

COMMITTEE ON PETITIONS

(FIFTH LOK SABHA)

SIXTEENTH REPORT

[Action taken by Government on the recommendations contained in the Eighth Report of the Committee on Petitions (Fifth Lok Sabha) regarding claims against the Railways on account of shortages in consignments of pig iron booked from Steel Plants]



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
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COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE ON PETITIONS
(1973-74)

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**SIXTEENTH REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON PETITIONS
(FIFTH LOK SABHA)**

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairman of the Committee on Petitions, having been authorised by the Committee to present the Report on their behalf, present this Sixteenth Report of the Committee to the House, regarding action taken by Government on the recommendations contained in the Eighth Report of the Committee on Petitions (Fifth Lok Sabha) on the representation regarding claims against the Railways on account of shortages in consignments of pig iron booked from Steel Plants.

2. The Committee considered the matter and adopted the draft Report at their sitting held on the 3rd January, 1974.

3. The observations of the Committee on the matters contained in the Report have been included in this Report.

REPORT

1.1 In their Eighth Report (Fifth Lok Sabha), the Committee had made certain recommendations on the subject of claims against the Railways on account of shortages in consignments of pig iron booked from Steel Plants. The Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) were requested to implement the recommendations of the Committee. The recommendations of the Committee and action taken replies thereon furnished by the Government are given below *seriatim*:

Recommendation in para 1.61 of the Eighth Report

The Committee view with alarm the wide-spread and increasing number of complaints regarding shortages in consignments of pig iron and the various other goods carried by the Railways. The Committee are of the opinion that as the National carriers of goods, it is prime duty of the Railways to ensure safe delivery of consignments to the consignees.

Reply of Government

Ministry of Railways fully share the concern of the Committee about the incidence of thefts and pilferages resulting in shortages in consignments booked by Railways. The Committee would, however, be glad to know that as a result of various preventive measures taken by the Railways, number of claims for compensation for loss, thefts, pilferages, damage etc. received during 1972-73 were less by 40,000 as compared to 1971-72. Efforts in this direction are being vigorously continued. It will also be appreciated that prevention of thefts and pilferages is mainly the responsibility of the State Governments whose active cooperation has been sought by constituting High Level Coordination Committees in each State.

Instructions have also been issued that the intelligence staff should be deployed to find out the foundries who may be the recipients of the stolen pig-iron.

[Vide Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) O.M. No. TCIV/4752/71/2/LS dated 1-9-1973].

Recommendation in para 1.62 of the Eighth Report

The Committee are surprised to find that the Railways do not

maintain statistics of complaints of shortages in consignments received by them on a cause-wise basis. The Railways were, accordingly unable to furnish to the Committee statistics of complaints or claims received by them in respect of pig iron consignments. The Committee are unable to appreciate how in the absence of statistics of complaints on a cause-wise basis, the extent of the problem of shortages in consignments of pig iron or other commodities can be estimated effectively removed. The Committee are of the opinion that pig iron being an expensive material, Railways should keep separate statistics of complaints and claims for shortages in consignments of this commodity.

Reply of Government

The complaints received from the trade in respect of loss, shortage, breakage etc., are generally in the form of a notice of claim. The cause giving rise to a claim can be established only after investigations have been conducted in the concerned case. Railways, therefore, maintain statistics, cause-wise and commodity-wise, of claims paid only. These statistics are already maintained for 36 important commodities including iron and steel.

Preventive action for reducing claim is taken after analysing the main causes giving rise to claims and identifying the commodities for which claims payment is high or is showing increase.

Statistics for claims paid on pig iron are not separately maintained at present but are included under the Commodity Heading, 'Iron and Steel'. Instructions to the Railways have been issued for computerisation of claims statistics. Separate cause-wise statistics for claims paid on pig iron will be maintained after instructions for computerisation have been implemented on all the Zonal Railways.

[Vide Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) O.M. No. TCIV/4752/71/2/LS dated 1-9-1973].

Recommendation in para 1.63 of the Eighth Report

Occurrence of wide-spread shortages in consignments of an expensive and rather a scarce commodity like pig iron not only causes losses to the established industries and disturbs their working and finances, but also forces the Railways to pay large sums of money by way of compensation for the shortages. It is, therefore, of utmost importance that urgent steps should be taken to eliminate the causes of such shortages.

Reply of Government

The urgent need to eradicate the causes of thefts and pilferages and minimise their incidence is accepted. Measures taken by the Railways to reduce the incidence of claims on iron and steel consignments are given below:

- (i) escorting of trains carrying iron steel consignments in block loads through vulnerable sections;
- (ii) patrolling by armed Railway Protection Force personnel in vulnerable yards;
- (iii) collection of crime intelligence and conducting surprise raids by the staff of Railways as well as Central Crime Bureau, Railway Board, with a view to tracking down criminals and receivers of stolen property and convicting them under the Railway Property (Unlawful Possession) Act, 1966;
- (iv) maintenance of close co-ordination between Railway Protection Force, Government Railway Police and State Police Officers to deal with criminals and receivers of stolen properties;
- (v) proper labelling of wagons to avoid misdespatches and to prevent them from becoming unconnected; pasting of an extra label on the sole-bar of wagons loaded with Iron and Steel;
- (vi) emphasis on correct documentation and securing relevant documents with wagons;
- (vii) supplying of covered wagons for loading of pig iron consignments as far as practicable;
- (viii) organisation of a special cell to connect wagons loaded with Iron and Steel reported to be lying unconnected at stations.

[Vide Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) O.M. No. TCIV/
4752/71/2/LS dated 1-9-1973].

Recommendation in para 1.64 of the Eighth Report

The Committee are of the opinion that pilferage in consignments

of pig iron is the main cause of shortages and consequent claims against the Railways. The loading of pig iron consignments in open wagons at the Steel Plants makes pilferage comparatively easier for the anti-social elements.

Reply of Government

Steps taken to prevent claims on iron and steel consignments including those of pig iron are detailed in reply to recommendation in para 1.63. Regarding loading of pig iron in open wagons by steel plants, reply to paras 1.65 and 1.68 may be referred.

[Vide Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) O.M. No. TCIV/4752/71/2/LS dated 17-10-1973].

Recommendations in para 1.65 of the Eighth Report

Loading of pig iron in open wagons on a piecemeal basis aggravates the problem as it makes sustained watch difficult and thus increases the chances of pilferage. During their on-the-spot visits to the loading sites in Rourkela and Bhilai Steel Plants, the Committee were satisfied that the chances of pilferage at the loading sites within the premises of the Steel Plants were remote, because of high boundary walls barbed wire fencing and adequate security arrangements made by the Steel Plants. The Committee are of the view that the more vulnerable points for pilferage are (i) exchange yards of the Steel Plants, (ii) Transshipment Points and (iii) various stages of movement, especially over long hauls.

Reply of Government

The Committee is aware that pig iron is loaded by Steel Plants with the help of magnetic cranes which can be done only in open wagons. To that extent, use of open wagons for loading of pig iron is unavoidable. Instructions already exist that covered wagons should be supplied for loading of pig iron as far as possible.

Chances of pilferage within the premises of Steel Plants cannot be completely ruled out. The vulnerable points of Railways—exchange yards, transshipment points and various other places are being closely watched by the Security Department of the Railways. Railways are also escorting, within the available resources, maximum number of trains loaded with vulnerable commodities.

[Vide Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) O.M. No. TCIV/4752/71/2/LS dated 1-9-1973].

Recommendation in para No. 1.66 of the Eighth Report

In cases of piecemeal loading of pig iron wagons, the loads of the trains are completed from the intermediate stations which exposes the pig iron loaded wagons to greater chances of pilferage.

Reply of Government

The observation is noted. Reply to para 1.69 may be referred.

[Vide Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) O.M. No. TCIV/4752/71/2/LS dated 17-10-1973.]

Recommendation in para 1.67 of the Eighth Report

The Committee have also been informed that there are certain areas adjoining the Railway tracks in industrial sidings, Steel Plants or even elsewhere in concentration of 'bustees', etc, where undesirable and anti-social elements indulge in wagon breaking and maintain direct contacts with certain business people who purchase stolen goods and finance those hirelings. It is necessary that these areas should be identified. In order to deal with the menacing problem of wagon breaking and pilferage for running trains by anti-social and criminal gangs at the vulnerable points, the Ministry of Railways, in coordination with the State Governments concerned, should take concerted steps to liquidate the organised gangs.

Reply of Government

Instructions already exist wherein the Railways have been asked to identify the notorious areas where undesirable and anti-social elements indulge in wagon breaking, thefts and pilferages from running trains and yards, and to liquidate gangs operating in these places with the assistance of the State Governments concerned.

As most of these 'bustees' are outside the Railway premises, it is only the State Government|Police which can take action against them. Intelligence regarding activities of the criminals operating in these areas is, therefore, passed on by the Railway Protection Force to the Government Railway|Civil Police concerned for action. The problem is also discussed in the State Level Committees from time to time.

[Vide Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) O.M. No. TCIV/4752/71/2/LS dated 17-10-1973.]

Recommendation in para 1.68 of the Eighth Report

The Committee are of the view that utilisation of covered wagons for loading and transport of pig iron will prevent pilferage to a very large extent. Use of mechanical loading and adjustments by means of over-head magnetic cranes would, however, require redesigning of the covered wagons, for example by providing sliding panels, or by other suitable modifications. The Committee recommend that the Ministry of Railways should develop a suitable design of covered wagons to suit this purpose on a priority basis and progressively use only covered wagons for loading and transport of pig iron. Till then, the Committee recommend that where loading of pig iron is done manually, covered wagons should be used as far as possible and open wagons may be used only when covered wagons are not available or where loading and adjustment is done by mechanical means.

Reply of Government

Instructions to the Railways exist that covered wagons should be utilised to the extent possible, for loading pig iron. The scope of supplying covered wagons for loading pig iron is, however, limited by the fact that most of the Steel Plants load pig iron by overhead magnetic cranes. Further, in supply of covered wagons, preference is given to damageable commodities like foodgrains sugar, fertilisers and cement. Under certain circumstances, the Railways have to carry even foodgrains in open wagons.

Regarding the Committee's recommendation for designing a covered wagon with sliding panels, it is pointed out that a design of an open wagon with collapsible roofs had already been prepared and 30 BOX wagons of this design have been manufactured for experiment. The results of this experiment are yet to be assessed.

[Vide Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) O.M. No. TCIV/4752/71/2/LS dated 1-9-1973].

Recommendation in para 1.69 of the Eighth Report

The Committee recommend that loading of pig iron should be done as far as possible in block rakes which should be escorted by the Railways all along on vulnerable sections and long hauls. Further, the wagon-load despatches should be marshalled into full trainloads at the first possible opportunity. Piecemeal loading should be avoided as far as possible.

Reply of Government

The recommendation that loading of pig iron should be done, as far as possible, in block rakes which should be escorted by Railway staff is in keeping with the existing policy of the Railways. Steel Plants have been requested to arrange movement of maximum number of block rakes to their stock yards for further distribution therefrom to individual buyers. Block rakes of pig iron and other steel consignments are being escorted by the Railway Protection Force staff within the available resources. Formation of train loads of the same commodity at intermediate points is not always possible as the wagons cannot be detailed in a yard to enable such formation.

[Vide Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) O.M. No. TCIV/4752/71/2/LS dated 1-9-1973].

Recommendation in para 1.70 of the Eighth Report

The Committee are of the view that security arrangements by Railway Protection Force need to be strengthened at the Exchange Yards at the Steel Plants and the transshipment points. Special security guards should invariably be posted to guard the trains during long halts at way side stations and yards specially during night time.

Reply of Government

Railways have been instructed to further tighten security arrangements in the exchange yards of steel plants and transshipment points and to post Railway Protection Force staff to the extent possible to guard the goods trains during long halts at way-side stations/ yards particularly at night.

[Vide Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) O.M. No. TCIV/4752/71/2/LS dated 17-10-1973.]

Recommendation in para 1.71 of the Eighth Report

In this connection, the Committee would emphasise the desirability of awarding exemplary punishment to the offenders so that they find pilferage really prohibitive. If necessary, the relevant provisions of law should be suitably amended. Any Railway Staff found conniving in pilferage should also be dealt with severely.

Reply of Government

The punishment for acts of theft and pilferages of Railway property as also the goods entrusted to the Railways as carriers has been prescribed under the general law of the land i.e., Indian Penal Code. As the crime control is a state subject, the cases are processed by the State Police Authorities who apprehend the culprits and initiate action for getting them convicted. As things stand, separate punishment has not been prescribed for theft and pilferage of Railway property and it is difficult to make out a special case therefor.

However, to check the heavy incidence of such cases, an act known as Railway Property (Unlawful Possession) Act, 1966 has been passed by the Parliament. This Act has been brought into force from 1-4-1968. Under this, a person found in possession of any Railway Property reasonably suspected to have been stolen or unlawfully obtained, is liable to be punished for a minimum imprisonment of one year and/or with fine not less than Rs. 1,000 for the offence. For the second or subsequent offences, a minimum imprisonment of 2 years and a fine of Rs. 2,000 has been prescribed. A number of cases of pilferage of goods consigned by the Railways are prosecuted under Railway Property (Unlawful Possession) Act. It is considered that the provision of law both in the Indian Penal Code and the Railway Property (Unlawful Possession) Act, are adequate to deal with this problem.

Penalties on the Railway servants are imposed under the provisions contained in Railway Servants (D & A) Rules, 1968 as also RPF Rules, 1959. Under these rules, penalties ranging from warning/censure to removal and dismissal from service can be imposed for good and sufficient reasons. Conniving in pilferage of Railway property is misconduct which will attract these rules and normally merit the imposition of a major penalty.

This is in addition to the punishments that may be imposed upon Railway servants under the general law of the land including Railway Property (Unlawful Possession) Act, 1966.

[Vide Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) O.M. No. TCIV/4752/71/2/LS dated 1-9-1973].

Recommendation in para 1.72 of the Eighth Report

The Committee, during their on-the-spot visits to the loading sites at the Rourkela and Bhilai Steel Plants, were not satisfied

by the supervision arrangements of loading and weighing of pig iron. The Committee are of the view that weighing should not be left to mere Tally Clerks but there should be supervision by some Senior Officers also, both of the Railways as well as of the Steel Plants. There should also be periodical joint surprise checks of weighing of loaded wagons by the Railways and Steel Plants Officers. Similar supervision and checking should also be carried out at the transshipment points by the Senior Officers of the Railways.

Reply of Government

The Committee's intention, perhaps, is that the work of staff in charge of weighing at weigh-bridges should be supervised by Senior Officers of the Railways as well as the Steel Plants. Weighing is the responsibility of the Railways and it would not be desirable to ask the Steel Plants to send their officers for exercising supervision on the work done by the Railway Staff. Station Masters|Yard Masters are required to supervise the work of all staff working under them including weigh-bridge clerks. Divisional Officers are also required to inspect the weigh-bridges from time to time. The Railways have, however, been instructed that weigh-bridges should be treated as vulnerable points and supervision thereon should be intensified.

Instructions already exist that officers should conduct surprise checks on weighing of loaded wagons at the originating points as well as the transshipment points. The Railway have been advised to make these surprise checks more frequent and also to associate Steel Plant Officers in such checks.

[Vide Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) O.M. No. TCIY/4752|71|2|LS dated 17-10-1973].

Recommendations in para 1.73 of the Eighth Report

The Committee also recommend that the tare weight of the Railway Wagons should be periodically checked both at the loading points in the Steel Plants as well as at the transshipment points. Further, all possible measures should be adopted in order to eliminate chances of pilferage and tampering with the loaded wagons. These would include revetting the loaded wagons securely and sealing them carefully; precautions in proper packing, labelling marking, scrutiny and documentation of consignments; ensuring fitness of wagons; patrolling of loading points, exchange yards and at transshipment points.

Reply of Government

Instructions exist that the tare weight of wagons should be checked at the time of periodic overhaul of wagons and correct weight marked on the wagons. It will not, however, be possible to check the tare weight of these wagons at the loading or transshipment points as the inward released wagons are generally back loaded and weigh-bridges are provided at a few points only.

The Committee's recommendation that all possible measures should be adopted to eliminate chances of pilferage and tampering is in accordance with the existing policy and is accepted. Great emphasis is being laid on proper rivetting, sealing, packing, labelling, marking and documentation of consignment. A massive drive has also been started for patching the holes in the wagons. Patrolling of exchange yards and at transshipment points is also being done within the available resources.

[Vide Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) O.M. No. TCIV/4752/71/2/LS dated 1-9-1973].

Recommendation in para 1.74 of the Eighth Report

The Committee are of the opinion that clear unqualified Railway Receipts should always be issued in respect of consignments of pig iron so that there is no ambiguity about their weight and there is no harassment to the consignees in the settlement of their claims.

Reply of Government

The Railway Receipts issued for pig-iron are clear as far as weight of the consignment loaded is concerned. Weighment of wagons loaded with pig iron is witnessed by the Railway Staff and the weight is recorded on the Railway Receipts. It is, however, not possible, to certify the number of pig iron ingots loaded as loading is by mechanical means and it is not possible for the Railway Staff to physically count the number of pieces loaded.

Recommendation in para 1.75 of the Eighth Report

The Committee feel that the existing procedure and conditions for dealing with demands of re-weighment of consignments are vague and unsatisfactory and likely to lead to arbitrary denial of legitimate demands for re-weighments by aggrieved consignees. The Committee recommend that the procedure and conditions for re-weighment should be clearly laid down to ensure that genuine demands for re-weighment are not denied.

Reply of Government

Weigh Bridges are not provided at all destination stations. Moreover weighing of a wagon involves considerable detention to the same resulting in loss of transport capacity. It has, therefore, been laid down in Rule No. 118 of the Indian Railways Conference Association Goods Tariff No. 33 Part I that, "Railways do not undertake to weigh consignments at destination stations as a matter of course. Such weighments at destination can only be considered in exceptional cases when the condition of the consignment or package warrants this".

Instructions already exist that Railways should allow re-weighment of pig iron consignments when signs of shortages are apparent. The Railways have been advised that discretion should be exercised judiciously and promptly, and that genuine requests for re-weighment should be allowed.

[Vide Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) O.M. No. TCIV/4752/71/2/LS dated 1-9-1973].

Recommendation in para 1.76 of the Eighth Report

The Committee are not satisfied with the existing procedure for settlement of claims by the Railways. The Committee recommend that this procedure should be simplified and streamlined to ensure expeditious settlement of claims.

Reply of Government

The observations are noted. It is the policy of the Board to settle claims expeditiously in accordance with the provisions of Indian Railways Act.

The recommendation for simplification and streamlining of procedure for settlement of claims is also in accordance with the existing policy of the Railway Board. With a view to ensuring expeditious settlement of claims for compensation, several measures have been taken in the recent past. Some of these measures are:—

- (i) The Monetary limit for settlement of claims for compensation requiring financial concurrence before payment has been raised from Rs. 1000 to Rs. 5000.

- (ii) The Monetary limit of claims for compensation for fixation of inter-railway liability has been raised from Rs. 200 to Rs. 2,000 in respect of Government Railways.
- (iii) The Monetary limit of Station Pay Orders issued for settlement of claims for compensation and encashable at important stations has been raised from Rs. 500 to Rs. 1000.
- (iv) Mobile Claims Office headed by Claims Officers visit important stations and settle claims on the spot.
- (v) Small claims are settled summarily.

[Vide Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) O.M. No. TCIV/4752/71/2/LS dated 1-9-1973].

Recommendation in para. 1.77 of the Eighth Report

The Committee are of the opinion that the public relations mahinery of the Railways should be streamlined to ensure that an aggrieved person is able to approach the higher officers of the Railways without any difficulty for redressal of his grievances.

Reply of Government

Railway officials can always be approached for redressal of genuine difficulties. Periodical meetings are also held with important Chambers of Commerce and regular customers to resolve points of dispute.

Recommendation in para 1.78 of the Eighth Report

The Committee recommend that the Western Railway authorities should expeditiously review all the unsettled pending claims of the Jamnagar Factory Owners' Association and other parties of that area, in respect of shortages in consignments of pig iron. The Committee would like to be informed of the results of such review as early as possible.

Reply of Government

The Jamnagar Factory Owners' Association made a representation in September, 1970, regarding non-payment of 20 claims for compensation for partial shortage in respect of consignments of pig iron booked to Jamnagar from Burnco Siding, Bhilai, Rourkela and Durgapur. Out of these 20 claims, seven claims on review were

settled by payment and in one case the claim was not admitted as there was no shortage. The remaining 12 cases were also reviewed by the Railway but were not found payable on merits.

Six claims of shortages from consignments of pig iron in Rajkot area were pending settlement on 1st January, 1973. All these six cases have since been settled by payment.

[Vide Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) O.M. No. TCIV/4752/71/2/LS dated 1-9-1973].

Recommendation in para 1.79 of the Eighth Report

The Committee note from the recent Report of the Special Study on claims in Iron and Steel Traffic of the Western Railway that in some cases where the contents of one broad gauge wagon are transhipped into two or more wagons, the metre gauge wagons are not despatched to destinations in one lot by the same train, but are despatched on different dates and by different trains. This practice results in piece-meal arrival of consignments at destinations and leads to unnecessary requests for re-weighment. The Committee would like to emphasise that such piece-meal despatches should be avoided to keep the claims bill against the Railways in check.

Reply of Government

Instructions have been issued that transhipped wagons of pig iron should be sent together and not in piece-meal.

[Vide Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) O.M. No. TCIV/4752/71/2/LS dated 1-9-1973].

Observations of the Committee

1.2. The Committee note that in pursuance of their recommendations, the Government have initiated certain measures to eradicate the causes of thefts and pilferages and minimise the incidence of claims arising out of shortages in iron and steel consignments, as a result of which the number of claims for compensation for loss, thefts, pilferages, damages etc., received during 1972-73 were less by 40,000 as compared to those in 1971-72. The Committee hope that efforts made in this direction will be vigorously continued.

1.3. The Committee note that prevention of thefts and pilferages is also the responsibility of the State Governments whose active cooperation has been sought by the Railway authorities by constituting High Level Coordination Committees in each of the States.

1.4. The Committee note that instructions have been issued to the Railway Administrations for computerisation of claims statistics and for keeping separate cause-wise statistics for claims paid on pig iron after instructions for computerisation have been implemented on all the Zonal Railways. The Committee desire that a copy of the instructions issued by the Ministry of Railways in this regard may be furnished to the Committee for their information.

1.5. The Committee note that Zonal Railways have been asked to identify the areas where undesirable and anti-social elements indulge in wagon breaking, thefts and pilferages from running trains and yards and to liquidate such gangs operating in those areas, with the assistance of the State Governments concerned. The Committee hope that the State Governments will give full cooperation to the Railways to deal with the menacing problem of wagon breaking and pilferage from running trains by anti-social and criminal gangs.

1.6. The Committee note that a new design of wagons with collapsible roofs has been prepared and 30 BOX wagons of this design have been manufactured on an experimental basis. The Committee desire the Ministry of Railways to intimate the Committee the results of this experiment and expedite regular production of such wagons with such improvements as may be found necessary as a result of the experiment.

1.7. The Committee have noted that loading of pig iron is now done as far as possible, in block rakes which are escorted by the Railway Protection Force. The Committee desire that block rakes may always be used for movement to destinations where there are heavy concentration of consumers.

1.8. The Committee note that in order to check heavy incidence of theft and pilferages of Railway property, in addition to the punishment prescribed under the general penal law of land, the Railway Property (Unlawful Possession) Act, 1966 has been brought into force from the 1st April, 1968, under which a person found in possession of any Railway property reasonably suspected to have been stolen or unlawfully obtained, is liable to be punished for a minimum imprisonment of one year and or with fine not less than Rs. 1000, and for the second or subsequent offences, a minimum imprisonment of two years and a fine of Rs. 2000 has been prescribed.

Penalties on the Railway servants for conniving in pilferage of Railway Property are imposed under the provisions contained in the Railway Servants (Disciplinary and Appeal) Rules, 1968. They are also punished under the general law of the land including the Railways Property (Unlawful Possession) Act, 1966. The Committee desire that the provisions of the above laws should be strictly enforced by strengthening the enforcement machinery of the Railways.

1.9. The Committee note that the Officers of Railways have been instructed to supervise and inspect the work of loading of pig iron at the Steel Plants. The Committee also note that surprise checks on weighment of loaded wagons at the originating points as well as the transshipment points have been intensified. These are steps in the right direction. The Committee would like the Ministry of Railways to furnish to the Committee a statement showing percentages of surprise checks made on weighment of loaded wagons at the originating points as well as at the transshipment points month-wise to the total number of steel consignments booked during the last two years. The Committee also desire the Ministry of Railways to intimate to the Committee the results of surprise checks made on weighment of loaded wagons of pig iron at the originating and transshipment points, for their information, in due course.

The Committee note that instructions have been issued that transshipped wagons of pig iron should be sent together and not in piecemeal. The Committee hope that this will be strictly enforced.

1.10. The Committee note that weigh-bridges are not provided at all destination stations. Railways allow re-weighment of pig iron consignments when signs of shortages are apparent. The Committee hope that genuine requests for reweighment will not be disallowed.

ANANT PRASAD SHARMA,
Chairman,
Committee on Petitions.

NEW DELHI;
Dated the 3rd January, 1974.