of printed question papers to the representatives of various examination centres commenced (from 19-10-1981 onwards) the RSC on receipt (19-10-1981) of information about leakage of the question papers cancelled (22-10-1981) the examination which was later held on 28th February 1982. Failure to maintain secrecy of the question papers led to cancellation of the examination (25-10-1981) resulting in infructuous expenditure of Rs. 4.83 lakhs towards printing of question papers, call letter and other contingent charges.
- (iii) The CBI investigation into the matter revealed that contrary to Railway Board's instructions (July 1964) for printing of question papers in security or in Government Press, the RSC, Allahabad had got the question papers printed at the AMU Press, Aligarh where security arrangements were inadequate and to which even Aligarh Muslim University did not entrust the printing of its own question papers. The suspect involved in the leakage of question papers could not be located during the CBI enquiry.

By way of remedial measures, the Railway Board advised (September 1983) the RSCs that for printing of question papers they should seek the help of the State Government Presses which have secret wings for printing of secret papers. Nevertheless, for a subsequent mass examination to be conducted by the various RSCs on 26th February 1984, the Railway Board themselves arranged printing of question papers through a private agency on the Ministry of Works and Housing declining to undertake the job. Again there was leakage of the question papers and the examination had to be cancelled (25th February 1984) involving an infructuous expenditure of about Rs. 11.36 lakhs towards printing of question papers (Rs. 9.07 lakhs) and other contingent charges (Rs. 2.29 lakhs). Besides, free rail travel facilities allowed to the candidates from and to their home stations for appearing at the examination later held on 27th May, 1984 also entailed expenditure of Rs. 73.79 lakhs (Approx.) in respect of eight

commissions alone (position relating to other commissions not readily available). CBI investigation in the matter is in progress.

- (iv) Repetitive cases of cancellation of examinations involving infructuous expenditure, besides harassment to the candidates, would point to lack of adequate safeguards in the existing arrangements for printing, custody and distribution etc. of the question papers against their leakages and call for suitable streamlining of the procedure.

According to the Railway Board (November 1984), necessary instructions had been issued (March 1984) for tightening up the security measures but it may not be possible to stop completely the leakage of question papers, whatever measures be taken. It is not, however, known whether the Railway Board have ever examined how the system/procedure on the Railways compares with those of the Union Public Service Commission and Staff Selection Commission who also conduct similar mass examinations.

- (v) In RSC, Bombay, besides the reported insistence of the Chairman on knowing the question papers well before the examinations, there had been cases of supplementing original application of the candidates, fabrication of answer sheets and their replacement, hold up of answer books, forgery in tabulation and unauthorised appointments etc. Report of the CBI investigation ordered (May 1983) into the malpractices is awaited (November 1984).

1.4 Summing up

- (i) Unnecessary excessive proliferation of the RSCs involved avoidable expenditure of Rs. 58 lakhs per annum;
- (ii) Failure of the commissions to meet the Railways requirements led to ad hoc departmental promotions of the staff from lower categories without formal selection, thereby defeating the objective of recruitment through RSCs; and
- (iii) Repeated failures to maintain secrecy of question papers resulted in infructuous expenditure of Rs. 90.98 lakhs.

The Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) stated (January 1963) that it had been decided not to accept the recommendation (June 1963) of the RRC.

[Paragraph 41 of the Advance Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India for the year 1983-84, Union Government (Railways)]

Policy for setting up of Recruitment Boards

1.5 At the instance of the Committee the Ministry of Transport (Department of Railways) (Railway Board) have furnished the following written note indicating *inter alia* the laid down policy for setting up the Railway Recruitment Boards:

"Indian Railways decided to have a separate body for the recruitment of railway staff, as early as 1942. The first Service Commission was established with a Chairman and two Members on the then North Western Railway. Based on the successful experience gained, four Service Commissions were created in 1946 at Bombay, Calcutta, Lucknow (subsequently shifted to Allahabad) and Madras. The Indian Railway Inquiry Committee in 1948 recommended their permanency. The Railway Corruption Inquiry Committee in 1955 had endorsed this policy. The Estimates Committee in their 24th Report in 1956 had also generally approved of the recruitments through the Railway Service Commissions. The Administrative Reforms Commission had also considered this question and in their report of January, 1970 indicated that 'the work of recruitment relating to two or more Zones may be dealt with by a single Recruitment Board, unless the quantum of work clearly warrants the need for a separate Recruitment Board for a particular Zonal Railway.'

(2) With the passage of time, additional Railway Service Commissions were set up.....

(3)by 1981, there were nine Railway Service Commissions meeting the needs of the Zonal Railways and the Railway Production Units.....

(4) In 1981, the Railway Board expressed the view that:

'A lot of delay is taking place in the recruitment of Class III staff by the Railway Service Commissions because the

workload on the same is very heavy. Besides, with the present location of Railway Service Commissions, certain regions are getting neglected and in those areas staff recruited from other regions are invariably disinclined for posting.

It is desirable that a few more Railway Service Commissions are provided at suitable locations in the region which are not suitably served at present, and ordered an in-depth study of the working of the various Railway Service Commissions. The Efficiency Bureau of the Railway Ministry completed this study in the first half of 1981. At about the same time, there was also a note from the then M. R. (Shri Kedar Pandey) in July, 1981 commenting upon the heavy loads on the Railway Service Commissions with consequent delays in finalising recruitment. The Efficiency Bureau Study recommended the setting up of six new Service Commissions. This recommendation contained in the Efficiency Bureau Study was approved by the Board and at the time of detailed implementation of the same, the Board decided that a seventh one should be provided at Jammu and Srinagar. Accordingly orders were issued in September, 1982 to establish 7 more Railway Service Commissions at the following places:

1. Ahmedabad
2. Ajmer
3. Bhopal
4. Bhubaneshwar
5. Chandigarh
6. Jammu and Srinagar
7. Tribandrum

The above Commissions started functioning in the first half of 1983.

- (5) In 1984, two more Railway Service Commissions were set up at Gorakhpur and Malda. In addition, the existing Ranchi Branch Office of the Calcutta Railway Service Commission was converted to function as a fullfledged Service Commission exclusively to cater to the quota requirements of Scheduled Tribe candidates.

- (6) It will thus be seen that the opening of the new Railway Service Commissions, re-named as Railway Recruitment Boards from January 1985, has been based on policies which have evolved over a period of time, with the following objectives:
- (i) To rationalise the workload on the existing RRBs.
 - (ii) To expedite the selection process.
 - (iii) To bring the recruiting agencies nearer to the candidates in the far flung areas and interior of States.
 - (iv) To meet regional aspirations in the matter of employment.

The jurisdiction and location of the 19 RRBs as they exist at present are given in Appendix I."

1.6 On an enquiry of the Committee for not accepting the recommendations of the Railway Reforms Committee to revert back to the nine Commissions on the basis of one for each Zonal Railway, the Ministry of Transport (Department of Railways) (Railway Board) have stated in a note:

"The decision to set-up seven new Railway Recruitment Boards in 1982 was taken after due deliberations, based on a study conducted by the Railway Ministry, in furtherance of the policy of decentralising and expediting the work of recruitment and also to meet the employment needs of various regions. The new Railway Recruitment Boards having started functioning only in the early part of 1983, it was too early to have done a review of the working of all the Railway Recruitment Boards together. It was also considered that representation in employment to Railway Services should be given to all regions. It was, therefore, decided not to accept the recommendations of the Railway Reforms Committee."

1.7 On an enquiry of the Committee in regard to advantages in having a larger number of Recruitment Boards instead of setting up more examination centres, the Department of Railways have stated in a note as follows:—

"Decentralisation of RRBs reduces the number of examinees to be dealt with by each RRB and this facilitates the selection process. The more the examination centres, the more

unwisely the functioning of RRBs become because remote control from a far away Railway Recruitment Board has its own attendant disadvantages. Proximity of a RRB, as opposed to an examination centre, makes it easier for a candidate to make enquiries personally; logistically, therefore, having more Railway Recruitment Boards has been of a great help to the candidates. In addition, there is also the psychological impact that the nearness of an office of the RRB can create in the minds of the candidates especially from the backward and under-developed areas."

1.8 On an another enquiry the Committee were informed that:

"The recruitment work for filling up vacancies handled by RRBs is invariably done Zone-wise as per jurisdiction laid down. In this process opportunity is afforded to candidates in remote areas because examination centres are dispersed widely. The only difference is that instead of opting for a limited number of RRBs each with a large number of examination centres, the Railways have opted for comparatively more RRBs with comparatively less examination centres attached to each. The Railways had not yet undertaken a specific study as to how the system/procedure on the Railways compares with other agencies like Staff Selection Commission|Banking Service Recruitment Board etc. who also conduct similar mass examinations in the matter of tightening up security measures so as to stop completely the leakage of question papers. However, the Efficiency Bureau study mentioned in para 1.5(4), had gone into the recruitment procedures followed by the Railways, Union Public Service Commission, Banking Service Recruitment Board, and the Staff Selection Commission. A number of improvements were effected in the working of the Railway Recruitment Boards based on the recommendations contained in this study.

Information obtained from them indicate that they have no problems regarding leakage of question papers."

1.9 In a subsequent note, explaining the economic aspect of a large number of RRB, the Railway Board informed the Committee as follows:

"Though the economics have not been worked out, having a larger number of RRBs has advantages. Logistically, the

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jurisdiction being small, the administration will become more efficient and costwise also the total time spent by the RRB officials for journeys will be lesser when compared to a situation of having lesser number of RRBs. The basic issue is that the time required to complete a selection process has a direct relation to the number of applicants handled by a particular RRB—the more the number of RRBs, the less will be the number of applicants at each and hence the less should be the selection time. Besides, the more homogenous will be the spectrum of the candidates competing.

The opening of an RRB with a minimum complement of staff as was done in the case of RRBs opened in 1984 had a financial implication of about Rs. 6 lakhs per annum per RRB. The Financial implications for the centres have not been worked out as the cost per centre will be different, as this will vary from examination to examination depending upon the number of candidates who have been called for the examination. It may not be possible for this information to be computed with any great degree of accuracy."

1.10 Justifying the urgency for setting up the three Recruitment Boards at Malda, Ranchi and Gorakhpur, it has been stated in a note:

"With a view to improving the employment opportunities and satisfying the aspirations of the people in the areas concerned, it was considered that Railway Recruitment Boards should be set up at Malda, Gorakhpur and Ranchi. When this decision was taken it was also decided that suitable organisational arrangements including staff and infrastructure, should be found from the existing set up or arranged afresh, if not available, so that the Commissions could start functioning in a reasonable time.

Accordingly, the Boards were set up by redeployment of available staff. Simultaneously, the Cabinet was approached for creation of the posts required, but the Cabinet Secretariat indicated that the proposal should be routed through the Ministry of Finance. Ministry of Finance indicated that, on account of the ban, the Railways should come up with a proposal with adequate matching surrender of staff.

The proposal is now being examined to see whether matching surrenders can be effected."

1.11. The Department of Railways submitted the following statement showing the number of candidates recommended by the various Railway Recruitment Boards during the period from 1980-81 to 1984-85.

	1980-81	1981-82	1982-83	1983-84	1984-85
AHMEDABAD*	—	—	—	160	277
AJMER*	—	—	—	41	175
ALLAHABAD*	1083	1016	840	1029	933
BANGALORE*	903	237	341	257	240
BHOPAL*	—	—	—	—	512
BHUBANESWER*	—	—	—	103	262
BOMBAY*	5952	854	1656	1419	2288
CALCUTTA*	—	571	4974	837	2913
CHANDIGARH*	—	—	—	63	1153
GAUHATI	588	336	604	500	574
GORAKHPUR**	—	—	—	—	70
JAMMU & SRINAGAR*	—	—	—	—	137
MADRAS	1571	2451	1842	1440	1665
MUZAFFARPUR	1269	1194	370	923	501
MALDA**	—	—	—	—	—
PATNA	—	277	983	1376	624
RANCHI**	—	—	—	—	75
SECUNDERABAD	1256	966	466	464	867
TRIVANDRUM*	—	—	—	88	272
TOTAL :	12,622	7,902	12,076	8,700	13,538

*Set up on the basis of the E.B. study the RRB started functioning the early part of 1983.

**These 3 RRBs were set up in the latter part of 1984.

1.12. When asked whether the objection made by the Audit was not proper, the representative of the Ministry stated:

"No, Sir."

1.13. Speaking on Recruitment Boards, the Member (Staff) stated:

"The Railway Reforms Committee had recommended nine Railway Recruitment Boards, one for each Railway. As against this, we have got 19 Railway Recruitment Boards mainly with a view to affording opportunities to candidates in far-flung areas. A view can certainly be taken that this objective could have been achieved by setting up more examination centres rather than proliferating Recruitment Boards.

The only way to speed up selection is by having more Recruitment Boards so that the number of candidates per Recruitment Board comes down. Secondly, it appears to us that the aspirants for jobs feel more comfortable if there is a Recruitment Board nearer their home. It is true that the Railway Reforms Committee had recommended that we should have only one Recruitment Board for each Railway Zone, but the Railway Zones stretch over 5-6 States with different standards. We had considered this and had come to the conclusion that we needed 16 Boards. This has subsequently been raised to 19 Boards."

1.14. According to Audit Para, in absence of any ban the candidates are free to apply to more than one Commission the jurisdiction of which may not even cover their home towns. This has resulted in manifold increase in the workload of the Boards besides rendering the proliferation scheme of little practical utility, so far as its objective of affording opportunity to the candidates in far flung areas is concerned.

1.15. The Committee pointed out that when the candidates were free to apply to any Recruitment Board, how the need for bringing the recruiting agencies nearer to the candidates in far flung areas through multiple Railway Recruitment Boards arose. In a note the Ministry have stated:

"The question whether it could be constitutional to restrict each candidate to one application with one RRB only for the same type of job was considered and it was felt desir-

able to obtain legal advice in the matter. The legal advice given was that it may not be desirable to give effect to such a proposal.

The resultant freedom of candidates to apply to any RRB does not, however, militate against the candidates' needs for bringing the recruiting agencies nearer to their homes by setting up multiple RRBs.

In so far as the freedom of candidates to apply to any RRB is concerned, this question was considered and a decision taken by the Railway Ministry to fix one common day all over the country for the Non-Technical Popular Categories examination, which is the selection, for which, normally, the largest number of applications are received. Thus, though the candidates are still free to apply to any number of RRBs in respect of NTPC, the work of the RRB is limited upto the stage of issue of the admission card only. There is no extra workload in the matter of evaluation of answer papers and subsequent processes. In regard to other categories, the experience has been that the candidates do not normally apply to RRBs located at far off places."

1.16 In another note, the Ministry have stated that the decision to have a common day all over the country for NTPC examinations seeks to reduce the selection workload by ensuring that a candidate is not in a position to appear for more than one selection at one time for the same post.

Shortfall in coverage of Railway's Requirements

1.17. Audit Paragraph mentions that despite receipt of applications several times more than the advertised vacancies the recruitment of the Railways could not be fully met during the period 1975-76 to 1981-82 the actual coverage ranged between 21.9 and 88.2 per cent of the demands in case of RRBs, Allahabad and Bombay.

1.18 On being asked to state why these Recruitment Boards could not cover the requirements of Zonal Railways, the Ministry of Transport (Department of Railways) (Railway Board) have explained in separate notes:—

"It would, not be appropriate to draw conclusions on the extent of coverage as has been done in the statement. The figures quoted in the Audit Paragraph indicate the

number of vacancies and the number/percentage of candidates recommended. The number of vacancies indicated in the Audit Para represents the total of the vacancies carried forward plus the number of new vacancies advertised during the year. The number of candidates recommended indicates the number covered by panels which could be finalised during the year. The ratio between the two figures, therefore, does not indicate the extent to which a demand for candidates against each panel was met.

In order to see the figures in their correct perspective, a comparison of the number of candidates indented from the Railway Recruitment Boards at Bombay and Allahabad and the number of candidates recommended in each of the panels finalised is being compiled."

1.19 In a subsequent note the Department of Railways furnished the performance efficiency of the Railway Recruitment Boards at Bombay and Allahabad and other 17 RRBs.

The shortfall could be broadly grouped under the following heads:—

- (a) SC/ST candidates being not available.
- (b) Suitable candidates not being available in certain specified technical categories para-medical categories and the categories of Stenographers/Typists etc.
- (c) Ex-Servicemen candidates not being available.

1.20 In regard to shortfall in the coverage of the Railway requirements, the Member (Staff) stated in his evidence as follows:

"There are two issues. The first is whether in the case of any particular indent for any particular category the demand has been met in full or not. In our written answer we have said that in Allahabad selections were conducted to meet the total requirements of 6219 candidates. We were able to supply 5516 or just under 90 per cent. The reasons for the 'shortfall' have been indicated in our reply. The major factors were. Non-availability of ST and SC candidates and ex-servicemen. Regarding Bombay, the figures are not so good. Against a demand of

6948 candidates, we were able to supply on 5075—a compliance of about 73 per cent. The main reason was non-availability of ST and SC candidates in respect of these technical posts. There are some technical categories for which we faced the situation of non-availability of adequate number of candidates. The demand was large. But I would like to assure you that the work has not suffered on this account at all. Our requirement has been met in full by the internal promotion of suitable candidates. This is however a matter of concern for us. We would always like a certain percentage of new blood to come in and also to progressively improve our standards as we go along. In the case of Bombay, we ran into some problems. Bombay is a big industrial area. Technical people do have more openings there which they find more attractive. But we do feel that this sort of shortfall will not persist for long. Now the demand also have come down. We can meet them in full now.”

1.21 On an enquiry the Railway Board spelled out the corrective measures taken in this regard as follows:—

“In so far as SC/ST candidates are concerned, the existing instructions regarding relaxation in the minimum qualifications, relaxation in age, relaxation in the interview standards, no application fees should be charged from the SC/ST candidates, etc. are considered adequate.

In so far as the Ex-servicemen candidates are concerned, they also enjoy age relaxation, exemption from application fees, etc. Recently this matter received attention at the highest level and a Committee of Officers (including a representative of the Department of Railways) constituted under the aegis of the Ministry of Personnel & Training, Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances and Pension, is examining the various issues involved in the placement of Ex-servicemen in civilian jobs.

In so far as the shortfall in technical categories is concerned, this is a phenomenon faced by some of the Railways on account of competition from other industries including public and private sectors. Suitable pay scales for technical categories will doubtless feature in the Report of the IVth Pay Commission and this should help in solving the problem.”

Ad hoc promotions

1.22 The Audit Para points out that the continued shortfall in the coverage of their requirements led to the Railways filling up the vacancies by *ad hoc* promotions of the staff from lower categories without formal selection, thereby defeating the objective of recruitment of better personnel through RRBs. The Committee desired the Department of Railways to furnish position of *ad-hoc* promotions during the last 3-4 years and reversions if any thereof on availability of RRB approved candidates. In their note the Ministry have stated *inter-alia* as follows:—

“The position regarding *ad hoc* arrangements, continuously changes from time to time. It will be appreciated that, against this background, compilation of data pinpointing those *ad hoc* arrangements, which arose solely due to delays in recruitment and reversions, if any as a result thereof, is a process which will call for detailed and meticulous collation of data which will be extremely difficult and time consuming.”

Excessive time taken in Finalisation of Selections

1.23 The Committee enquired whether the Railway Board had laid down any time limit for finalising selections of the vacancies advertised and whether the Recruitment Boards were adhering to the prescribed time limit for finalising selection. The Ministry of Transport (Department of Railways) (Railway Board) in their note have stated:

“The Railway Ministry had issued instructions in 1964 laying down time schedules of 7 months from the date of receipt of indent to the date of finalisation of panels for the Non-Technical Popular Categories and 5 months for the other categories. This time schedule had not been revised later but in 1984 the Railways were told that they should assess their requirements keeping in view a lead time of 1 year for the Non-Technical Popular Categories examination and 6 months for other categories.”

1.24 From the detailed statements furnished by the Department of Railways (Railway Board), it is seen that the time taken for

finalisation of selection by the Recruitment Boards for various posts categories-wise is as follows:

Name of the Recruitment Board	Year	Non-Technical Popular categories	Other categories
1	2	3	4
		(Time in months)	(Time in months)
Ahmedabad	1983-84	—	8 to 15
	1984-85	—	7 to 16
Ajmer	1983-84	11	—
	1984-85	under process	3 to 15
Allahabad	1979-80	46	7 to 21
	1980-81	Results not declared	—
	1981-82	-do-	7 to 48
	1982-83	-do-	5 to 28
Bangalore	1983-84	-do-	4 to 19
	1981	14 to 22	3 to 6
	1982	29	2 to 14
	1983	28 to 32	10 to 11
Bhopal	1984	under process	2 to 18
	1983-84	15	—
	1984-85	—	18 to 20
	1983-84	18	9 to 12
Bhubaneswar	1984-85	Results not declared	—
	1979-80	—	3 to 12
	1980-81	—	3 to 28
	1981-82	—	6 to 21
Bombay	1982-83	33 to 38	5 to 26
	1983-84	—	5 to 28
	1984-85	Results awaited	14 and more
	1979-80	25 to 27	3 to 30
Calcutta	1980-81	No advertisement issued	—
	1981-82	—	4 to 9
	1982-83	21	4 to 17
	1983-84	—	9 to 17
Chandigarh	1983-84	23	4 to 17
Gorakhpur	1984-85	—	2 to 11
Gauhati	1979-80	30	3 to 28
	1980-81	—	4 to 14
	1981-82	—	7 to 23
	1982-83	14	6 to 15
Jammu and Srinagar	1983-84	Examination Postponed	—
	1984-85	13	4 to 15

	1	2	3	4
			(Time in months)	(Time in months)
Malda		- Came into existence in July 1984. Required details are not readily available.		
Muzaffarpur	1979-80	16	9 to 15	
	1980-81	42	12 to 27	
	1981-82	36	7 to 22	
	1982-83	—	3 to 12	
	1983-84	—	3 to 10	
Madras	1979-80	—	2 to 12	
	1980-81	9	2 to 11	
	1981-82	5	2 to 15	
	1982-83	—	3 to 9	
	1983-84	13	5 to 16	
Patna	1981-82	—	3 to 18	
	1982-83	17	6 to 18	
	1983-84	14	1 to 14	
Ranchi	1984-85	—	4 to 5	
Secundrabad	1970-80	—	3 to 12	
	1980-81	—	3 to 16	
	1981-82	—	3 to 11	
	1982-83	—	2 to 14	
	1983-84	—	8 to 19	
Trivandrum	1983-84	—	6 to 8	
	1984-85	13	6 to 9	

1.25 The Committee asked the Ministry of Transport (Department of Railways) (Railway Board) how they proposed to remedy the situation regarding excessive time taken by the Recruitment Boards in finalising selection. In a note the Ministry have stated as follows:

“The Railway Ministry had been seized of the problems of delay in finalising the Recruitment process by the Railway Recruitment Boards. In fact, it was for this purpose a special study was asked to be conducted by the Efficiency Bureau Directorate of the Railway Board in 1981. This report brings out the problems being faced by RRBs on account of the very large number of applications being received by them, the inadequacy of staff etc. The Efficiency Bureau Study recommended certain steps to streamline the procedure then in vogue in RRBs which have been accepted and implemented.

It may be mentioned that the Study identified 42 steps that were involved in the recruitment process and made recommendations involving a number of changes deletions. Detailed instructions have been issued thereafter.

The Efficiency Bureau Study also recommended that after the improvised methods were introduced and the staff had become well conversant with them, a scientific job analysis of various activities then happening in one or two RRBs should be carried out by one of the Staff Inspection Units to examine whether any increase in the staff strength was required and to suggest a yardstick for evaluating the staff strength in a RRB. A study has now been ordered and is expected to commence shortly. Further action will be taken based on their report.

In the meantime, use of computers to speed up the examination process has started to a limited extent."

1.26 Explaining the steps taken for streamlining the procedure, the Member (Staff), Railway Board, stated:

"We go through 42 steps from the receipt of an indent from the Railway Administration to the issue of the appointment letter to the successful candidates. Some of these steps necessarily take time.

* * * *

Where we can effect reduction of time in our selection procedure is in the time between receipt of applications and the despatch of the call letters and similarly between the conduct of the written examination and tabulation of answer sheets. We have streamlined the procedure."

1.27 Explaining the position further, Member (Staff) stated:

"There are lakhs of applications which pour in. There is a lot of categories to handle. We have attempted to streamline this process and get it done quickly. Similarly we have streamlined our process of evaluation of answer sheets. It now done by a computer in some cases. A full bunch of answer papers goes to the computer centre and the answers are just punched in. They get evaluated, results are tabulated and output sheet come out. In fact we are trying to extend it further and get the names also printed. Therefore, as things stand, we are reasonably certain that we will be able to finish selcetions for even the most difficult one, which is the non-technical popular category in less than a year, so that any candidate, who sits for

one examination gets his call letter well before the next examination process starts."

1.28 Explaining the justification for more Recruitment Boards, the Member (Staff) stated during evidence:

"The ultimate bottleneck in a selection process will remain. The number of candidates to be handled by any particular Recruitment Board is relevant, because it is this number that will determine the time required to deal with applications from the stage of receipt to the stage of issue of letters for the written examination. Similarly, it is this number which will determine how long the *viva voce* will take because the Board can interview at best 30-35 candidates a day and from this number we will not get more than 14 persons."

1.29 During his evidence, the Member (Staff), Railway Board informed the Committee that "Viva Voce test is important because it is a vital link in our attempt to prevent any malpractice during the course of written test. We present a candidate with his written paper and we check up as to whether he is still in a position to answer the questions." In reply to a supplementary question, the representative of the Railway Board clarified that Member of the Interview Board were aware of the marks scored by the candidates at the written test. When the Committee pointed out the practices in the Public Service Commissions was that members who were interviewing were not answer of the previous marks scored by the candidates. The Member (Staff) assured the Committee that they could re-examine their system whether the marks used for short-listing the candidates need not be given to the Board members and take appropriate steps.

1.30 In a subsequent note on the remedial measures being taken to ensure that delays in finalising selection did not occur, the Ministry of Transport (Department of Railways) have stated as follows:

"The Railway Board has been seized of the problems of delays in finalising the recruitment process in some of the RRBs. The special study of the Efficiency Bureau was ordered on this account in 1981. The following steps had already been taken on the basis of the recommendations of the E. B. Study:—

- (1) Seven new RRBs were set up in 1983.
- (2) The RRBs have been told to computerise the process of recruitment in a phased manner.

- (3) The RRBs at Trivandrum, Madras, Secunderabad, Bombay, Bhopal, Allahabad, Chandigarh and Ahmedabad have already taken action and they are using computers for some of the steps in the process of recruitment.
- (4) Procedural improvements that have been brought about are—
- (i) Postal franking and automatic roll numbering machines have been introduced.
 - (ii) The candidates are now free to apply on plain paper.
 - (iii) Call letter forms are made in a detachable form as a part of the application form.
 - (iv) Travel facilities for SC/ST candidates are given by a suitable endorsement on the Admit Card (Railway passes are no longer required to be issued for the purpose).
 - (v) Objective type of questions have been introduced.
 - (vi) Initial scrutiny of application forms for the NTPC examinations has been dispensed with.
 - (vii) The candidates are no longer required to send copies of educational certificates etc. at the time of application.
 - (viii) Candidates who have not been successful are no longer advised of the results."

1.31 The Committee were informed that there had been five Non-Technical Popular Categories examinations, the finalisation of panels in respect of which had been delayed for more than two years after the written examination.

Jurisdiction of RRBs

1.32 The Committee pointed to the Ministry that the Railway Recruitment Board at Jammu/Srinagar, catering for areas in Bikaner Division was about 700 kms. away, whereas Bikaner Division was nearer to Ajmer and desired to know why the Bikaner Division should not be brought under the jurisdiction of Railway Recruitment Board at Ajmer. In a note, the Ministry of Transport (Department of Railways) (Railway Board) have stated that "based on the views expressed during the oral hearing on 30-10-85, the feasibility of bringing

Bikaner Division under the jurisdiction of the Ajmer RRB is under consideration”.

1.33 In a subsequent note, the Railway Board have stated that “orders have been issued on 18-2-86 transferring the Bikaner Division of Northern Railway to the jurisdiction of the Ajmer Railway Recruitment Board”.

Printing of Question Papers

1.34 Audit Report brings out that the CBI investigation into the leakage of question paper for examination in October 1981 for recruitment of Group ‘C’ posts by RSC Allahabad revealed that contrary to Railway Board’s instructions (July 1964) for printing of question papers in Security or in Government Press, the RSC Allahabad had got the question papers printed at the Aligarh Muslim University Press, Aligarh where security arrangements were inadequate and to which even Aligarh Muslim University did not entrust the printing of its own question papers. The suspect involved in the leakage of question papers could not be located during the CBI enquiry.

For a subsequent mass examination which was conducted by the various RSCs on 26th February, 1984, the Railway Board themselves arranged printing of question papers through a private agency on the Ministry of Works and Housing declining to undertake the job.

1.35 The Committee enquired from the Ministry why the State Government Press did not agree to take up printing of question papers and what were the reasons for selection of Aligarh Muslim University Press for the job notwithstanding its inadequate security arrangements. In a written note the Ministry of Transport (Department of Railways) have stated as under:

- “(i) RRB, Allahabad had on 13-8-81 approached the Government Press, Lucknow who advised that they had no arrangements for undertaking secret work and had suggested that RRB contact their Head Office (Supdt. Printing, Uttar Pradesh, Allahabad) who may have arrangements for undertaking such work.

It may be mentioned that RRB, Allahabad had earlier approached the Directorate of Printing, Ministry of

Works and Housing for getting the question papers printed at the Government of India Press, New Delhi but the latter expressed their inability to undertake the work, as the time available was less than three months. RRB, Allahabad had indicated in their letter of 12-8-81 to the Ministry of Works and Housing that they would like to have two sets of question papers of 2,70,000 and 80,000 for examinations fixed on 25-10-81 and 29-11-81, respectively.

- (ii) The Chairman, RRB, Allahabad had then approached on 24-8-81 the Manager, Aligarh Muslim University Press who agreed to do the job *vide* their letter dated 1-9-81. The reasons why the Aligarh Muslim University Press was selected for the job are not known in the absence of the concerned files, which have been seized by CBI, Lucknow and are still with them. It may, however, be mentioned that in regard to an examination in 1978 printing of certain question papers was got done from the same press without any problem but on that occasion the then Member-Secretary of Allahabad, Railway Recruitment Board had personally supervised the printing. It has been reported that in the present case, however, the then Chairman, RRB, Allahabad did not make any arrangements for the proper supervision of the printing of the question papers.

Further more, in connection with some printing work for RRB, Allahabad the State Government Press at Bombay was approached by them and from a copy of letter dated 6-1-82, it is seen that they did not agree to do the work due to heavy pressure of State Government work and other prior commitments."

1.36 On being asked to indicate the reasons for which the Ministry of Works and Housing declined to take up printing of question papers for the February 1984 examination, the Railway Board have stated:

"The Railway Ministry had arranged for the printing of the question-cum-answer books for the Non-technical Popular Categories examination held in 1983 in the secret section of the Government Press at Mayapuri.

New Delhi in consultation with the Ministry of Works and Housing (Controller of Printing and Stationery). Similarly, for the examination to be conducted in February 1984 the Ministry of Works and Housing (Controller of Printing and Stationery) was approached and a formal indent was placed on them on 25-10-83. The matter was also discussed but the Ministry indicated their inability to arrange the printing of these papers as the secret section did not have sufficient capacity to undertake such a voluminous job.

After detailed discussion, the Ministry suggested that the matter for question-cum-answer books could be composed in Delhi and then sent to Government Press in Mysore. Later on, however, they withdrew even this offer as they indicated that the Mysore Press was meant only to print text books as per some arrangements and could not undertake any other job. In a meeting with the Ministry of Works and Housing, it was suggested by them that the work could be got done by the Railway Ministry in a private press. The matter was also discussed with the Staff Selection Commission to find out how they were getting their question papers printed. It was given to understand that they got this work done through a private press, the identity of which they could not divulge for obvious reasons. Instead, they suggested the names of a few presses which could be tried. The Controller of Printing and Stationery of the Ministry of Works and Housing had also suggested names of some printing presses. The job of printing was thereafter entrusted to one of these presses."

1.37 On an enquiry of the Committee whether the Railway Board had considered the possibility of augmenting printing capacity of their own presses for the purpose of question papers, it was stated that "the Railway Printing Presses are not geared to meet the need of printing of question papers as these are sensitive documents which require special facilities of a secret wing. This will pose problems as the work load will be highly variable and limited."

CBI Investigations

1.38 Audit Para points out that in RRB, Bombay, besides the reported insistence of the Chairman on knowing the question papers

well before the examinations, there had been cases of supplementing original application of the candidates, fabrication of answer sheets and their replacement, hold up of answer books, forgery in tabulation and unauthorised appointments etc. Report of the CBI investigation ordered (May 1983) into the malpractices is awaited (November 1984).

1.39 The Committee enquired from the Ministry of Transport whether the reported malpractices in the Railway Recruitment Board, Bombay would not point to absence of adequate safeguards in the existing procedure for processing of applications/handling of the answer books, etc. and remedial measures being taken in this regard. In their reply, the Ministry have informed as follows:

“The functioning of the RRBs has been under continuous scrutiny by the Railway Ministry. The system/procedure adopted by the RRBs are adequate to ensure that malpractices, if any, in handling the various recruitment processes by RRBs do not pass undetected.

In regard to the case of RRB, Bombay, it may be mentioned that applications were invited on 1-9-80 to fill up various Group ‘C’ posts under Employment Notice No. 2/80-81. The last date was extended from 30.9.80 to 31-12-80. The total number of posts was 7,241.

The written examination was held in June, 1981. After compilation of the results by the middle of 1982, candidates were called for interview. During this period, beginning from the middle of 1982, complaints started coming from various quarters that large-scale corrupt practices had been resorted to by interested parties to secure selection against these posts. There was also adverse criticism in the Press and from prominent men in public life. It was alleged that outsiders, in collusion with the railway staff, had been resorting to large-scale manipulation of marks on the answer sheets/interview test.

The Vigilance Directorate of the Railway Ministry started enquiring into these complaints. The basic documents relating to the examination like answer sheets, tabulation sheets, summary sheets, etc. were scrutinised in respect of

about 13,500 cases. The Vigilance Officers suspected that some corrupt means had been employed in the various processes. As the preliminary investigation carried out by the Vigilance Directorate confirmed the suspicion that some outside agencies had been involved in the racket, it was decided by the Railway Ministry that further investigations into the complaints of corrupt practices may be handed over to CBI for investigation. CBI, Bombay have registered a case in May, 1983 under various sections of the Indian Penal Code and also the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1947. The CBI's report is still awaited. Writ Petitions are also pending in the matter.

From the above narrative, it will be seen that the system as such did not fail. On receipt of complaints, it was possible for investigations to be conducted in the matter and also to entrust the case to the CBI for further investigation and necessary action."

1.40 As regards the leakages of question papers at examinations conducted at Allahabad and manipulation of the answer paper and other irregularities at Bombay, the Member (Staff), Railway Board deposed during evidence as follows:—

"It is unfortunate that such leakages and manipulations have taken place. I can assure you that our system is not defective. It is more a case of who will guard the guards themselves. We will entrust the investigation of any such case to the CBI, because outside parties are involved. They have to be interrogated. We will not hesitate to institute prosecution in such cases if the suspects can be identified.

Regarding the leakage at Allahabad, we handed over the matter to CBI, Lucknow, for investigation. They were not able to pin-point the suspect involved for the leakage of the question paper. They felt that 'there was strong circumstantial evidence' to show that the leakage could have taken place from the Press at Aligarh. But involvement of any official of the RRB at Allahabad for the leakage of the question paper could unfortunately not be pin-pointed. The CBI was unable to obtain necessary clarification from the former Chairman of the Railway

Recruitment Board due to his illness. As far as the leakage of the question paper (the setting of which was organised by the Railway Board in 1984) is concerned this matter too was handed over to the CBI for enquiry. The report in this regard is awaited. If any suspect is identified we will not hesitate to initiate prosecution or disciplinary proceedings as the case may be against him. Whatever action is deemed appropriate will definitely be taken.

As regards the manipulation of the answer papers and other irregularities at Bombay... we have received the report of the CBI on the 17th September, 1985. This report is now under examination. We will not hesitate to take disciplinary action and prosecution as deemed fit. In all these cases, the silver-lining in the cloud—if I may say so—is that the system brought certain irregularities promptly to our notice. No selection of improper candidate was made. It is our endeavour to tighten up the system further. We want to impose strict punishment on any one found guilty or any one betraying our trust. Judging by the current level of performance in the recent past, we have had no problem. I think we would be able to overcome some of the problems which were there earlier.”

1.41 About the departmental action, the representative of the Ministry informed that the services of the Chairman of the Board were terminated and the Secretary was under suspension. The concerned clerks had been shifted.

1.42 In their subsequent written note to the Committee the Ministry of Transport (Department of Railways) have intimated the findings of CBI in the reported malpractices in RRB Bombay as follows:

“The report has indicated that *prima facie* certain malpractices have been indulged in. The report has recommended

prosecution of 13 persons including two retired railway officers, six serving railway employees and five outsiders. The matter is being processed in consultation with the Central Vigilance Commission."

Ah hoc Appointments for Posts of Chairmen

1.43 The Committee desired to know the appointments to the posts of Chairman of Railway Recruitment Board. In his reply, the Member (Staff) stated:

"In several of the Commissions, *ad hoc* arrangements are going on. We have, of course, drafted recruitment rules for the post of Chairman. They are open to both outsiders and retired railway employees and since we have not yet filled all the posts, we are currently managing with some *ad hoc* appointments. And we do not think that with the *ad hoc* arrangement there are any malpractices because of this."

1.44 In response to a query, the Member (Staff) informed the Committee:

"Out of 19 Railway Boards, five are having regular chairmen and 14 have *ad hoc* arrangements."

1.54 On being asked to indicate the time when the regular appointments to posts of Chairmen would be finalised, the Member (Staff) stated that "It is very difficult to answer that question. It requires a whole lot of approvals including Minister's as well as UPSC approvalI will not be able to give you the date when we will be able to finalise our names."

1.46 As desired by the Committee, the Ministry of Transport (Department of Railways) (Railway Board) have furnished a note

indicating the dates from which *ad hoc* arrangements for the post of Chairman are continuing in the various Railway Recruitment Boards with reasons for not filling up the posts for so long, as follows:

“The dates from which *ad hoc* arrangements are continuing for the post of chairman in various Railway Service Recruitment Board are as follows:—

Name of Railway Recruitment Board	Date from which ad hoc arrangement continuing
1. Ajmer	8-9-83
2. Ahmedabad	19-3-84
3. Allahabad	16-8-82
4. Bangalore	16-3-82
5. Bombay	9-1-81
6. Calcutta	5-2-82
7. Chandigarh	9-9-83
8. Guahati	9-2-84
9. Madras	8-4-85
10. Muzaffarpur	16-5-81
11. Secunderabad	5-8-83
12. Gorakhpur	19-7-84
13. Malda	17-7-84
14. Ranchi	29-8-84

Since adequate number of persons suitable for inclusion in the list to be sent to the UPSC have not yet been selected, recommendations could not be sent for their consideration. However, every effort is being made to finalise the same as early as possible.”

1.47 Indian Railways decided as early as 1942, to have a separate body for recruitment of Railway staff. The first Service Commission since renamed as Railway Recruitment Board (RRB) was established with a Chairman and two Members on the then North Western Railway. Based on the successful experience gained, four Service Commissions were created in 1946, at Bombay, Calcutta, Lucknow (subsequently shifted to Allahabad) and Madras. The Indian Railway Inquiry Committee in 1948 recommended their permanency. With the passage of time additional Railway Service Commissions were set up and by 1981, there were nine Railway Service Commissions meeting the recruitments of the Zonal Railways and the Railway Production Units. In 1981, the Railway Board ordered an in-depth study of the working of the various Railway Service Commissions. The Efficiency Bureau of the Railway Board which conducted the study recommended the setting up of six new Service Commis-

sions, one each in the States of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Orissa and Kerala and at Chandigarh in order to cope up with the increased demands of staff by Zonal Railways. However, at the time of implementation, the Railway Board decided that a seventh one should be provided at Jammu and Srinagar. Accordingly orders were issued in September, 1982 to establish seven more Service Commissions at Ahmedabad, Ajmer, Bhopal, Bhubaneswar, Chandigarh, Jammu and Srinagar and Trivandrum. These Service Commissions started functioning from 1983. Subsequently, three more Service Commissions were set up at Gorakhpur, Malda and Ranchi.

The Recruitment Boards have been set up with the objectives (i) to rationalise the workload on the existing RRBs; (ii) to expedite the selection process; (iii) to bring the recruiting agencies nearer to the candidates in the far flung areas and interior of States; and (iv) to meet regional aspirations in the matter of employment. The Ministry have further stated that the recruitment work for filling up vacancies handled by RRBs is done zone-wise as per jurisdictions laid down.

1.48 The Committee note that Audit para has raised three basic issues. The first is unnecessary and excessive proliferation of Railway Recruitment Boards. Secondly, Railway Recruitment Boards failed to meet the requirements for candidates, which led to ad hoc promotions without formal selection. The third is repeated failure to maintain the secrecy of question papers.

The Committee will deal first with the number of Recruitment Boards. The Member (Staff) agreed during evidence that "a view can certainly be taken that this objective could have been achieved by setting up more examination centres rather than proliferating Recruitment Boards". Keeping in view the national character of the Railways the Railway Reforms Committee recommended that the Railway should have only one Recruitment Board for each Railway Zone which stretched over five or six States. Overlooking this recommendation, the Railways decided to have 16 Boards, which number was subsequently raised to 19 Boards.

Apparently, instead of setting up a limited number of RRB's each with a large number of examination centres, the Railway have opted for comparatively larger number of RRBs each with small examination centres. Though a scientific study of the economics of the two systems has not been conducted it is evident that the additional cost per RRB is in the region of Rs. 6 lakhs per annum. Audit has estimated that additional cost per annum due to establishment of 10

more Commissions is Rs. 58 lakhs per annum. The Committee would strongly recommended that a review should be carried out of the RRBs which have been set up after 1983 and where the quantum of work has not picked up, RRB in question should be wound up.

1.49 One of the objectives of the policy laid down by the Railway Board for setting up Railway Recruitment Boards is to bring the recruiting agencies nearer to the candidates in the far flung areas and interior of States. According to the Ministry, proximity of RRB as opposed to an examination centre, makes it easier for a candidate to make enquiries personally. In addition there is also the psychological impact that the nearness of an office of the RRB can create in the minds of the candidates especially from the backward and under-developed areas. The Committee are not convinced with these arguments. They would like to point out that the State of Madhya Pradesh is one of the largest in respect of area in the country. The RRB at Bhopal in the State of Madhya Pradesh serves inter alia areas under its jurisdiction in the Bilaspur Division, which are as far as 700-800 kms. (Railway line distance) from the location of the Board. This is one instance. The Committee also find that most of the Recruitment Boards are located in the Capitals of the States whose location because of historical significance is far from the interior of the States coming within their respective jurisdiction. It was only at the instance of the Committee that Bikaner was brought within Ajmer's jurisdiction instead of that of J&K. The Committee are also unable to comprehend how one Zonal Railway Administration is able to place its demands for multiple Railway Recruitment Boards. The Committee are constrained to observe that the present locations of Railway Recruitment Boards are not in conformity with the declared objective of bringing the recruiting agencies nearer to the candidates from the far flung and interior areas of States. The Committee cannot but come to the conclusion that the RRBs have not been established with any clear conceptual policy, much less foresight.

1.50 Regarding the shortfall in coverage of staff requirements of Railways, there are two aspects. The first is whether in the case of any demand for a particular category the requirement has been met or not. In Allahabad, selections were conducted to meet the total requirements of 6,219 candidates. The number of candidates selected were 5,516 or about 90 per cent. In Bombay against a demand of 6,948 candidates only 5,075 or about 73 per cent were selected. The reasons for shortfall are stated to be non-availability of SC/ST candidates and ex-servicemen. The Committee have no doubt that had the number of RRBs been smaller, each covering a larger area, the number of

candidates appearing and qualifying would have been about the same and that result not much different. The second issue arises as a result of sufficient number of candidates not qualifying. It has been explained to the Committee that the work has not suffered as the requirement for the requisite staff was met in full by internal promotion of suitable candidates without observing the normal procedure. The Committee are surprised to learn that ad hoc promotions have had to be resorted to so frequently and widely that the Department of Railways have not been in a position to even compile and furnish the data regarding ad hoc promotions made due to failure of the Recruitment Boards to provide a sufficient number of freshly selected candidates.

1.51 The Committee observe that one of the major reasons for poor performance of the Railway Recruitment Boards is the excessive time taken by RRBs in finalising selection. It is noticed that the time taken by the RRBs from the date of advertisement to the date of final selection is four years as against the prescribed time limit of six months or a year. In evidence, the Member (Staff), Railway Board conceded that "it was a matter of concern to them". The Committee are constrained to observe that this is not a satisfactory state of affairs. Creeping of malpractices cannot be avoided in the face of such long delays.

1.52 The Committee were informed that there were 42 steps from the receipt of an indent from the Railway Administration to the issue of appointment letter to the successful candidates and that some of these steps were time consuming. The Committee consider that there can be no excuse for such delays. The process of recruitment should never be allowed to exceed twelve months and should normally be six months. It is also unwise to assume that a candidate applying to RRB could afford to wait for four years. The Committee strongly recommend that the Ministry of Transport should carry out a thorough review of the working of the RRBs and restructure the system so that the entire process of recruitment is speeded up and the selected candidates informed of their appointment within a reasonable period of time.

1.53 The third issue gone into by the Committee is failure to maintain secrecy. This arose from leakages of question papers to examinations conducted at Allahabad. These incidents of leakages received wide publicity in the press and shook the faith of the public in the RRBs. The Railway Board claims that the system and procedure followed by them are not defective. Complacency of this kind can only be described as unsatisfactory. The Committee recommends

emphatically that the Railway Board should carry out a quick study of the working of other recruiting organisations of similar kind such as the Banking Service Recruitment Board and Staff Selection Commission and the defects found in the system followed by RRBs remedial promptly.

1.54 The Committee is astonished at the Railway Board's failure to ensure that the personnel of the Recruitment Boards are appointed in a proper manner and in accordance with the rules framed for the purpose. There is no justification for adhocism in such matters.

NEW DELHI;
25 April, 1986

5Vaisakha, 1908 (Saka)

E. AYYAPU REDDY,
Chaiman,
Public Accounts Committee.

APPENDIX I

[See para 1.5 (6) of the Report]

[Statement showing the location and Jurisdiction of Railway Recruitment Boards as on 20-8-85]

Location of the Board	State	Railway	
1. Ahmedabad	Gujarat	Western Railway	
		Vadodara	} Divisions
		Rajkot	
		Bhavnagar	
2. Ajmer	Rajasthan	Western Railway	
		Ratlam	} Divisions
		Kota	
		Jaipur	
		Ajmer	
		Northern Railway	
		Jodhpur	Division
3. Allahabad	Uttar Pradesh	Diesel Locomotive Works/Varanasi	
		Northern Railway	
		Allahabad	} Divisions
		Lucknow	
		Moradabad	
4. Bangalore	Karnataka	Southern Railway	
		Bangalore	} Divisions
		Mysore	
		South Central Railway	
		Hubli	Divisions
		Wheel & Axle Plant, Banalore.	
5. Bhopal	Madhya Pradesh	Central Railway	
		Jabalpur	} Divisions
		Jhansi	
		South Eastern Railway	
		Bilaspur	} Divisions
		Nagpur	
6. Bhubaneswar	Orissa	South Eastern Railway	
		Khurda Road	} Divisions
		Waltair	
		Chakaradharpur	

Location of the Board	State	Railway	
7. Bombay	Maharashtra	<i>Central Railway</i>	
		Headquarters Office	
		Bombay Bhusaval Nagpur Sholapur	} Divisions
		<i>Western Railway</i>	
		Headquarters Office	
		Bombay	Division
8. Calcutta	West Bengal	<i>Eastern Railway</i>	
		Headquarters Office	
		Howarah Asansol Sealdah	} Divisions
		<i>South Eastern Railway</i>	
		Headquarters Office	
		Adra Kharagpur	} Divisions
9. Chandigarh	Punjab/Haryana	<i>Northern Railway</i>	
		Headquarters Office & Delhi Division	
10. Gauhati	Assam	<i>North East Frontier Railway</i>	
		Headquarters Office	
		Alipurduar Lumding Tinsukia	} Divisions
		<i>North Eastern Railway</i>	
11. Gorakhpur	Uttar Pradesh	Headquarters Office	
		Varanasi Izatnagar Lucknow	} Divisions
		<i>Northern Railway</i>	
12. Jammu & Srinagar	Jammu & Kashmir	Bikaner Ferozapore Diesel Component Works, Patiala	} Divisions

Location of the Board	State	Railway	
13. Madras	Tamil Nadu	<i>Southern Railway</i>	
		Headquarters Office	
		Madras Tiruchirapalli Madurai Integral Coach Factory, Madras	} Divisions
14. Malda	West Bengal	<i>Eastern Railway</i>	
		Malda	} Division
		<i>North East Frontier Railway</i>	
		D.H. Railway	
15. Muzaffarpur	Bihar	<i>North Eastern Railway</i>	
		Samastipur Sonepur	} Divisions
16. Patna	Bihar	<i>Eastern Railway</i>	
		Moghalsarai Dhanbad Danapur	} Divisions
		<i>North East Frontier Railway</i>	
		Katihar (except D.H. Railway)	} Division
17. Ranchi	Bihar	<i>North East Frontier Railway</i>	
	Exclusively to meet the requirements of Scheduled Tribe quota vacancies	Katihar	} Division
		Eastern Railway Dhanbad Danapur Moghalsarai	} Divisions
		<i>South Eastern Railway</i>	
		Chakradharpur	} Division
18. Secunderabad	Andhra Pradesh	<i>South Central Railway</i>	
		Headquarters Office	
		Secunderabad (BG) Hyderabad (MG) Vijayawada Guntakal	} Divisions
19. Trivandrum	Kerala	<i>Southern Railway</i>	
		Palghat Trivandrum	} Divisions

APPENDIX II

Statement of Observations and Recommendations

Sl. No.	Para No.	Ministry concerned	Observations/Recommendations
1	2	3	4
1	1.47	Transport (Department of Railways) (Railway Board)	<p>Indian Railways decided as early as 1942, to have a separate body for recruitment of Railway staff. The first Service Commission (since renamed as Railway Recruitment Board) (RRB) was established with a Chairman and two Members on the then North Western Railway. Based on the successful experience gained, four Service Commissions were created in 1946, at Bombay, Calcutta, Lucknow (subsequently shifted to Allahabad) and Madras. The Indian Railway Inquiry Committee in 1948 recommended their permanency. With the passage of time additional Railway Service Commissions were set up and by 1981, there were nine Railway Service Commissions meeting the requirements of the Zonal Railways had the Railway Production Units. In 1981, the Railway Board ordered an indepth study of the working of the various Railway Service Commissions. The Efficiency Bureau of the Railway Board which conducted the study recommended the setting up of six new Service Commissions, one each in the States of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Orissa and Kerala and at Chandigarh in order to cope up with the increased de-</p>

mands of staff by Zonal Railways. However, at the time of implementation, the Railway Board decided that a seventh one should be provided at Jammu and Srinagar. Accordingly orders were issued in September, 1982 to establish seven more Service Commissions at Ahmedabad, Ajmer, Bhopal, Bhubaneswar, Chandigarh, Jammu and Srinagar and Trivandrum. These Service Commissions started functioning from 1983. Subsequently, three more Service Commissions were set up at Gorakhpur, Malda and Ranchi.

The Recruitment Boards have been set up with the objectives (i) to rationalise the workload on the existing RRBs; (ii) to expedite the selection process; (iii) to bring the recruiting agencies nearer to the candidates in the far flung areas and interior of States; and (iv) to meet regional aspirations in the matter of employment. The Ministry have further stated that the recruitment work for filling up vacancies handled by RRBs is done zone-wise as per jurisdiction laid down.

The Committee note that Audit para has raised three basic issues. The first is unnecessary and excessive proliferation of Railway Recruitment Boards. Secondly, Railway Recruitment Boards failed to meet the requirements for candidates, which led to *ad hoc* promotions without formal selection. The third is repeated failure to maintain the secrecy of question papers.

The Committee will deal first with the number of Recruitment Boards. The Member (Staff) agreed during evidence that "a view can certainly be taken that this objective could have been achieved by setting up more examination centres rather than proliferating Recruitment Boards". Keeping in view the national character of the Railways the Railway Reforms Committee recommended that the Railway should have only one Recruitment Board for each Railway Zone which stretched over five or six States. Overlooking this recommendation, the Railways decided to have 16 Boards, which number was subsequently raised to 19 Boards.

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Apparently, instead of setting up a limited number of RRBs, each with a large number of examination centres, the Railway have opted for comparatively larger number of RRBs each with small examination centres. Though a scientific study of the economics of the two systems has not been conducted it is evident that the additional cost per RRB is in the region of Rs. 6 lakhs per annum. Audit has estimated that additional cost per annum due to establishment of 10 more Commissions is Rs. 58 lakhs per annum. The Committee would strongly recommend that a review should be carried out of the RRBs, which have been set up after 1983 and where the quantum of work has not picked up, RRB in question should be wound up.

One of the objectives of the policy laid down by the Railway Board for setting up Railway Recruitment Boards is to bring the recruiting agencies nearer to the candidates in the far flung areas and interior of States. According to the Ministry, proximity of RRB as opposed to an examination centre, makes it easier for a candidate to make enquiries personally. In addition there is also the psychological impact that the nearness of an office of the RRB can create in the minds of the candidates especially from the backward and under-developed areas. The Committee are not convinced with these arguments. They would like to point out that the State of Madhya Pradesh is one of the largest in respect of area in the country. The RRB at Bhopal in the State of Madhya Pradesh serves *inter alia* areas under its jurisdiction in the Bilaspur Division, which are as far as 700-800 kms. (Railway line distance) from the location of the Board. This is one instance. The Committee also find that most of the Recruitment Boards are located in the Capitals of the States whose location because of historical significance is far from the interior of the States coming within their respective jurisdiction. It was only at the instance of the Committee that Bikaner was brought within Ajmer's jurisdiction instead of that of J&K. The Committee are also unable to comprehend how one Zonal Railway Administration is able to place its demands for multiple Railway Recruitment Boards. The Committee are constrained to observe that the present locations of Railway Recruitment Boards are not in conformity with the declared objective of bringing the recruiting agencies nearer to the candidates

from the far flung and interior areas of States. The Committee cannot but come to the conclusion that the RRBs have not been established with any clear conceptual policy much less foresight.

4 1.50

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Regarding the shortfall in coverage of staff requirements of Railways, there are two aspects. The first is whether in the case of any demand for a particular category the requirement has been met or not. In Allahabad, selections were conducted to meet the total requirements of 6,219 candidates. The number of candidates selected were 5,516 or about 90 per cent. In Bombay against a demand of 6,948 candidates only 5,075 or about 73 per cent were selected. The reasons for shortfall are stated to be non-availability of SC/ST candidates and ex-servicemen. The Committee have no doubt that had the number of RRBs been smaller, each covering a larger area, the number of candidates appearing and qualifying would have been about the same and the result not much different. The second issue arises as a result of sufficient number of candidates not qualifying. It has been explained to the Committee that the work has not suffered as the requirement for the requisite staff was met in full by internal promotion of suitable candidates without observing the normal procedure. The Committee are surprised to learn that *ad hoc* promotions have had to be resorted to so frequently and widely that the Department of Railways have not been in a position to even compile and furnish the

data regarding *ad hoc* promotions made due to failure of the Recruitment Boards to provide a sufficient number of freshly selected candidates.

5 1.51 -do-

The Committee observe that one of the major reasons for poor performance of the Railway Recruitment Boards is the excessive time taken by RRBs in finalising selection. It is noticed that the time taken by the RRBs from the date of advertisement to the date of final selection is four years as against the prescribed time limit of six months or a year. In evidence, the Member (Staff), Railway Board conceded that "it was a matter of concern to them". The Committee are constrained to observe that this is not a satisfactory state of affairs. Creeping of malpractices cannot be avoided in the face of such long delays.

6 1.52 -do-

The Committee were informed that there were 42 steps from the receipt of an indent from the Railway Administration to the issue of appointment letter to the successful candidates and that some of those steps were time consuming. The Committee consider that there can be no excuse for such delays. The process of recruitment should never be allowed to exceed twelve months and should normally be six months. It is also unwise to assume that a candidate applying to RRB could afford to wait for four years. The Committee strongly recommend that the Ministry of Transport should carry out a thorough review of the working of the RRBs and restructure the system so that the entire process of recruitment is speeded up and the selected candidates informed of their appointment within a reasonable period of time.

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The third issue gone into by the Committee is failure to maintain secrecy. This arose from leakages of question papers at examinations conducted at Allahabad. These incidents of leakages received wide publicity in the press and shook the faith of the public in the RRBs. The Railway Board claims that the system and procedure followed by them are not defective. Complacence of this kind can only be described as unsatisfactory. The Committee recommends emphatically that the Railway Board should carry out a quick study of the working of other recruiting organisations of similar kind such as the Banking Service Recruitment Board and Staff Selection Commission and the defects found in the system followed by RRBs remedied promptly.

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The Committee is astonished at the Railway Board's failure to ensure that the personnel of the Recruitment Boards are appointed in a proper manner and in accordance with the rules framed for the purpose. There is no justification for adhocism in such matters.

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