

NINETEENTH REPORT
ESTIMATES COMMITTEE
(1985-86)

(EIGHTH LOK SABHA)

MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT
(DEPARTMENT OF SURFACE TRANSPORT)

BORDER ROADS



Presented to Lok Sabha on 9 December, 1985

LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI

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(1985-86)**

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1. Shri N. N. Mehra—*Joint Secretary*
2. Shri Bipin Behari—*Chief Financial Committee Officer.*
3. Shri J. C. Malhotra—*Senior Financial Committee Officer.*

INTRODUCTION

1. The Chairman of Estimates Committee having been authorised by the Committee to submit the Report on their behalf, present this Nineteenth Report on the Ministry of Transport (Department of Surface Transport)—Border Roads.

2. The Committee took evidence of the representatives of the Ministries of Defence and Transport and Border Roads Organisation on the 28th and 29th October, 1985. The Committee wish to express their thanks to the Defence Secretary, Director General (Road Development) and Additional Secretary, Department of Surface Transport, the Secretary, Border Roads Development Board, the Director General Border Roads and other officers for placing before them the material and information they desired in connection with the examination of the Estimates.

3. The Report was considered and adopted by the Committee on 9 December, 1985.

4. For facility of reference and convenience, recommendations and observations 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 the Appendix to the Report.

NEW DELHI;
December 10, 1985.

Agrahayana 19, 1907 (S)

CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI,
Chairman,
Estimates Committee.

REPORT

CHAPTER I

BORDER ROADS DEVELOPMENT BOARD

A. *Composition and Functions of the Board*

1.1 As the economic development of North and North-eastern border areas of the country was handicapped by meagre and inadequate communications, the Government set up in 1960 "Border Roads Development Board" in order to ensure co-ordinated, economical and expeditious development of these communications by partly improving existing primitive roads and partly by new constructions, by co-ordinating the resources and the effort of various Central and State construction agencies including the Engineer personnel of the Defence Services. The Prime Minister was the Chairman of the Board and the Defence Minister the Deputy Chairman. Subsequently, in May, 1982, the Defence Minister was appointed the Chairman of the Board.

1.2 When set up for the first time in March 1960, the composition of the Border Roads Development Board was as follows:—

- (1) Prime Minister (Chairman)
- (2) Defence Minister (Dy. Chairman)
- (3) Chief of Army Staff
- (4) Chief of Air Staff
- (5) Lt. Gen. B. M. Kaul
- (6) Secretary, Kashmir Affairs
- (7) Secretary, Ministry of Transport
- (8) Secretary, Ministry of Defence
- (9) Consulting Engineer (Road Development)
- (10) Financial Adviser, Ministry of Defence.
- (11) Director General Border Roads
- (12) Secretary, Border Roads Development Board
- (13) Joint Secretary (G), Ministry of Defence

1.3 The present composition of the Board is as follows:—

(1) Prime Minister	Chairman
(2) Raksha Rajya Mantri (A)	Deputy Chairman*
(3) Minister of State for Surface Transport	Member
(4) Cabinet Secretary	Do.
(5) Chief of the Army Staff	Do.
(6) Chief of the Air Staff	Do.
(7) Secretary, Ministry of Defence	Do.
(8) Secretary, Planning Commission	Do.
(9) Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs	Do.
(10) Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs	Do.]
(11) Secretary, Ministry of Surface Transport	Do.
(12) Engineer-in-Chief, Army Headquarters	Do.
(13) Financial Adviser (Defence Services)	Do.
(14) Director General (Roads Development) & Addl. Secretary Deptt of Surface Transport	Do.
(15) Director General Border Roads	Do.
(16) Secretary, Border Roads Development Board	Do.

1.4 The functions of the Border Roads Development Board as laid down in Border Roads Regulations are as follows:—

- (a) It lays down the policy, programme and priorities for the development of communications in border areas.
- (b) It examines and approves the estimates of individual projects and ensures that they are planned and executed properly and expeditiously in accordance with the priorities laid down.
- (c) It decides the agency for execution of the projects and prescribes the responsibilities of such agencies. It coordinates the work of the different agencies.
- (d) It approves detailed procedure to be followed for the execution of the projects.

*At the time of factual verification, the Ministry of Defence have informed the Committee that Raksha Rajya Mantri (A) has now been made Deputy Chairman of the Border Roads Development Board.

- (e) It keeps a watch on the progress of work and arranges for necessary assistance, where delay occurs or is anticipated.
- (f) It approves the various measures required in connection with departmental construction of projects.

1.5 As laid down in the Rules of Business of the Border Roads Development Board, the following matters are put up to the Board for decision:—

- (i) The Budget and connected estimates. Pending the formulation of detailed Budget and subject to availability of funds, the Board may sanction individual projects or group of projects.
- (ii) Determination of priorities in regard to projects to be taken up.
- (iii) (a) Individual projects (other than Developmental Projects of the Board and residential quarters, including land for B.R.O. personnel) costing more than Rs. 200 lakhs.
- (b) Developmental projects of the Board and residential quarters, including land, for B.R.O. personnel costing more than Rs. 100 lakhs.
- (iv) Proposals for procurement of plant and machinery vehicles, stores, etc. involving expenditure exceeding Rs. 200 lakhs.
- (v) Creation of temporary posts of Class I service or equivalent on a pay of Rs. 2,250 per month or above and appointment thereto.
- (vi) Reports regarding the progress of works.
- (vii) Any major relaxation in the works or accounting procedure.

1.6 However, the Chairman of the Board has been authorised to take decision on urgent matters, subject to eventual ratification by the Board.

1.7 Asked to explain the reasons for the abolition of the post of Deputy Chairman of the Border Roads Development Board, the Defence Secretary stated during evidence, "There is nothing on the record about this". Asked who presided over the meetings of the Board in the absence of the Chairman, he said that this need had

never been felt as the date and time of the meeting were fixed in consultation with the Chairman.

1.8 Asked whether the present composition of the Board was considered to be satisfactory, the Defence Secretary replied in the affirmative.

1.9 In reply to a further question, it was stated that the Board as presently constituted as neither a statutory Board nor an autonomous Board. It was created by a Government order. Therefore, it was the prerogative of the "Prime Minister" to constitute the Board for the governance of the Border Roads Organisation.

1.10 Asked whether the Planning Commission was in any way associated with the Board, the Defence Secretary informed that the Secretary, Planning Commission was a Member of the Board. However, since the expenditure being incurred by the Board was mainly non-plan expenditure, the role of the Planning Commission was more by way of providing expert guidance. The Planning Commission came into picture only where the expenditure was plan expenditure viz. the expenditure incurred in connection with the works entrusted by Agencies like the North-East Council to the Border Roads Organisation.

1.11 Asked whether the Board frequently visited the Border Roads, the Defence Secretary stated that the Board as such had not been going around and inspecting the Border Roads. This was a policy guidance Board and not an Executive Board which might be expected to go around and inspect things. Its main task was to review the performance of the Organisation. Matters which were considered important enough were brought before the Board for their decisions.

1.12 Asked to state the status of the decisions taken by the Board, the Defence Secretary stated during evidence that the decisions of the Board were converted into Government orders and those orders had the authority of the President. Asked whether the border road projects approved by the Board still required the approval of the Ministry of Finance, Defence Secretary stated that the Finance Ministry was taken into confidence before the proposals were put up to the Board. Therefore, it was not necessary to send the proposals to the Ministry of Finance again for decisions after the Board had approved them.

1.13 The Committee note that the Border Roads Development Board has as its Chairman, the Prime Minister. This is probably because the Prime Minister also holds the Defence portfolio. The

Committee also note that the composition of the Board does not indicate any of its members as its Dy. Chairman, although originally when the Board was set up for the first time in March 1960, it had a Dy. Chairman also. The Defence Secretary has not been able to inform the Committee the reasons for not appointing any member of the Board as its Dy. Chairman and only maintained that the need for Dy. Chairman had never been felt as the date and time of meetings of the Board were fixed in consultation with the Chairman. Although the Defence Secretary expressed the view before the Committee that the existing composition of the Board was satisfactory, the Committee feel that it may facilitate the working of the Board if a Dy. Chairman is also designated to discharge the functions of the Chairman if the latter is absent or otherwise unable to chair a particular meeting of the Board.*

B. Board's Meetings

1.14 The Committee were informed during evidence that the Border Roads Development Board) hereinafter called the Board) met once a year generally and during this meeting the programme for the year was finalised, the progress made in the past was reviewed and an attempt was made to find out if the programme was moving according to the right lines or not.

1.15 In reply to a question, the Defence Secretary stated during evidence that one meeting of the Board in a year was considered enough.

1.16 Asked whether all the ex-officio Members had attended all its sittings held during the last three years, the following statement regarding the ex-officio members who attended the meeting has been furnished to the Committee:—

Designation of Members	When attended	Remarks
Minister of State in the Ministry of Shipping and Transport.		
Cabinet Secretary	Attended meetings held in 1983, 1984 and 1985	
Chief of the Army Staff	Attended meetings held in 1985	On behalf of COAS VCOAS attended meetings held in 1984 and 1985
Chief of the Air Staff	Attended meetings held in 1983 and 1985	On behalf of CAS Vice CAS attended meeting held in 1984.

* At the time of final verification, the Ministry of Defence have informed the Committee that Raksha R-jya Mantri (A) has now been made Deputy Chairman of the Border Roads Development Board.

Designation of Members	When attended	Remarks
Secretary, Ministry of Defence	Attended meetings held in 1983, 1984 and 1985	
Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs		On beh lf of Home Secy. Jt. Secy. M.H.A. attended meetings held on 1983, 1984 & 1985.
Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs	Attended meeting held in 1983.	On behalf of Foreign Secretary, Addl. Secy. MEA, attended meeting held in 1985.
Secretary, Ministry of Shipping and Transport	Attended meetings held in 1983, 1984 & 1985	
Secretary, Planning Commission	Attended meeting held in 1985	Secretary, Planning Commission, was nominated as a Member in May, 1984.
Financial Adviser (Defence Services)	Attended meetings held in 1983 & 1985	On behalf of FA (DS) Addl. FA attended meeting in 1984.
Engineer-in Chief, Army HQrs.	Attended meetings held in 1983, 1984 and 1985	
D.G. (R.D.) and Addl. Secretary, Ministry of Shipping and Transport	Attended meetings held in 1984 & 1985	On beh lf of DG (RD) Dy. Secy., Ministry of Shipping and Transport attended meeting in 1983.
D.G.B.R.	Attended meetings held in 1983, 1984 and 1985.	
Secretary, B.R.D.B.	Attended meetings held in 1983 1984 & 1985	

1.17 When pointed out that the above statement showed that all the Members had not attended all the meetings of the Board held during the last three years, the representative of the Ministry of Defence has stated during evidence:

“All members have attended either themselves or through their second-in-command. All the members who are active members, have attended the meetings in person. The remaining members have sent their number twos. The Chief of Army Staff and the Vice Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Air Staff and Vice Chief of Air Staff. It is very difficult to draw a distinction between them because these people are more or less of the same rank.”

1.18 The Committee were informed during evidence that the Border Roads Development Board meets once a year. The Board, being a high-powered body, has to take major decisions involving

heavy financial commitments on project proposals of strategic importance. Besides, the Board is required to review the reports brought before it regarding the progress of works on individual projects. It is hardly believable that it would be possible for the Board meeting only once a year, to devote adequate time and attention to highly important matters accumulated over the past year for its consideration and decision. The Committee are of the firm view that if the Board is to discharge its functions effectively, its meetings have to be more often than once in a year.

1.19 The Committee do not appreciate the absence of members from the meetings of the Board, specially when the Board had been meeting only once a year. The very idea of membership of the Board being made high-powered appears to have been that matters coming up before the Board should receive consideration at the highest level representing different Ministries, Organisations and user interests concerned. Further, when membership of the Board is specific, it is not clear how any other officer could deputise for a senior officer unless he himself has the designation as mentioned in the Government order constituting the Board. The perfunctory attendance at the meetings of the Board indicates that the members have not been giving as much importance and attention to the Board and to the matters coming before it as they deserved. The Committee expect all the members of the Board to attend all its meetings personally so that they are able to give full and final picture and make final commitments on behalf of their departments on the matters coming up before the Board for consideration. The Committee would like their observations to be brought to the notice of all the members of the Border Roads Development Board.

CHAPTER II

BORDER ROADS ORGANISATION

A. Organisational set up

2.1 The Border Roads Organisation (BRO) is a self-contained construction agency with its own man-power and equipment arrangements for maintenance of the construction equipment and medical, postal, supply and communication cover for personnel.

2.2 The bulk of the works in the Border programme is carried out departmentally by the BRO (with its HQrs. in Delhi) under the Director General Border Roads (DGBR), who is also the technical adviser to the Board.

2.3 Projects, headed by Chief Engineers, are located in the States|Union Territories to look after physical progress of construction|maintenance works. A Project has been located in Bhutan to look after works in that country and some other works in India. Each project has under it 2 to 3 Task Forces responsible for physical execution of works, according to the stipulated specification. Below the Task Forces are Road Construction Companies to supervise the works of functional units like Formation Cutting Platoons, Surfacing Platoons, Permanent Works Platoon and Road Maintenance Platoons.

2.4 An organisational chart of the Border Roads Organisation is at Appendix I.

2.5 The functions of the Director General, Border Roads and Chief Engineer are as follows:—

Director General Border Roads

2.6 The Director General Border Roads is responsible for giving advice on technical matters. He is in overall control of the civilian force, namely, General Reserve Engineer Force for departmental construction of projects.

2.7 The Director General Border Roads is responsible for:—

- (i) Planning and execution of projects entrusted to the General Reserve Engineer Force and coordination of all

technical matters and progressing of projects entrusted to P.W.D./C.P.W.D;

- (ii) technical soundness of designs and specifications adopted in the construction of projects;
- (iii) scrutiny of all estimates before they are put up to the Board for sanction;
- (iv) preparation and submission of periodical budget estimates and obtaining funds from Government; and
- (v) administration, planning and control of man-power resources, etc. of General Reserve Engineer Force.

2.8 Except as otherwise provided, the Director General Border Roads exercises the same administrative, financial and technical powers as are granted to the Engineer-in-Chief under the Regulations for the Military Engineer Services and other orders. He may issue such technical and departmental instructions as are necessary for the proper and economical execution of projects and the administration of units and formations under his control. He may also specify the duties of the different Officers in the General Reserve Engineer Force.

Chief Engineers of Projects

2.9 The Chief Engineer of a project is responsible for:

- (i) the detailed planning of projects and the submission of estimates;
- (ii) ensuring that the project estimates submitted are in accordance with the specifications prescribed from time to time and the designs are sound and economical;
- (iii) proper and expeditious execution of sanctioned projects according to technical sanctions and for carrying out periodical inspections. He is also responsible for ensuring that no departure from Regulations, approved specifications or orders of superior authority is permitted without the approval of the competent authority;
- (iv) economical utilisation of resources in man-power and equipment;
- (v) control and administration of G.R.E.F. and Army units and formations placed under his command; and

(vi) using funds placed at his disposal in the best interests of Government.

2.10 The Chief Engineer may issue appropriate technical and administrative instructions to subordinate formations under his approval. He will keep in close touch with the local Army, PWD or CPWD authorities.

2.11 In a note furnished to the Committee, it has been stated that under Rule 3 of the Rules of Business of the Border Roads Development Board, the following powers could be delegated to such member as the Chairman may nominate:—

- (i) Approval of individual projects costing up to Rs. 200 lakhs.
- (ii) Minor changes or relaxation in the detailed works procedure including delegation of increased powers to lower authorities.

2.12 Certain powers have been delegated to the Secretary (BRDB) and DGBR in matters relating to inclusion of works in BRDB programme, sanction of estimates and procurement of plants and machinery. Powers have also been delegated to Chief Engineers, Task Force Commanders, etc. These powers are given in the statement at Appendix II.

2.13 The delegations of powers in Border Roads and MES do not correspond as the various officers in Border Roads Organisation have been vested with financial as well as administrative powers as per Government instructions. These instructions have been incorporated in the Border Roads Regulations. In MES the powers have been given to Engineer-in-Chief and have been further delegated by him to subordinate officers.

2.14 Asked when was the delegation of powers last reviewed, the Committee have been informed that the existing "delegation was last revised in October, 1983. There is a case for revision. We are now working that out. We shall put it up to the Government after proposals are framed."

2.15 Asked about the nature of control mechanism devised to supervise progress and coordinate the work assigned to and under implementation by the field formations, the Committee were informed during evidence that "there are approved annual works plans. Based on these annual works plans, the execution of work is being done. Priority is being laid down. The likely or probable date of completion of each project is laid down." Monitoring of the work

was done "right upto the lowest level starting from the executing agency of construction."

2.16 In reply to a further question, DGBR informed the Committee that the Director-General visited various projects on inspection. Also quarterly reports were received about the execution of each project. These reports were sent to the Secretary, BRDE who submits the same to Defence Secretary and Chairman, BRDB.

2.17 The Defence Secretary added:—

"...After the quarterly report is received from DG it is examined by the Secretary Border Roads and then it comes to me. I examine it and I put it up to Minister. It can be examined from two points of view, that is, from MICRO and MACRO levels. It is possible that the marco level shows that they are doing well. But when we look at the micro level we find that some projects are not doing so well and are lagging behind. Consequently, on those projects, some comments or observations are made. Naturally those things are conveyed to the Secretary, Border Roads and DGBR conveys those things right down the line. The Chief Engineer concerned, other officers etc. are suitably pulled up, if there are any problems those are removed so that we can move faster."

2.18 The Committee note that the delegation of powers to officers at various levels in the Border Roads Organisation was last revised in 1983. As there has been sizeable escalation in prices since then, it is high time that these are reviewed and revised suitably to make them realistic in the changed situation. The Committee would like such a review being made urgently so that the executing agencies are not hampered in carrying out the works entrusted to them expeditiously and smoothly. In this context they would also suggest that the delegation of powers to officers at various levels should roughly correspond to the delegation of powers in sister organisations like the MES. While making a review of the delegation of powers, this point may also be kept in view.

2.19 The Committee trust that the progress reports in respect of projects in hand received from various field formations are being scrutinised carefully and quickly on receipt so that the factors responsible for the delay in the execution of any work are identified well in time and necessary corrective measures taken in the matter promptly.

B. Staff Strength

2.20 The staff strength of the Border Roads Organisation (as on 30-6-1985) has been stated to be as follows:

No. of Vacancies as on 30-6-1985

OFFICERS	Authorised	Head	Deficiency
Technical Officers ¹	923	830	93
Other Officers	410	358	52
Total	1333	1188	145
SUBORDINATES			
Technical Staff	19361	16854	2507
Other Staff	8669	7879	190
Pioneers & Equivalent (Pioneers, Prans Chowkidars, S. f. iwrl)	20523	17681	2842
Total	47953	42414	5539

2.21 Explaining the difficulties which are being experienced in getting the required number of technical and non-technical personnel to fill the various posts, both in officer and subordinate cadres, it has been stated in a note furnished to the Committee as follows:—

- (i) Recruitment of officers for appointment as Assistant Executive Engineer (Civil) and Assistant Executive Engineer (Electrical and Mechanical) is made through U.P.S.C. Since adequate response through combined Engineering Services Examination conducted by U.P.S.C. was not forthcoming, the Commission was requested to select candidates through ad-hoc recruitment (limited to interviews only). U.P.S.C. agreed. As a result thereof, an ad-hoc examination was conducted by U.P.S.C. in 1985 for recruitment of A.E.E. (Civil) and A.E.E. (E&M) and, on the basis of the examination, 88 and 28 candidates were selected by U.P.S.C. for appointment as A.E.E. (Civil) and A.E.E. (E&M). After completion of character verification by the local authorities and medical test, offers of

appointment as A.E.E. (Civil) have been sent to 47 candidates and as A.E.E. (E&M) to 17 candidates. Local verification is under-way in respect of the remaining candidates. Of them, only 27 candidates have since joined as A.E.E. (Civil) and 5 as A.E.E. (E&M). As such, the response is still not encouraging.

- (ii) As regards the Medical Officers, this cadre has become unviable due to non-availability of suitable candidates on the basis of examination conducted by U.P.S.C. for appointment as Medical Officers. A decision was therefore, taken to encadre these posts with the Army Medical Corps and to stop further recruitment through U.P.S.C.
- (iii) As regards subordinates, it may be seen from the figures given above that about 50 per cent of the deficiencies in the subordinate cadres pertain to Pioneers. There is no difficulty in the recruitment of Pioneers and they are being recruited in a phased manner.

2.22 As regards the technical personnel, there are a few categories, like Superintendent B|R Gde II, Superintendent E|M Gde II, Sub-overseer, Leading Hand (Nursing), charge Mechanic, charge Electricians, etc. where adequate number of suitable candidates is not forthcoming.

2.23 With a view to attracting adequate number of technical personnel to B.R.O., the following steps have been taken:—

- (i) The terms and conditions of service of General Reserve Engineer Force employees have been improved during the last few years, particularly in the areas of ration, Clothing, accommodation, extension of areas of Special Compensatory Allowance, etc. Areas of further improvements in their terms and conditions of service are under consideration.
- (ii) To apprise the candidates (both officers and subordinates) of the service conditions, career prospects, facilities and amenities available in this Organisation, (like canteen facilities, etc.) Brochures (in Hindi and English) giving detailed information on such matters have been sent to different I.I.Ts, I.T.Is, other technical institutions, etc. for guidance of the prospective candidates.
- (iii) Radio talks on the career prospects of GREF officers and personnel have also been arranged by the Chief Engineers of Projects.

- (iv) Although recruitment to the various grades in subordinate cadre (technical as well as non-technical) is to be made at the GREF Centre and Records, Pune, steps have been taken to send mobile recruitment teams to various places where Technical Institutions like, I.T.Is, etc., are located for recruitment of suitable candidates.

2.24 Asked what was the overall ratio between civilian staff *vis-a-vis* service staff in the Border Roads Organisation, the Defence Secretary stated during evidence:

“There are certain percentages which we have defined at various levels. At the level of Chief Engineer distribution between the Army and the GREF is 75 per cent and 25 per cent. For the Superintending Engineer, it is 50 per cent and 50 per cent, for Executive Engineer, it is 42 per cent and 58 per cent and for the Assistant Executive Engineer, it is 20 per cent and 80 per cent. I think the hon. Members may like to know why, at the highest two levels, namely, Chief Engineer Grade—I and Chief Engineer Grade—II, it appears to be somewhat weighed in favour of the Army. We are carrying before the Cadre Review Committee, a paper for the cadre review in which we are proposing to reduce the percentage in favour of GREF. Nevertheless, I should also explain as to why it had been like this. The reason for this is that at this point of time, at least 50 to 60 per cent of the works done by the Border Roads Organisation are for the Defence Services. It is therefore, natural that the leadership of this organisation and the inspiration which is drawn by this organisation should come from the officers of that organisation. The second reason is that there is also the planning to be done in advance for the role which the Border Roads played in the previous conflicts of 1962, 1965 and 1971, etc. Notwithstanding that, as mentioned earlier, the existing weightage is intended to be whittled down to some extent”

Defence Secretary also stated that it would take “about 6 months time” to bring the paper before the Cadre Review Committee.

2.25 The Committee are distressed to find that a very large number of posts, both in Officer and Sub-ordinate cadres (technical and non-technical), are lying vacant in the Border Roads Organisation. This must be affecting adversely the efficiency of the organisation

and the orderly and timely progress of projects. The Committee have been informed of the measures taken to tide over the situation. As the vacancies are persisting and the organisation is not able to attract sufficient number of persons, it is obvious that these measures are not adequate. The Committee would like the B.R.D.B. to conduct an in-depth study to identify the reasons as to why persons are not coming forward to join the services of the Border Roads Organisation, when there is an acute unemployment problem in the country. The result of this study should be earnestly followed up. The unattractive features of the services in the Border Roads Organisation should be adequately compensated by improving the pay structure and service conditions of GREF personnel. The Committee would also like the Board to launch a systematic and sustained publicity campaign for attracting the unemployed youth to the services of the Border Roads Organisation through mass media like Radio, T.V. and the Press. The visits of Mobile Recruitment Units should be so programmed as to cover all the States and Union Territories especially the remote and inaccessible areas. These visits should be preceded by adequate publicity of the programme of visit and the type of personnel proposed to be recruited.

2.26 The Committee consider that proportionately more civil personnel should be inducted in the services of the Border Roads Organisation at all levels, so that Service officers are relieved in devote themselves to Service requirements. They learn that a proposal is already under way in this regard and the matter is being shortly put up to the Cadre Review Committee for approval. The Committee hope that the final decision in the matter would be taken urgently.

C. Service Conditions

2.27 In a note furnished to the Committee, it has been stated that the General Reserve Engineer Force (GREF) are deployed in sensitive border areas for construction and maintenance of road communications and other facilities which are vital for the defence of the country. In view of its role and deployment in sensitive border areas, the disciplinary provisions of the Army Act, 1950 and Army Rules, 1954 have also been applied to the members of the Force to ensure the required degree of discipline. The GREF civilian employees are treated at par with Central Government civilian employees for the purpose of pay and allowance, promotion, removal from service, etc., and are governed by the Central Civil Services Regulations.

2.28 The Defence personnel posted to the Border Roads Organisation are governed by the terms and conditions applicable to Defence personnel.

2.29 Government have stated in a written communication to the Committee that Section 21 of the Army Act (which is applicable to GREF) prohibits formation of any trade union or labour union and trade union activity except those of purely recreational or religious nature in which case prior sanction is required. In violation of this provision, some GREF employees formed an Association called "All India Border Roads Employees Association" and resorted to demonstrations and strike in certain Border Roads Organisation units in December, 1979 and raised the following demands:—

- (a) They should be allowed the same benefits as are admissible to Army personnel because they are subject to the Army Act and Rules.
- (b) Alternatively, their terms and conditions of service should be improved and regulated by a separate statute as in the case of para Military Forces.
- (c) If however, they are viewed as a purely civilian Force, the applicability of Army Act and Rules should be revoked; the right to form Associations|Union be granted to them.

2.30 In order to maintain discipline in the Force, action against the erring employees was taken under the provision of Army Act resulting in their arrest and subsequent trial and punishment by Court Martials.

2.31 The legality of the application of the Army Act to GREF and their trial by Court Martials had been questioned by some GREF employees and the members of their families by filing Writ Petitions in the Supreme Court. In its judgement dated 6-5-1983, the Supreme Court held that composition, organisation and role of GREF clearly show that GREF is an integral part of the Armed Forces, and the provisions of the Army Act have been validly applied to them. The Supreme Court also upheld their trial by Court Martials.

2.32 As regards the grant of facilities to GREF employees on Army scales, the Supreme Court in its judgement had observed that since the members of the Border Roads Organisation are drawn from two different courses, it is possible that the terms and conditions of service of the personnel coming from two sources may be different; the Army personnel posted in GREF units naturally carry their own terms and conditions of service while the other officers

and men in GREF are governed by their own distinctive terms and conditions. However, keeping in view the observation of the Supreme Court that "in case it is found that the terms and conditions of service of officers and men in GREF directly recruited or taken on deputation are in any way less favourable than those of Army personnel appointed to the same or equivalent posts, in the Border Roads Organisation, the Central Government might well consider the advisability of taking steps for ensuring that the disparity, if any, between the terms and conditions of service, such as, salary, allowance, rations, etc. of Army personnel posted in GREF units and other officers and men in GREF is removed."

2.33 In the light of the judgement of Supreme Court, major areas of improvement were identified and the following improvements have since been made:—

(i) *Ration*

Improvements in the existing scale of ration and free ration benefits to all GREF personnel upto the rank of Chief Engineer Grade II (equivalent to Colonel in the Army) has since been authorised in both non-static and static units, during 1984-85.

(ii) *Clothing*

Taking into account the high altitude areas of deployment of the GREF personnel, the need to moderanise the cumbersome items of supply and also the authorisation of clothing items for Army personnel, changes in the authorisation of GREF clothing scale have been accepted by Government and orders issued in October, 1984.

(iii) *Special Compensatory Allowance*

S.C.A. benefits have been extended to seven more additional specified areas of deployment of GREF personnel in Project Beacon (J & K), Sampark (J & K), and Deepak (H.P.) in October, 1985.

(iv) *Free Air travel by GREF personnel*

Free Air travel by GREF personnel during leave by IAC Aircraft at Govt. cost from Leh to Chandigarh, and back, during November to May each year has been authorised w.e.f. 14-6-1985.

(v) *Grant of daily allowance*

Grant of daily allowance in lieu of ration money when GREF personnel are posted from GREF Centre to units on completion of their initial training.

(vi) *Selection grades for Superintending Engineer*

Selection grades for Superintending Engineer in the scale of Rs. 2000-2250 have been created in October, 1985.

(vii) *Revision of Pay Scales of Chief Engineers*

Pay Scales of Grade I and Grade II Chief Engineers of GREF have been revised in October, 1984 to Rs. 2500-2750 and Rs. 2250-2500|- respectively to bring them at par with those of Chief Engineers of other Central Engineering Services, like CPWD, etc.

2.34 Asked during evidence to explain the reasons for not implementing the judgement of the Supreme Court given as for back as on 6th May, 1983, the Defence Secretary stated as follows:—

“That is a directive, and let me tell you that we have made the best use of this directive and all the things written by the Supreme Court in its 39-page judgement in order to bolster up our case, and that is how we have been able to get successfully quite a few concessions but there are still some which are in the pipeline... but consistently we are making this effort that this directive of the Supreme Court should be implemented.”

2.35 Explaining the present disparities in the service conditions of the Army Personnel and the GREF Personnel, the Defence Secretary stated:—

“Precisely, when compared with the Army, married accommodation is still not provided—except in six stations—to GREF personnel; only single accommodation is provided. The furniture is not provided. Thirdly, the scale of rations is less. Fourthly, the concessions of leave travel are not to the extent which the Army officers and personnel are getting. The army officers' children are provided free transport. It is not there for GREF officers.”

2.36 It was pointed out that even in the rations there were disparities to the extent that whereas 570 grams of Atta was given to Army personnel, only 550 grams was given to GREF personnel, and in the same way, there were differences in the quantity of Sugar, Rice, Meat etc. given to Army personnel and the GREF personnel. The DGBR, admitting that there were differences in the scale of rations provided to GREF and Army personnel, stated:—

"We have taken up the case and said that there should be no disparity... we are taking up the case again and trying to get the clearance from the financial authorities."

2.37 The Committee note that there are disparities in the scales of ration, leave, clothing etc. between the Army personnel and GREF personnel working in the Border Roads Organisation. The Committee consider it unfortunate that some of the GREF employees had to form an Association and resort to strike in December, 1979, in violation of Section 21 of the Army Act, 1950 to press their demands for the removal of these disparities. Some of the employees had also to go to Supreme Court for the redressal of their grievances. The Supreme Court in their judgement dated 6 May, 1983 gave a very clear directive that the Government might well consider the advisability of taking steps for ensuring that the disparities, if any, between the terms and conditions of service, such as, salary, allowance, ration etc. of Army personnel posted in GREP units and other Officers and men in GREF is removed. The Committee note that in the light of the judgement of Supreme Court some steps have since been taken by Government to remove some of the disparities. However, much needs to be done, as disparities still exist even after the lapse of more than two and a half years from the date of the judgement of the Supreme Court. The Committee feel that since the Army personnel and the GREF personnel are to work shoulder-to-shoulder in the same conditions and they are both governed by the Army Act, 1950 and Army Rules, 1954, there appears to be no justification for maintaining disparity in their terms and conditions of service.

D. Training

2.38 It has been stated that in order to improve skills and prospects, a number of training courses are organised at Recruitment-cum-Training Centre at Pune for GREF Officers and subordinates. The Training School, at GREF Centre has a teaching staff of 4 officers, 7 supervisors and 5 subordinates. The courses cover the training programme for civil/mechanical engineer officers of Assistant Engineer|Assistant Executive Engineer level, Administrative|Stores Officers of Civilian Officers Grade II|III level, Civil Mechanical Engineer|Stores Supervisors, Upper Division Clerks, Vehicle|Equipment Mechanics, Sub-Overseers, Storeman Technical, Lower Division Clerks. Driver Engine Static etc.

2.39 Apart from the training courses at GREF Centre, courses are also organised at Army Training Centres for GREF personnel in the

trades of Operator Excavating Machinery, Driver Engine Static, Road Roller Drivers, wireless/Radio Operators and Nursing Assistants, Diploma Courses in Civil Draughtsman and estimating and Mechanical Engineering at College of Military Engineering, Pune, to enable Matriculate subordinates in specific categories to become eligible for appointments as technical supervisors/officers have also been organised from 1983-84. Training courses for Assistant Surveyor of Works for officers of Assistant Executive Engineer level are also organised at College of Military Engineering, Pune.

2.40 Courses at various Government institutions and private firms like Defence Institute of Works Study, Mussorie, Central Road Research Institute, New Delhi, Cabinet Secretariat, Department of Personnel and Administrative Reforms, University of Roorkee, Hindustan Motors, Calcutta, Tata Engineering & Locomotive Co., M/s. Thermax Private Ltd., are also organised for specialist training.

2.41 4 Officers and 5 subordinates were trained in Germany, Switzerland in repair and maintenance of snow clearance equipment.

2.42 The number of officials trained during the last five years in the recruitment-cum-training Centre, Pune has been indicated as follows:—

1980-81	—	355
1981-82	—	355
1982-83	—	340
1983-84	—	365
1984-85	—	250

2.43 In 1985-86, 145 officials are stated to have undergone/are undergoing training.

2.44 The number of official trained during the last five years at various other institutions has been indicated as follows:—

Institute	1981-82	1982-83	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86	Total
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Defence Institute of Works Study, Mussorie.	19	2	18	16	14	69
Bengal Engineering Group Kirkee & College of Military Engineering, Pune.	12	15	161	107	70	365
University of Roorkee.		9	11	8	2	30
I.I.T., New Delhi					1	1

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
AMC Centres & School, Lucknow.			80	40	60	180
Military College of Telecommuni- cation, Mhow (M.P.)					2	2
B.E.L. Bangalore					8	8
H.Q., 101 Area	13	15	32	32		52
Madan Mohan Malaviya Eng. College, Gorakhpur				1		1
Madras Engineering Group, Banga- lore.	3		60	40		103
C.R.R. I., New Delhi		11	2			13
Institute of Applied Man Power Research, New Delhi			2			2
M/s R. Enterprises (P) Ltd, New Delhi		14				14
N.I.T.I.E., Bombay		2				2
Air Force Station, Kanpur		3				3
I.S.T.M., New Delhi	16					16
	69	71	366	244	157	901

2.45 Asked during evidence whether the capacity of the training centre at Pune was adequate to cater to the needs of the Border Roads Organisation, the representative of the Border Roads Organisation stated that the capacity was considered to be adequate as many of the employees were also getting on-the-job training.

2.46 The Committee note that the number of officials being imparted training at Recruitment-cum-Training Centre, Pune has come down substantially in the years 1984-85 and 1985-86. This naturally should have resulted in under-utilisation of the capacity of the Institute. The Committee need not emphasise that systematic and purposeful training can go a long way in toning up the employees and improving their skills to the benefit of both the employees and the employer organisation. It is, therefore, imperative that all the training programmes should be properly chalked out and implemented so that the employees are exposed to the modern and latest techniques of road construction and maintenance and management, general as well as technical of the projects handled by the B.R.O. The Committee further recommend

that short-term refresher courses in various disciplines for the officers|employees should also be arranged at regular intervals. The Committee would also like Government to step up the intake of the Recruitment-cum- Training Centre, Pune to optimum level so that its capacity is fully utilised.

E. Confirmation

2.47 In a note furnished to the Committee by Government it has been stated that GREF employees are governed by Civil Service Regulations. GREF employees who have served for more than three years' continuously in temporary capacity and whose quality of work, conduct and character are found suitable for employment in a quasi-permanent capacity, are declared as quasi-permanent.

2.48 For according permanency, this is done on the basis of the recommendations of the Departmental Promotion Committee (DPC) and keeping in view the number of permanent vacancies available. These DPCs are convened at GREF Centre and Records, Pune, as per the time-schedule laid down by Department of Personnel & Training.

2.49 The following statement indicating the details of the temporary GREF personnel has been furnished to the Committee:

Sl. No.	Group	More than				
		2 yrs less than 3 years	3-4 years	4-5 years	5-10 years	10 years
1.	A					
2.	B					
3.	C	969	15			..
4.	D	2343	..	..	..	1
Total		3306	15			1 deserter

2.50 The Defence Secretary stated during evidence that the cases of 15 persons in group 'C' who had put in more than 3 years service and were still temporary were "under consideration" for making them quasi-permanent.

2.51 The representative of the Border Roads Organisation stated during evidence that roughly 75 per cent of the total strength of the

Border Roads Organisation was permanent. However, everybody could become quasi-permanent depending upon required period of satisfactory service.

2.52 The Committee note that there are only 15 temporary employees in category 'C', who have put in more than three years service and have not yet been made quasi-permanent and that their cases are 'under-consideration'. The Committee would like the Government to quickly finalise their cases.

2.53 The Committee trust that the officers and staff are also being made permanent as soon as vacancies arise and that there is no undue delay in this regard.

F. High Altitude Allowance

2.54 In a note furnished to the Committee by the Ministry, it has been stated that Special Compensatory Allowance (and not High Altitude Allowance) is given in certain specified areas, (which cover both high and low altitude areas), keeping in view the remoteness of the areas and non-availability of basic amenities of life in those areas. This allowance is given to all GREF Officers and personnel, except Group 'D' employees like, (Pioneers, Safaiwalas, etc.)

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2.55 The Third Pay Commission had recommended against the grant of Special Compensatory Allowance to Group 'D' employees (Pioneers and equivalent) on the ground that their revised pay-scales (revised from Rs. 55—70 to Rs. 196—232) had taken care of the said allowance. However, the case was taken up with the Ministry of Finance (Department of Expenditure) who advised that the matter be taken up with the Fourth Pay Commission. Accordingly, this issue has been referred to the Fourth Pay Commission.

2.56 Explaining the position regarding the payment of High Altitude Allowance, the Defence Secretary stated during evidence that in Army two types of allowances were paid—one was called the High Altitude Allowance and the other Uncongenial Climate Allowance. These two types of allowances had been combined and a Special Compensatory Allowance was being paid. This allowance was being paid in high altitude areas as well as in uncongenial climate areas or the areas where the working conditions

were hard. This allowance was revised from time to time. Recently, some sectors in the North-Western areas which were earlier not included for grant of Special Compensatory Allowance had been included geographically for grant of that allowance. As regards the question of payment of higher allowance for individuals working at a height of 13,000 or 14,000 ft. he said: "There was no such thing earlier in Army also but recently the Army has been thinking of giving some allowance." He also informed the Committee that Government "are also taking up a case now of the individuals who are working on snow clearance work, to give them allowance which will be termed as snow clearing allowance. This is only at the initial stages."

2.57 Asked to state the number of Officers and Staff who have remained posted at very high altitude for more than 2 years, 4 years, 6 years and more than that, the Ministry have furnished the following statement:

	2-3 years	3-4 years	4-6 years	Over 6 years
Officers	104	—	1	—
Staff	901	379	99	12
TOTAL	1005	379	99	12-1495

2.58 In reply to a question, the representative of the Border Roads Organisation stated during evidence that the normal tenure of posting at the high altitude was 2 to 3 years. However, sometimes the Officers|Staff belonged to those high altitude areas and the volunteered to stay longer there.

2.59 Asked whether any representations had been received from Officers|Subordinate Staff during each of the last three years regarding their posting at high altitudes for long periods and if so, what action was taken on these representations, the Ministry have, in a note furnished to the Committee, stated as follows:

Officers: No representation has been received from Officers during the last three years.

Subordinates: The record in respect of previous three years is that 5 representations were received in 1982, 13 were received in 1983 and 3 were received in 1984. All individuals were moved out from high altitude areas, on consideration of their requests. During the period September, 1984 to September, 1985, six such representations were received and action taken was that all the six effected personnel were posted out.

2.60 The Committee regret that in the matter of payment of special compensatory Allowance and exception has been made in the case of category 'D' employees of GREF to whom Special Compensatory Allowance is not being paid, whereas it is being paid to all other categories of GREF employees. The Committee do not appreciate the reasons advanced for denying this allowance to category 'D' GREF employees who also work in the same difficult terrains and tough conditions at the high altitudes as others, and strongly recommend that Special Compensatory Allowance should be admissible to all categories of GREF employees if they fulfil the other conditions.

2.61 The Committee feel that the question of payment of snow clearing allowance to the employees of the Border Roads Organisation engaged on such operations and some special allowance to those working at very high altitudes, stated to be under-consideration merits favourable consideration. The Committee hope that this matter will be finalised quickly.

G. Casual Labour

2.62 The total number of casual labourers in Border Roads Organisation as on 31 December, 1984 is stated to be about 77,000.

2.63 Asked during evidence about the policy and procedure for appointment and regularisation of the casual labourers, the Defence Secretary stated that the Border Roads Organisation was dealing with a fluctuating workload because there were items of work which were terminal in character. The Border Roads Organisation could not have a very large number of permanent labour force as the workload might go down off and on "because of seasonality and casualness of the nature of work." He further stated that the Recruitment Rules, both under the Army Act as well as under the GREF did not permit women to be employed in the Organisation, even though a very large number of women had been employed in areas like Sikkim. The casual labourers also did not satisfy conditions of educational qualifications, medical standards etc. for their regularisation. A study was, however, made every year in order to find out the number of vacancies available and how many of those vacancies could be filled up by casual labourers on a regular basis.

2.64 Asked about the number of days in a year on which the casual labour worked, the Defence Secretary stated as follows:—

"The work keeps on fluctuating in various areas. In Leh, the working season is from May to October. There will

be hardly any work from November to March. Working season varies and also the strength varies. It becomes a little difficult to specify the working season because it varies from area to area, from region to region and from project to project."

2.65 Asked how many of the 77,000 casual labourers were working on contract basis and how many were working departmentally, the Defence Secretary stated that contract labour was about 1.25 per cent of the total force and even this would disappear totally now that separate construction units have been sanctioned.

2.66 It was pointed out to him that the problem of casual workers was there in a number of Government Departments e.g., Railways. The Railways have tried the system of shifting the labour rendered surplus at one location to some other place of work where they would be given priority for employment. Asked whether it was possible for the Border Roads Organisation to handle the problem of casual labourers in similar manner, the Defence Secretary replied:--

"This idea is extremely welcome. But regrettably it would not be applicable to any significant degree in our Organisation for the simple reason that areas other than North and the North-East where we are functioning are the Rajasthan desert, Bihar and Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Railways have a certain facility. They have their own carriers and they can organize the movement very freely. If we are to do that it would mean that from Sikkim or Arunachal Pradesh we have to move them to the Thar Desert. This is not going to be an easy thing.....Nonetheless. I would advise DGBR to have a look at this suggestion and to the extent possible they should try. The people themselves may not be willing to go to other areas."

2.67 On being asked again whether the casual workers were given preference in the matter of appointment to regular vacancies, the DGBR stated:—

"Yes. In the last advertisement which we have published for recruitment, we have said that casual labourers will be given concession in respect of age to the extent they have been working as casual labourers. When the vacancies arise we definitely give them preference....."

Individuals who are eligible and want to join it get preference whenever vacancies arise.....In the case of skilled workers like masons and persons having skill in mechanical and electrical trade, we do accept them."

2.68 Asked whether under certain projects more than 60 per cent of the casual labourers were females, the Defence Secretary stated that in only one project, namely, Swastik about 60 per cent of the casual labourers were females. The over all position in the Border Roads Organisation was that there were 80 per cent male casual labourers and 20 per cent female casual labourers. In response to a question about the maternity benefits available to female casual workers employed by the Border Roads Organisation in certain projects, the Defence Secretary admitted that the Border Roads Organisation did not have "facilities of maternity leave for them as such, because they are not regular government employees". He, however, assured the Committee "we have got the Medical Inspection Rooms where they have considerable facilities and those facilities are also available to the female casual labour."

2.69 Asked to state the difficulty in giving maternity leave to the female casual labour, the Defence Secretary stated:—

"It is a question of alternative end with the limited means. In a situation of this kind we have to have more of road service. We can spend money here. It depends on the size of the pie".

2.70 Asked about the number of casual labourers regularised during each of the last 5 years, in a note furnished to the Committee, it has been stated that:—

"In 1982, 24 Casual workers of Western Base Workshop had applied for regular posts in Border Roads Organisation, out of whom 17 who were medically fit and had trade qualification could be recruited as per the recruitment rules.

By and large, the Casual workers were deployed in non-skilled trades and do not possess the minimum educational qualifications prescribed under the General Reserve Engineer Force group 'C' and 'D' Recruitment Rules, 1982. As such, their intake has been only sporadic due to which no separate records were maintained. Also the total intake in non-skilled group 'D' posts in GREF has been very limited as only a total of 109 persons were recruited in 1983, 32 in 1984 and 158 upto 31 October, 1985.

However, in early October 1984 the Chief Engineers have been informed that preference will be given to Casual labours for recruitment and have been suitably instructed to encourage eligible casual workers to join GREF. As an added incentive, it has also been decided to post them, initially in their home-States or in near-by location."

2.71 The Committee recommend that recruitment to non-skilled Group 'D' posts in GREF should be made largely from the casual labourers deployed in various projects if they fulfil the medical standard of fitness prescribed. The casual workers possessing the minimum basic qualifications and skills should be encouraged to join, and preferred for appointment to, Group 'C' posts. Such personnel can be given on-the-job-training to improve their skills and standards.

2.72 The Committee note that about 60 per cent of the casual labourers working in the Swastik Project are females and the overall position is that 80 per cent of the total casual labour force are males and 20 per cent are females. They further note that the Recruitment Rules, both under the Army Act and GREF do not permit females to be employed in the Organisation. The Committee see no reasons why the female casual labourers, who are actually working in various projects on casual basis should not be regularised merely because they happen to be females. They would like the Ministry to review the Recruitment Rules applicable to GREF and see whether these could be amended suitably to end this discrimination on grounds of sex. The Committee feel that conditions of work in GREF should be made known to the women candidates at the time of recruitment and it should be left to them to decide whether they could adjust to those conditions or not.

2.73 The Committee also recommend that the Border Roads Organisation should take up with the State Governments concerned the question of providing maternity care and other facilities in or near areas where there is a large concentration of female workers. In addition, the Medical facilities of the GREF should be available to the female workers.

H. Vigilance Organisation

2.74 It has been stated that the scope and functions of the vigilance organisation of the Border Roads Organisation are:

- (i) to implement effective departmental vigilance and anti-corruption measures, particularly on the preventive side,

since most of the works are executed by the organisation departmentally;

- (ii) to identify sensitive areas which offer scope for corruption; and
- (iii) to effectuate periodic rotation of the staff, who are posted in such sensitive areas.

2.75 The vigilance organisation also investigates complaints on bribery, corruption, etc. and takes suitable punitive action against the guilty. The Vigilance Officers of the organisation make surprise checks of the corruption-prone areas, like, works-in-progress, stores, cash, labourers at work-sites and disbursement of payments to casual personnel etc. The organisation also keeps a watch on the policies and procedures for award of contracts and placing of supply orders and suggests remedial and preventive measures.

2.76 It has been stated in a note furnished to the Committee that the nature of mal-practices/mis-appropriations etc., investigated during the last 5 years (1979—84) are as under:—

1. Mis-appropriation of Government property/stores;
2. Misuse of Government transport and manpower;
3. Mal-practices in local purchase and supply contracts;
4. Falsification of muster rolls;
5. False claims of TA/DA; and
6. Misuse of Regimental/Canteen funds.

2.77 However, since the Border Roads Organisation executes works departmentally and not through contracts (with a very few exceptions), according to the Note, no large-scale malpractices involving award of contracts has come to light.

2.78 The details of the cases processed by the vigilance organisation during the last 5 years have been stated to be as under:—

(i) Cases referred to Vigilance Organisation	350 cases
(ii) Number of cases investigated	295 cases
(iii) Number of cases in which persons were found guilty	11 cases
(iv) Action taken against involved personnel	18 persons
(v) Current cases being processed	55 cases

2.79 The project-wise break-up of the cases referred to the vigilance organisation reveals the state of pendency of cases as follows:

	No. of cases pending
1981-82	4
1982-83	6
1983-84	4
1984-85	20
1985-86	21

2.80 The Defence Secretary has stated during evidence that even an anonymous complaint, was investigated if it was felt that there was some *prima facie* truth in that.

2.81 The Committee consider that an efficient and well-organised system of vigilance in the Border Roads Organisation is a sine qua non for safeguarding against any misuse and mis-appropriation of funds and materials, thereby keeping the cost of operations to the minimum. The Committee note that although the number of cases referred to the vigilance organisation during the last five years was 350, only 11 persons have been found to be guilty. They suggest that the working of the vigilance organisation should be reviewed to make it more effective and result-oriented. There is also a need for immediate follow-up action on the findings of the vigilance organisation in each case referred to it.

I. Pension Cases

2.82 It has been stated in a note furnished to the Committee that at the end of the year 1981, the pendency of pension cases of the members of the General Reserve Engineer Force (GREF) was 1168. However, as a result of sustained efforts made by BRDB Sectt., Directorate General Border Roads and BRO units, the number of outstanding pension cases has been reduced to 305 only as on 1-7-1985. The details of the pension cases pending for the last 1 year, 2 years, 3 years, 4 years and 5 years and above are stated to be as follows:—

(i) Pension cases pending for the last 1 year (for the year 1984)	142
(ii) Pension cases pending for the last 2 years (for the year 1983)	45
(iii) Pension cases pending for the last 3 years (for the year 1982)	24
(iv) Pension cases pending for the last 4 years (for the year 1981)	54
(v) Pension cases pending for the last 5 years and above (for the year 1980 and before)	40
	305

2.83 In reply to a question, the main reasons for the pendency have been stated in a note, as follows:—

- (i) For finalisation of pension cases, compilation of service book in all respects is a pre-requisite. Border Roads Organisation units are located in far-flung and remote border areas where the communication facilities are inadequate. Since the service books of GREF personnel are maintained in these units, considerable time is involved in transit of documents, in cases of transfer of personnel as a result of which there is delay in updating the service books.
- (ii) Pension cases of GREF officers and subordinates are processed through four different CsDA, viz. CDA (Eastern Command), Patna, CDA (Western Command), Chandigarh, CDA (Northern Command), Jammu and CDA (Southern Command), Pune under whose jurisdiction the different BRO project fall. When GREF employees/officers are transferred from the jurisdiction of one CDA to another, the transfer of their service books takes a long time as the service book is required to be up-dated and audited by Accounts officer of the BRO project who works under the administrative control of the concerned CDA, before it is sent to the other place of posting of the individual which falls under the jurisdiction of another CDA. [In the Army, service books of officers are maintained centrally by CDA (officers) Pune, and those of OR by the Record Office of the Corps to which the OR belongs]
- (iii) When the pension papers are received by CDA(P), Allahabad, from various Projects Accounts offices Working under four different CsDA, they examine the papers with reference to entries recorded in service books. Discrepancies found in the examination are again referred back to the Border Roads Organisation units. The settlement of discrepancies takes a considerable time, as in most cases service records have to be checked at several places, where the individual had served.

2.84 In order to reduce the number of pending cases, following measures have been initiated:—

- (i) As advised by BRDB Secretariat, Directorate General, Border Roads issued detailed instructions to CBs Projects to update the service books of all BREF employees.

- (ii) BRO projects authorities were instructed to send their teams to CDA (Pension) Allahabad and the four different CsDA for on-the-spot finalisation of pending cases.
- (iii) During 1984-85, BRDD Sectt. liaised with CDA (Pension) Allahabad and the four CsDA (through CGDA) as a result of which the pendency has come down.

2.85 As a further measure to streamline the settlement of terminal dues of GREF personnel, it has been decided in consultation with CGDA to introduce the system of Individual Running Ledger Account (IRLA) in the GREF, which will be implemented shortly. With the introduction of this system, service books of all the GREF personnel will be maintained centrally by the Record Office, GREF, at Pune, and not in the units. Record Office will receive the application for grant of pensions, etc., from the Chief Engineers of Projects concerned and that office will process the pension cases with CDA (Pensions), Allahabad in consultation with PAO (GREF) of CDA (Southern Command), instead of the four CsDA as at present. This scheme of centralisation of service-books at one place will result in timely up-dating of service-books, since movement of service-books from the jurisdiction of CDA to another in cases of transfer of individual will be completely eliminated. Besides, the scheme also envisages a direct bilateral relationship between the GREF Record Office at Pune and the C.D.A. (Pension) Allahabad (Via PAO-GREF under CDA, Southern Command, Pune), which will further facilitate expeditious finalisation of pension cases.

2.86 In a subsequent written communication to the Committee, it is stated that as a result of the remedial measures taken, the number of pension cases pending with CDA (P), Allahabad as on 1-11-1985 are only 13.

2.87 The representative of the Ministry admitted during evidence that:—

“I only want to say that CDA (Pensions) is not one of our best offices. There are problems and those problems are being gradually resolved. We are hitting the problem at the root and very soon, say within a year, you should find that CDA (Pensions) would be an organisation where the complaints would be reduced very very significantly, as a result of the actions that we have already taken and as a result of a few other actions that we will take.....We are also changing over from manual system to a computerised system because the manual

system is very slow. The result of these would be that in about six months time you would find that there is a distinct improvement."

2.88 Asked whether any cases of corruption had also come to the notice of Government in the cases of settlement of Pensions, the representative of the CDA (Pensions), Allahabad stated during evidence that "while there is considerable scope for increasing the tempo of work, till today there is no complaint of corruption in Allahabad office."

2.89 The Committee note that the pendency of pension cases pertaining to retired GREF personnel with CDA (Pensions) was 1168 in 1981, 305 on 1-7-1985 and only 13 on 1-11-1985. While appreciating the steps taken and efforts made to clear the arrears of pension cases, the Committee emphasise the need for so streamlining the procedures and systems that the pension cases are finalised within a specified period, say within three months of the retirement and that no further arrears are created. The Committee feel that it is not impossible to introduce the ideal system under which a retired person starts getting his pension from the month following his retirement. This can be feasible if action to complete the service book and service records is initiated about a year before the retirement of the individual and complete papers are put up to the pension sanctioning authority before the person actually retires.

CHAPTER III

BUDGET AND EXPENDITURE

A. Financial Provisions and Expenditure

3.1 It has been stated in a note furnished to the Committee that the expenditure of Border Roads Development Board is met from non-plan provisions outside the purview of the National Plans and the Demands in this respect are included in the Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Transport. The agency works are entrusted to B.R.D.B. from within the overall plan provisions of those agencies. The physical and financial targets and achievements during the Sixth Plan period are as under:—

	1980-81 to 1982-83		1983-84		1984-85	
	Tgt.	Achi.	Tgt.	Achi.	Tgt.	Achi.
(a) Physical						
(i) Fm. Cut (Cl. 9Km.)	1025.19	1069.88	425.30	439.32	509.18	538.64
(ii) Surf/re-surf (Cl. 9Km.)	3029.31	3119.84	1045.75	1092.36	1229.05	1262.73
(b) Financial (Rs. in crores)						
(i) Works	246.00	246.19	122.11	112.84	149.00	145.78
(ii) Maintenance	36.80	36.75	17.01	17.05	20.40	20.37
(iii) Others	85.44	85.62	54.02	53.56	49.48	37.69

3.2 Based on the projections/priorities indicated by the users and annual potential available, the following level of output for the Organisation has been planned each year of the 7th Five Year Plan i.e. from 1985-86 to 1989-90.

() Physical	
(i) Fm. Cut (Cl. 9Km)	540 Kms.
(ii) Surf/Resurf.	1265 Kms.
(b) Tentative Financial Outlay	
	(Rs. in crores)
(i) Works	150
(ii) Maintenance	21
(iii) Other items (Establishment equipment, etc)	40

3.3 The Budget Estimates, Revised Estimates and actual expenditure incurred under the various heads during each of the last five

years have been stated to be as follows:—

Sl. No.	Year	Work	Maint.	Equipment	Estt.	General Administration	Gross Total	(Rs. in lakhs)	
								Other Ministries	Work/maint.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
1980-81									
1	BE 1980-81	4179.40	759.35	845.81	339.05	86.80	6510.41		
	RE 1980-81	4791.68	763.24	1227.04	704.08	90.40	7376.44		
	Expenditure	4589.46	770.26	1458.21	667.39	85.42	7570.81		2389.05
2	1981-82								
	BE 1981-82	5434.08	772.36	1444.24	746.64	91.45	8488.70		
	RE 1981-82	5512.04	862.29	1981.24	751.81	98.51	9205.29		
	Expenditure	5478.89	856.15	1955.66	709.22	98.70	9096.62		2731.79
1982-83									
3	BE 1982-83	6327.57	873.06	2009.40	771.92	103.45	10084.80		
	RE 1982-83	6647.26	1140.60	2710.66	859.74	120.83	11479.19		
	Expenditure	6560.34	1146.02	2675.46	795.07	116.68	11293.57		3772.58
1983-84									
4	BE 1983-84	6827.82	1375.25	3785.40	888.10	107.84	12976.45		
	RE 1983-84	6871.35	1392.00	4316.89	956.05	128.68	13664.92		
	Expenditure	6731.74	1389.82	4316.89	906.65	131.40	13476.52		5648.67
1984-85									
5	BE 1984-85	8030.31	1411.11	4334.62	983.16	128.63	14887.83		
	RE 1984-85	8489.99	1522.90	3798.62	990.63	158.11	14960.25		
	Expenditure	8171.33	1520.01	3600.56	892.62	144.78	14329.28		6327.07

BE — Budget Estimates
RE — Revised Estimates

3.4 Explaining the reasons for shortfall in the expenditure, the representative of the Border Roads Organisation stated during evidence that most of the works entrusted to the State PWDs could not be completed in time. When pointed out that during each of the last five years, the original budget estimates had been revised upwards but the actual expenditure in many cases was less than even the original estimates, and that there were quite big variations between the budget estimates and the revised estimates, the representative of the Border Roads Organisation stated during evidence that "the revision is normal procedure. But I agree that variation should not be so much between the budget estimates and the revised estimates. It may be that the targets get revised and so also the funds required."

3.5 When it was pointed out that under the head 'others' in 1984-85, the financial achievement was only to the tune of Rs. 37.69 crores against the target of Rs. 49.48 crores, the representative of Border Roads Organisation stated during evidence that according to the revised figures, the actual expenditure was Rs. 46.38 crores and the actual shortfall was to the extent of Rs. 3.10 crores only.

3.6 The Committee note that the budget estimates as originally formulated under various Heads of Expenditure had to be substantially revised subsequently during each of the last five years. They desire that at the initial stages of formulation of budget estimates, an in-depth study of the resources available and the capacity of the Border Roads Organisation to utilise these resources in consonance with the work-load should be made so that the budget estimates are formulated on a realistic basis, thus obviating the need to substantially revise them.

3.7 The Committee also note that there have been huge shortfalls in the expenditure under almost all Heads. As a result of the non-utilisation of the funds allocated for various items of work, the progress in those items of work must have suffered a set back. At the same time based on the expenditure envisaged in Revised Estimates, it would not have been possible for the Government to sanction expenditure on some other items necessitating their postponement. The Committee expect the Ministry to do a better budgetting and once the funds asked for are sanctioned to ensure that the funds are utilised fully so that the progress of work is not hampered.

B. Cost Structure

3.8 In a note furnished to the Committee, it has been stated that there is a wide variation in the cost of construction of roads from

region to region and State to State. The major factors responsible for the variation are given below:—

(i) Terrain and Topography.

(ii) Climatic conditions.

(iii) Strata of road alignment (hard rock, soft rock and ordinary soil).

(iv) Altitude

(v) Distance from rail-head.

(vi) Availability of local labour.

3.9 The following statement indicating the per kilometre cost of class 5 and class 9 roads with equipment bridges has been furnished to the Committee:—

Sl. No.	Name of Road	Classification	Surfaced/ unsurfaced	Cost per km (Rs. in lacs)	
				Class 5	Class 9
'A' Beacon (Jammu & Kashmir)					
1.	Road 'A'	Cl. 9	S		20.62
2.	Road 'B'	Cl. 5	U/S	13.13	
'B' Deepak (Himachal Pradesh & Uttar Pradesh)					
1.	Road 'C'	Cl. 9	S		18.24
2.	Road 'D'	Cl. 5	U/S	12.90	
'C' Chetak (Rajasthan)					
1.	Road 'E'	Double Lane	S		16.731
'D' Swastik (Sikkim)					
1.	Road 'F'	Cl. 9	S		18.54
2.	Road 'G'	Cl. 9	S		13.59
'E' Veriak (Arunachal Pradesh & Assam)					
1.	Road 'H'	Cl. 5	U/S	10.00	
2.	Road 'J'	Cl. 5	U/S	13.84	
'F' Setwak (Nagaland and Manipur)					
1.	Road 'K'	Cl. 9	U/S		11.44
'G' Pushpak (Mizoram & Tripura)					
1.	Road 'L'	Cl. 5	U/S	8.37	
2.	Road 'M'	Cl. 9	S		21-3

3.10 Asked how the system of cost control was being followed by the Border Roads Organisation. It has been stated in a note furnished to the Committee that:—

“A periodical evaluation of progress achieved *vis-a-vis* the expenditure incurred, with a view to watching the cost aspect and taking prompt remedial measures, wherever required is undertaken. The basic input and output details are recorded by the site executive. The monthly evaluation is done by the Task Force Commander for his own assessment of each work under progress. The results of quarterly evaluation are reported to Chief Engineers and Directorate General Border Roads along with critical review showing the action taken at Task Force level. Action required to be taken at Chief Engineer or Directorate General level is also indicated. Remedial actions like redeployment/readjustment of resources, revision of estimates due to change of scope and/or escalation of costs, etc. emerge from the critical review.”

3.11 The Committee have been informed that a High Power Committee (Committee on Cost of Construction and Maintenance, 1979) of technical and financial experts headed by Director General (Road Development) and Additional Secretary, Ministry (Now Department) of Shipping and Transport was constituted in pursuance of the recommendation contained in the 122nd Report (4th Lok Sabha) of the Estimates Committee to examine the factors responsible for high cost of construction and maintenance of roads. That Committee made series of recommendations.

The follow up action taken on the recommendations of the High Powered Committee is indicated as follows:—

(a) *Recommendations implemented:*

1. Preparation of an advance works and resources Plan for 5 years (1985—90)
2. Preparation of a time table for submission and sanction of estimates.
3. Total life of equipment increased by 15%.
4. Modification of made in Returns of Cost Control for proper remedial measures in time.
5. Computerisation of Standard Schedule of Rates effected.

6. All equipment including Class 'C' (i.e. equipment requiring overhaul by Base Workshops) is being treated as assets and level of resources suitably revised.
7. Periodicity of re-surfacing of roads reduced.
8. Diversion of BRO activities restricted to Civil Works, such as construction of Air Fields, residential accommodation etc.
9. A 'tailor made set up' for specialised works has been created in the form of an 'Integrated Task Force' for constructing the Gwalior airfield.
10. Standardisation of equipment in Border Roads Organisation has been made to reduce proliferation of different makes and types and other attendant problems of large inventory, etc.
11. Disposal of old vintage imported equipment speeded up.

(b) Recommendations under examination:

1. Rationalisation of functional units including staff for Recce, survey, etc., for enhanced potential of units.
2. Creation of suspense holding at Task Force for major construction stores.
3. Reduction in retirement age of Pioneers with increased terminal benefits.
4. Procurement action of equipment to be initiated sufficiently in advance so that bulk of equipment are available on ground from commencement of plan period.
5. Modernisation of workshops for speedy repairs.
6. Introduction of Management Information system.
7. Fixation of hourly usage rate for equipment for normal and outlived equipment.
8. Provision for quality control and contingency in Border Roads Organisation estimates.
9. Cost of HQ Task Force and RCC to be segregated and maintained separately under "Establishment cost".
10. Resurfacing to form a part of maintenance activity.
11. Payment of productivity-linked wages.

3.12 The Committee note that the Government constituted a High Powered Committee to examine the factors responsible for high cost of construction and maintenance of roads in pursuance of the recommendation of this Committee made in their 122nd Report (4th Lok Sabha). The Committee further note that the High Powered Committee made a series of recommendations for effectively controlling the cost of construction and maintenance of roads. They, however, are unhappy to find that only 11 recommendations of the High Powered Committee have been implemented so far and another 11 recommendations are stated to be still under examination. The Committee would like the Government to take final decisions on the pending recommendations without any further loss of time.

3.13 The Committee note that the monthly evaluation of the work in progress is done by the Task Force Commander and quarterly evaluation reports are sent to the Chief Engineers and Directorate General of Border Roads. The Committee need hardly stress that the returns on receipt should be immediately and critically analysed so as to ensure that the factors responsible for hampering the work and thereby resulting in the cost escalation, are dealt with promptly and effectively.

CHAPTER IV

PROJECTS

A. Formulation and Execution of Projects

4.1 As stated earlier, one of the functions of the Border Roads Development Board is to lay down the policy, programme and priorities for the development of communications in border areas.

4.2 Explaining the methodology for fixing the priorities for taking up various construction|maintenance works, the representative of the Border Roads Organisation stated during evidence that the priorities were laid down by Defence Services for the work done on their behalf. The priorities laid down by Defence Services was placed before the Border Roads Development Board for their approval.

4.3 The following statement indicating the priorities laid down for the completion of certain important roads and actual date of their completion has been furnished to the Committee:—

S. No	Name of the Road	Priority/ PDC	Actual date of completion	Remarks
1	2	3	4	5
<i>Project Beacon</i>				
1	Srinagar—Sonamarg	3/83	10/82	
2	Leh-Deshkit—Chalunka	3/83	3/83	
3	Chokibal—Tangdhar	3/81	8/82	
4	Akhnoor-Poonch	12/80	12/80	
5	Rajori—Thanamandi—Surankot	1/80	1/80	
6	Khatra—Jindra Raiasi	8/80	8/80	
<i>Project Chetak</i>				
7	Harasoni—Nandbaisala—Jaliba	5/82	5/82	
8	Hanumangarh—Padampur	3/82	3/82	
9	Ganganagar—Malout	4/82	4/82	
10	Hanumangarh—Anupgarh	3/82	3/82	

1	2	3	4	5
<i>Project Dantak</i>				
11	Sarbhang - Hatisar - Tomnga	3/80	3/80	
<i>Project Variak</i>				
12	Sitapani - Alubarighat - Tezu	3/84	3/84	
<i>Project Sewak</i>				
13	Dimapur - Kohima - Mo - M - rm	3/84	3/84	
14	Chura Chandpur - Tipaimukh	11/82	11/82	
<i>Project Puvhpak</i>				
15	Jowai - Rostachra - Churabari - Agartala	3/83	3/83	Class 9 Road
16	Lungleh - Tuipang	3/80	3/80	
17	Aijal - Tuipaibari	3/80	3/80	
18	Seiling - Tipaimukh	3/82	3/80	

4.4 Asked whether the construction/maintenance of roads was at present labour-oriented with the result that it was a slow process and the quality also suffered, the representative of the Border Roads Organisation stated during evidence that the choice of appropriate technology depended on technical and financial considerations and also the social desirability. The environmental factors had also to be kept in view. The environment of the area might be disturbed if only the machines were used. So some sort of technology which was neither labour-oriented nor fully machine-oriented had to be employed. By and large, the construction of roads was being mechanised to the extent possible.

4.5 A suggestion was made to a Study Group of Estimates Committee which visited Shillong in September 1985 that the approach roads to the main roads to be constructed by a Project should also be handed over to that Project so that the work was not hampered due to the poor maintenance of approach roads. When this question was raised during evidence, the Defence Secretary stated that there was an optimal work-load which the Border Roads Organisation could carry. If the approach roads or link roads were also to be maintained by the organisation, their work-load would increase very much. Moreover, the State Governments by and large, were in a better position to maintain those roads.

4.6 The representative of the Border Roads Organisation added that:—

“...there are certain rear link roads which the Chief Engineers concerned feel that if these are with them, they will be able to carry on their work better in the forward areas, because they will have control over the rear link also. There are two points to be seen. Firstly, whether the Chief Engineers or the other units on the ground should really concentrate on the forward links and where the PWD has been maintaining a certain sector should continue to maintain that. Secondly, there is also a certain amount of reluctance on the part of the State Governments to hand over certain sectors.”

4.7 When the comments of the representative of the Department of Surface Transport were invited, he stated that:—

“The roads are a State subject except the national highways which is a Central subject. Whenever a road is decided to be of strategic importance, the Government of India writes to the State Government for the road to be entrusted to us. With the passage of time, most of the State Governments are resisting this for various reasons except in those areas where the military traffic is there mostly. Then, about the maintenance, my own feeling is that most of the State Governments will not agree for maintenance to be done by the Border Roads where the traffic is mixed, i.e. civilian and military.”

4.8 A Study Group of the Estimates Committee which visited Shillong in September, 1985 were informed that the roads being maintained/constructed were mainly of Class 5 and Class 9 categories. Private trucks using those roads carried much more load than could be taken by those roads, with the result that the roads often deteriorated and their maintenance expenditure was quite heavy. It was suggested to the Study Group that traffic barriers should be established at the Borders of all States and the trucks should be weighed there to ensure that the trucks did not carry more than the prescribed load. In addition, highway petrolling should be regularly done on all the roads to check the trucks on the spot. Such practice was being followed in many of the western countries. When this question was raised during evidence, the representative of the Border Roads Organisation agreed that it was a good suggestion, as proper utilisation of roads by the user was of national importance. The representative of the Department of Surface stated that it was very unfortunate that on one side not enough money was

invested in the construction/maintenance of roads and on the other the roads were not properly utilised by the goods carriers. 8.2 tonnes axle load was universally accepted load. Truck axle load of 10.2 tonnes has been adopted in India. If the axle load was increased from 8.2 tonnes to 16.4 tonnes, the damage was not just simply double but it becomes 16 times more. The problem could be solved by not building trucks of higher capacity and also by implementing the rules and regulations on the subject. The Management of traffic was, however, in the hands of the police.

4.9 The representative of the Department of Surface Transport further stated that the roads built in our country could carry even 10 to 50 tonnes of goods in trucks without causing any excessive damage, but these trucks should have approximate number of axles at the back instead of the two axles. However, if the number of axles was only 2 and more goods were carried than the permissible limit, the roads were bound to deteriorate fast.

4.10 The Committee are happy to note that by and large the Border Roads Organisation has been able to complete the construction of certain important roads within the stipulated period. The Committee feel that to quicken the pace of development, the construction/maintenance of roads should be progressively mechanised.

4.11 The Committee would like the Government to consider whether in the exigencies of work, an approach road, immediately linking the main road to be constructed by the Border Roads Organisation could also be taken over for maintenance by the Border Roads Organisation temporarily till the construction of the main road is completed so that the main work is not hampered due to the poor maintenance of the approach road.

4.12 To avoid damage to roads by excess load carrying trucks the Committee would like the Ministry of Transport (Department of Surface Transport) to take up with the Ministry of Heavy Industry the question of manufacture of trucks and other heavy load bearing transport with a suitable number of rear axles. The feasibility of installing weigh bridges at suitable locations on the National Highways to detect and prevent plying of trucks carrying loads beyond a limit should also be examined in consultation with the State Governments.

B. Current Programmes

4.13 The important items of construction/improvement of roads in the current programme of the Board are the following:—

- (i) Development of National Highway 52 connecting Baihata—Charali-Tezpur-Passighat-Tezu-Rupai (total length 889 kms) NH 53 (connecting Imphal-Silchar-Badarpur—total length 295 kms) and NH 54 (connecting Silchar-Aizawal-Lungleh, total length 407 kms).

4.14 These three roads in the North East were declared as National Highways in September, 1980. The developmental works are to be undertaken under the BRDB programme and Border Roads Organisation is the construction agency, except for the Assam portion of National Highway 52, which portion is with the State P.W.D.

4.15 According to assessment of works and costs carried out by Technical Boards, the development of these roads is expected to cost about Rs. 185.00 crores. The works are being taken up in a phased manner according to the funds made available by the Roads Wing of the Ministry of Shipping and Transport.

- (ii) *Sensitive Border Areas Programme Roads*: 16 Roads with a total length of 910 kms have been entrusted to Border Roads Organisation for construction under the Plan provision for road communications in the Sensitive Border Areas (SBA) programme of the Ministry of Shipping and Transport (Roads Wing).
- (iii) *North East Council Roads*: 28 roads (2485 kms) of Economic and Inter-State Importance have been entrusted to BRO for construction in North Eastern States/Union Territories by North Eastern Council.
- (iv) *Roads in the Coal Mines area of Bihar*: 10 roads (98.5 kms) in the Coal Mines area in Dhanbad Distt. in Bihar have been entrusted to BRO by the Bharat Coaking Coal Ltd. for construction.
- (v) *Improvement of Leh-Manali road and pre-feasibility study for Rohtang Tunnel*: The existing Leh-Manali road (474 kms in length) is the alternative route to Ladakh. The other route is Srinagar Leh. However, the use of this road is restricted on account of heavy snow fall and avalanche at Rohtang and other mountain Passes.

Accordingly, in April 1984, it was decided to improve the road to surfaced specification at an estimated cost of Rs. 43 crores. It was also decided that pre-feasibility studies for construction of tunnel at Rohtang Pass and measures for snow clearance and construction of snow sheds at the other passes may be continued.

These works are in progress.

(vi) *Air Force Station at Gwalior*: In connection with the induction of Mirage-2000 air craft in the I.A.F., Border Roads Organisation was entrusted with the construction of new parallel taxi-track and other related works at Maharajpur Air Field at Gwalior, as a time bound programme.

A tailor made Task-Force was specially created in 1984 for the execution of this job. The work have been completed in record time by BRO by June, 1985.

Development of National Highways, 52, 53 & 54

4.16 Asked to explain the reasons for not undertaking the developmental work under the BRDB Programme so far even though the above 3 roads in the North-East were declared as National Highways as far back as September, 1980, the representative of the Border Roads Organisation stated during evidence that although they were declared as National Highways in September, 1980, they were included in the BRDB Programme in March, 1982 only. It was only after that the work on these National Highways was started. Explaining the position further the representative of the Department of Surface stated that:—

“When we prepare our Five Year Plans, we provide certain amounts for the improvement of the existing National Highways. We also add an amount for the new National Highways. When we moved into the Sixth Plan from the Fifth Plan, we were required to identify some roads which we had to declare as National Highways. It is known to all of us that for certain reasons we wanted the North-Eastern Region to be brought into the main stream. Therefore, the emphasis in the Sixth Plan was only to declare the National Highways mainly in the North-Eastern Region except one road which was somewhere else. National Highways which were declared in the Sixth Plan were only in the North-Eastern Region except one. First identification is for the roads to come into

the National Highway network. The second thing is to identify the deficiency in this system. Then the question of identifying the agencies who are supposed to do it comes in. It is the State Governments who do the works. But, in North-Eastern Region, specially, because the State Governments did not have the capability as they were not executing any such works, Border Roads was later on identified the agency and hence this delay of two years. It does not mean that the money which was coming to us every year for the development of National Highways, was being surrendered. The money was being spent on other National Highways."

4.17 In reply to a further question, the representative of the Border Roads Organisation stated that the total estimated expenditure on the development of these 3 National Highways was estimated to be Rs. 185 crores. Out of this a sum of Rs. 43.48 crores (Appendix III) had already been spent and the current year's budget was Rs. 20 crores. As for the target dates for the completion of these National Highways, the Secretary (BRDB) said: "It will be about 9-10 years more."

Leh-Manali Road and Rohtang Tunnel

4.18 The improvement|development of Leh-Manali road was included in the BRDB Programme in 1963. Due to paucity of funds, etc., the works were suspended in 1975. The works were however re-included in BRDB Programme in April 1984 at a cost of Rs. 48 crores. The work is being executed from Manali as well as from Leh ends. As on 30th September, 1985, 40.63 per cent physical progress of sanctioned jobs has been achieved.

4.19 The above mentioned improvement work was taken up during 1983-84 and the expenditure during 1983-84 and 1984-85 has been Rs. 61.03 lakhs and Rs. 312.81 lakhs, respectively.

4.20 The works relating to surfacing, restoration of damages and improvements of geometrics are planned to be completed by 1991 and the bridges by 1994.

4.21 The Manali-Leh road (474 Kms.) was linked in 1969 and opened to traffic in 1973. The road conforms broadly to Class IX specifications (Carriageway 3.66 metres). This road crosses Pirpanjal, Great Himalayan and Zaskar ranges at Rohtang (3,980 metres), Baralachala (4,900 metres), Thangalangle (5,350 metres) passes. These passes are subject to very heavy snowfall and avalanche and the road remains closed between November and July.

4.22 The Ministry have furnished the following note regarding the programme for improvement of this road and building up of tunnels at the passes to make it road worthy for greater part of the year:

“The improvement of this road and the question of making the road available for a longer period for traffic are under consideration. This involves upgradation of the road to surfaced specification with permanent bridges, tunnel at Rohtang, tunnel|snow structures at Baralachala and other passes and snow sheds|structures at other location along the road. As these proposals have a long gestation period, it has been decided that the following action may be taken to make the road trafficable for longer durations:—

- (a) Snow clearance efforts should be increased.
- (b) Improvement of road to Class IX surfaced specifications with permanent bridges to be taken up on priority.
- (c) Survey and investigation for tunnel at Rohtang and structures required at other passes should be taken up.
- (d) Snow studies should be done to provide control measures at various locations.

Accordingly, snow clearance efforts have been increased and the road is expected to be opened to traffic for 5 months in a year the exact increase in the availability of the road for traffic will be known after two years' experience.

Improvement of the road to Class IX surfaced specification, at a cost of Rs. 43 crores, has already been included in Border Roads Development Board Programme and the works are in progress.

As regards Rohtang tunnel, a preliminary study has been done by Geological Survey of India and a tentative alignment recommended by them. The tunnel as recommended is likely to be 8.84 kms. long with about 15 km. approach roads, thus reducing the length of the existing road by 45 kms. Detailed study and investigations have been planned at a cost of Rs. 82 lakhs. The tunnel, as per rough assessment, may cost about Rs. 94 crores and may take about 10 years to build.

At the other passes, preliminary studies, survey and investigations for tunnel|snow structures, etc., are being done.

Snow studies to evolve snow and avalanche control measures is being done by Snow & Avalanche Study Establishment (SASE) and preliminary studies indicate an approximate cost of Rs. 22.25 crores over a period of 8-10 years, for increasing the road trafficability period upto 7|8 months in addition to measures being taken for surfacing, tunneling, etc.

Thus the proposals for Rohtang tunnel is under study|investigation and proposal can be finalised and decision taken only on completion of these investigations."

Bhadarwah-Chamba Road

4.23 Asked whether any scheme has been received from state PWD for upgradation of Bhadarwah-Chamba road costing Rs. 193 crores (portion in J&K), the representative of the Department of Surface Transport stated during evidence that:—

"Development of this road is a State subject . At no point of time it has been considered to be declared as a National Highway. I would submit that since it is a State subject the question of our financing does not arise.

We do finance from the Government of India some of the State projects under what we call E&I scheme and so far we had sanctioned certain amount for this road to be improved. Whatever is in existence today is mainly because of the sanctions issued by the Government of India under their E&I scheme to the State Government. In J&K it is more or less completed and in the Himachal Pradesh side about four or five kms. are yet to be completed."

4.24 The Committee are unhappy to learn that the work on the National Highways Nos. 52, 53 and 54 could only be started after February, 1962 even though these roads had been declared as National Highways as early as September, 1960. This shows that the Ministries concerned and the agencies involved in the execution of the works have handled this matter in a leisurely fashion. Government should fix the target dates for the upgradation of these roads to National Highways standard immediately and strictly adhere to those targets.

4.25 The Committee consider that the Leh-Manali Road is not only of considerable strategic importance but has great socio-economic importance also for the inhabitants of those areas. The Committee therefore strongly recommend that high priority should be accorded to the project for improvement of this road and for building Tunnels *en rout* at the Rohtang and other passes. The Committee hope that shortage of funds would not come in the way of early completion of this project.

4.26 The Committee feel that Bhadarwah-Chamba road has also great potential for the economic development of the backward areas not only of Jammu & Kashmir but of Himachal Pradesh as well. The proposal made by Jammu & Kashmir Government for declaring it as a National Highway therefore deserves favourable consideration by Government. In case it is not found feasible to agree to this proposal, Government may consider extending Central financial assistance for improvement of this road.

C. Future Programmes

4.27 Based on the balance of works included in the BRDB programme and new projections indicated by various agencies/Departments, etc., the tentative future work load of BRDB as on 1st April, 1985 has been assessed for broad planning purposes as under:—

	Length in Class 9 equivalent (Kms)
Construction/Improvement (Upgradation) of roads	3869
Surfacing	7459
Resurfacing (Per year)	1901

4.28 With the existing/planned annual potential of about 510 kms of formation-cutting/(Construction of roads), improvement/upgradation and 1265 kms of surfacing/resurfacing, the Border Roads Organisation has, it is stated, adequate workload for the following 8 years

4.29 The Committee have been informed during evidence that all the above works pertained to the Ministry of Defence and other Agencies and the total requirement of completion of all the above works would be of the order of Rs 1142 crores. Out of this the funds required during the five year period from 1985-86 to 1989-90 would be Rs. 794.20 crores. The work might undergo change at any time depending upon the strategic importance of the work to be done. This would require adjustment in some other areas. In addition,

some works might also be entrusted to the Border Roads Organisation by the State Governments or any other agencies for which necessary funds would be provided by them.

4.30 Border Roads Organisation has the existing/planned potential of about 540 kms. of formation-cutting|improvement/upgradation and 1265 kms. of surfacing|resurfacing. Accordingly the Organisation proposes to complete the future programme of work indicated to them by the user agency in the next 8 years. The Committee would like the Government to consider raising the capacity of the Border Roads Organisation to handle heavier work-load and complete the projects assigned to them earlier than envisaged as with the passage of time the cost of construction is likely to escalate.

D. Bridging Units

4.31 It has been stated in a note furnished to the Committee that construction of permanent bridges, particularly long-span bridges above 30 metres is lagging behind mainly due to non-response from major contractors, including Public Sector Undertakings, reluctance of such contractors to undertake works in remote and forward areas, and exorbitant quotations from contractors. However, there is a necessity to fully explore and utilise the contract potential to supplement the departmental bridge construction expertise which is being developed.

4.32 Among the works carried out by the BRO, the physical percentage of bridge work being carried out by the private contractors to the total quantum of bridge work (23,500 metres) is 3.23 per cent. The valuwisewise progress is 2.79 per cent. Year-wise details are as under:—

Year	% physical progress	% value
1980-81	0.15%	0.05%
1981-82		
1982-83		
1983-84	1.44%	1.15%
1984-85	1.64%	1.59%
Total	3.23%	2.79%

4.33 Asked whether any instances of exploitation of labour employed by private contractors have come to the notice of Border

Roads Organisation, the representative of the Border Roads Organisation replied in the negative. Asked when the bridging units were expected to be raised, the representative of the Border Roads Organisation stated:—

“Two units are now being raised. We have at present two sub-soil investigation, design and planning units, one in the east and the other in the north. These will be raised to bridge units. We might however continue to give some bridges on contract because a lot of work has to be done.”

4.34 The Committee are distressed to note that the construction of long span bridges of about 30 meters or more is lagging behind mainly due to non-response from private contractors, reluctance of such contractors to undertake works in remote and forward areas, and exorbitant quotation of costs. The committee, therefore, strongly recommend that not only the present two sub-soil investigation, design and planning units be converted into bridging units as proposed, but more such units should be created so that maximum work could be handled departmentally and the dependence on the private contractors is minimised.

E. Stores

4.35 The Ministry have stated that in the Border Roads, stores come under the category of vehicles, plants, equipment, bridging equipment, spares, clothing and other ordinance articles, expendable tools, explosives, constructional stores like cement, steel, timber etc., rations, POL, tentage, medical stores etc. All items of stores, as categorised above, are physically verified (stock taking done and classified) at least once in a year at the rate of 25 per cent of the items per quarter except for rations and POL for which stock taking is carried out once every month by an officer. Thus, verification of stores is a continuing process throughout the year in the organisation. The above procedure applies to stores held by every self-accounting unit such as Headquarters Chief Engineer, H.Q. Task Force, Base Depots, Store Companies, Base Workshops, Stores Divisions etc.

4.36 During stock taking, the stores are classified according to their condition i.e. serviceable, unserviceable, surplus and scrap. Survey boards are convened quarterly by the Chief Engineers for survey, classification and condemnation of stores. Unserviceable stores are periodically disposed of by public auction. Stores surplus and not wanted by the units are declared surplus and transferred to other Projects where they are needed and are offered to other

departments if no requirement exists in other Projects. Unserviceable stores and items like packing materials are utilised for various other jobs thus saving on cost.

4.37 An upto date inventory of stores is held or maintained by each unit in store ledger as per the procedure laid down. Every item of stores is therefore accounted for.

4.38 Surprise checks are carried out under the orders of Chief Engineer and Task Force Commander periodically for the stores held. During the annual inspection, inspection of stores held and system adopted is conducted by the Chief Engineers and Task Force Commanders. An annual stock taking report is prepared and serious deficiencies are reported to higher formations and surplus items are taken on charge and deficiencies are regularised as per procedure.

4.39 The Technical Examiners' Cell at B.R.D.B. annually inspects Base Depots which hold transit stock of constructional stores, plant and machinery on behalf of the Headquarters Chief Engineer Projects, for eventual release to functional units. (Base Depots also holds and dispose of unserviceable stores and equipment). During the last 3 years, the following shortcomings have been noticed by the Technical Examiner's Cell in different Base Depots:

- (a) Some delay in release/lifting of stores and equipment;
- (b) though efforts have been made to accommodate stores in semi-permanent accommodation, there is a requirement of permanent accommodation for proper storage and preservation of stores; and
- (c) further improvement is required for proper security arrangements by way of proper security fencing and provision of explosive magazines.

4.40 All these shortcomings were brought to the notice of Chief Engineers concerned. The following improvements were noticed during subsequent inspections:—

- (a) All stores have been released and were under process of lifting by functional units.
- (b) Administrative Approvals have been/are being accorded for construction of permanent accommodation for storage of constructional stores and explosives and for provisions of security fencing.

4.41 The following statement showing the total inventory of stores (assets of equipment) available with the Border Roads Organisation during each of the 5 years, from 1980-81 to 1984-85, has been furnished to the Committee:

Year	No. of items of equipment	Book value (Rupees in Lakhs)	Depreciated value
1980-81 . . .	4965	3979.72	2114.29
1981-82 . . .	6284	6083.40	3523.20
1982-83 . . .	5673	7091.34	4529.19
1983-84 . . .	6731	10252.66	7321.60
1984-85 . . .	6067	11200.79	7673.10

4.42 The total book value of equipment (1006 Nos.) not in use/declared unserviceable was Rs. 875 lakhs and its depreciated value was Rs. 43.70 lakhs as on 1-4-1985.

4.43 The Committee note that as in 1984-85, the Border Roads Organisation had a total entry of stores to the tune of Rs. 11200.79 lakhs at book value and of Rs. 7673.10 lakhs at the depreciated value. They also note that the value of unserviceable equipment numbered 1006 as on 1-4-1985 with book value of Rs. 875 lakhs and the depreciated value of Rs. 43.17 lakhs. The Committee are unable to appreciate why so many unserviceable items of equipment are lying with the Border Roads Organisation. Keeping unserviceable equipment for long periods results in over capitalisation and blocking of valuable space besides reducing the scrap value of the equipment. The Committee, therefore desire that survey should be made of all such items and these be disposed off without delay. The Committee expect to be informed of the progress made in this regard in six months time.

4.44 The Committee would like utmost attention being given to maintenance of the machinery, tools, plants and equipment available with the Border Roads Organisation. Through proper and effective maintenance only, the life of equipment as well as its operational efficiency can be maintained at the optimum level.

4.45 Adequate storage facilities and security arrangements are necessary for the proper upkeep and preservation of stores. The Committee trust that this aspect pointed out by the Vigilance Organisation is being attended to by the Border Roads Organisation.

F. Cases of Losses

4.46 The age-wise break-up of losses of the BRO with their cumulative value awaiting sanction, as on 1 April, 1985 is given below:—

Year	No. of cases	Value
Upto		Rs.
1979-80	4	24.31 lakhs
1980-81	8	3.99 lakhs
1981-82	21	11.12 lakhs
1982-83	3	1.55 lakhs
1983-84	9	2.28 lakhs
1984-85	9	2.74 lakhs
TOTAL	91	45.99 lakhs

4.47 The total value of losses written off during each of the last five years is also given below:—

Year	Amount
	Rs.
1980-81	15,22,084.78
1981-82	27,13,860.51
1982-83	4,79,644.12
1983-84	9,92,419.00
1984-85	4,69,220.09
TOTAL	61,77,228.50

4.48 Asked to indicate the reasons for large cases of losses pending for decisions with various projects, in a note furnished to the Committee, it has been stated that each case of loss has to be investigated according to the laid down procedures before it can be

projected by Directorate General Border Roads to Border Roads Development Board Sectt. for regularisation action.

The procedure envisages the following steps:—

- (a) preliminary inquiry by the concerned unit on the occurrence of the loss.
- (b) Reporting of the facts of loss to the higher authority.
- (c) Institution of Court of Inquiry/Board of Officers for determining the extent of loss, fixation of responsibility and recommendations for settlement of the loss amount.
- (d) Examination by and comments of the controlling authorities at different levels on the findings of Court of Inquiry, etc.
- (e) Report of the Controller of Defence Accounts concerned on the loss and its regularisation.
- (f) Submission of the case with the comments and recommendations of the Chief Engineer of the Project to the Director General Border Roads for his orders.
- (g) Initiation of the case to Border Roads Development Board Sectt. by Dte General Border Roads for regularisation.
- (h) Examination of the case at Govt. level and issue of Govt. sanction.

4.49 Asked during evidence to indicate the amount involved in the losses by unfair wear and tear, the representative of the Border Roads Organisation stated:—

“about Rs. 1.11 lakh is the amount which is to be regularised for the last so many years because of premature failures.”

4.50 The Committee are distressed to find that as many as 91 cases of the total depreciated value of Rs. 46 lakhs are still awaiting sanction for being written off. Among them are cases older than even 1979-80. The Committee would like a crash programme to be launched for investigating and finalising action on these cases within the next six months. The Committee would like to be informed of the progress made in this direction.

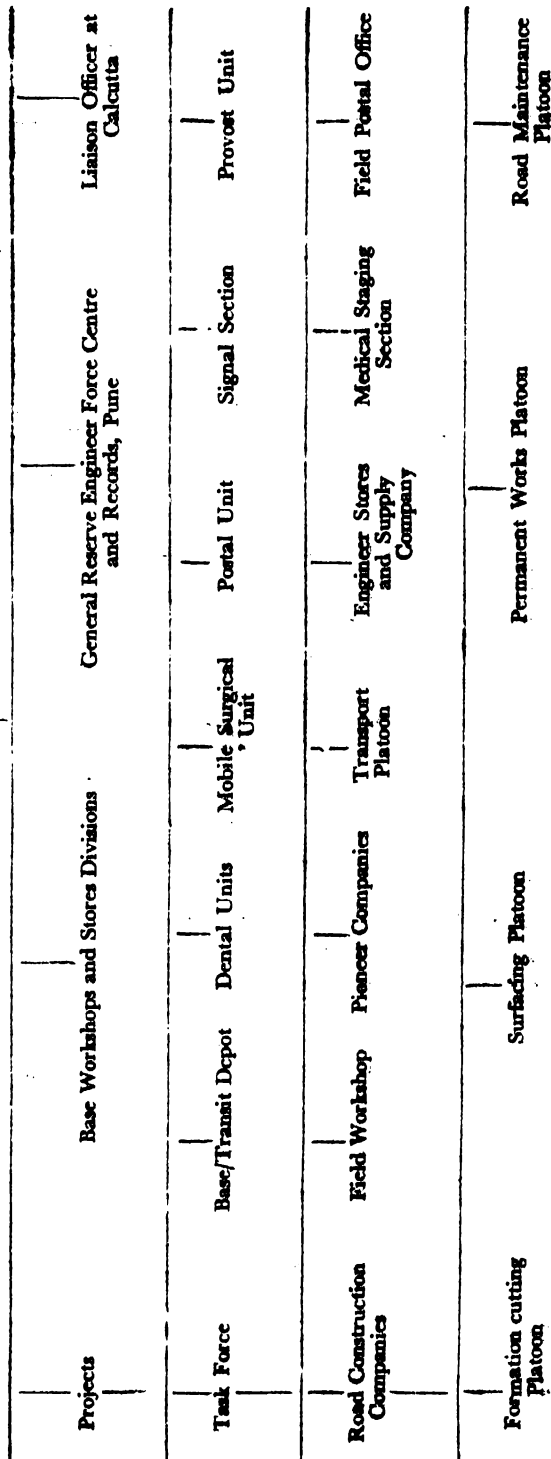
APPENDIX I

(See para 2.4)

Organisational Chart of Border Roads Organisation

BORDER ROADS DEVELOPMENT BOARD

DIRECTORATE GENERAL BORDER ROADS



APPENDIX II

(See para 2.12)

Statement showing the delegated powers in B.R.O.

I. Powers to include works in the Programme of BRDB;

So. No.	Subject	Delegated powers		
		Secretary, BRDB		D.G.B.R.
		With Financial Concurrence	Without Financial Concurrence	Without Financial Concurrence
1	2	3	4	5
		Rs. in lakhs		
1.	(a) Roads & Civil Works.			
	(i) Roads & Civil works required by General Staff	50	10	Nil
	(ii) Development Civil Works and Roads	25	Nil	Nil
	(iii) Civil Works and Roads to be taken up as agency works (funds being provided by the users).	100	25	Nil
	(b) Accommodation works for GREF (Administrative buildings and residential quarters including lands) :			
	(i) Administrative Buildings.	50	Nil	Nil
	(ii) Residential quarters.	50	Nil	Nil

II. Powers to sanction estimates for works.

(a) Roads :			
(i) Formation cutting	Full powers	35	15
(ii) Permanent Works	Full powers	35	15
(iii) Surf. cing/resurf. cing	Full powers	35	15
(iv) Emergency works.	Full powers	25	15
(b) Civil works and accommodation works for GREF	Full powers	25	15
(c) Powers to sanction indents for equipment, spares and clothing items		200	Nil
			50 on any one indent (for spares & Clo. items);

3. (a) Delegation of financial powers for according technical sanction	Task Force— Commander O.C. RCC	Rs. 10 lakhs Rs. 3 Lakhs
	(b) Delegation of financial powers for concluding of contract	Task Force— Commander O.C. RCC— Rs. 3 Lakhs
4. Enhancement of emergent powers of CE for local purchase of Cat 'A' Spares	Chief Engineer	Rs. 40,000/- on er ch occ sion
5. Enhancement of delegated powers for sanction of petty minor works in GREF.	DGBR	Rs. 20,000/-
	Chief Engineer	Rs. 4,000/- for each minor work (max. Rs. 75,000/-PA)
	Task Force Commander	Rs. 3,000/- for each minor work (max. Rs. 30,000/-PA)
6. Delegation of powers for local purchase of stationery to be charged to Project contingencies.	Chief Engineer	Rs. 10,000 PA for own office
	Task Force	Rs. 6,000 PA for own office
	OC RCC;	Rs. 3,000/-PA
	Indep PL	Rs. 1000/-PA
These power which expired on 30-6-83 only have been redede- gated for 2 years w.e.f. 1-4-84		
7. Delegation of powers for local purchase of stationery to meet emergent requirement. (Govt. letter dated 28-6-72 as extended from time to time)	DGBR (i)	Rs. 5,000/-PA
	(ii)	Rs. 5,000/-PA
	Chief Engineer	Rs. 3,000/-PA
	Task (i)	Rs. 3,000/-PA
	Comm- (ii)	Rs. 4,000/-PA
	nder	
Commander Base Wksp.	Rs. 250/-PA	
Commander F.T.F.	Rs. 500/-PA	
per C.E. for all items directly under DGBR. for his own office. for his own office. for all units under TF; for own office		
8. Local purchase of Cat 'B' stores i.e. other than construction material.	Chief Engineer	40,000/-
	Commander Task Force	Rs. 20,000/-

APPENDIX III

(See para 4.17)

Expenditure on NHS 52, 53 & 54 From 1980-81 to 1984-85

(Rs. in lacs)

NH	1980-81		1981-82		1982-83		1983-84		1984-85		Total		
	BRDB	MOST	BRDB	M.O.S.T.	BRDB	M.O.S.T.	BRDB	M.O.S.T.	BRDB	M.O.S.T.			
52(G)	-	..	..	..	..	..	15.99	..	20.87	33.22	36.86	33.22	70.08
(P)	110.81	..	110.18	9.10	141.95	156.92	176.31	285.06	327.55	336.78	866.80	787.96	1694.66
53(G)	20.36	..	25.40	15.92	13.02	99.00	15.41	253.00	13.53	448.38	87.72	816.30	904.02
54(G)	141.80	..	264.46	19.00	223.51	144.00	202.08	203.77	249.95	270.76	1081.80	637.53	1719.33
Total (G)	162.16	..	289.86	54.92	236.53	243.00	233.48	456.77	284.35	752.36	1206.38	1487.05	2693.43
(P)	110.81	..	110.18	9.10	141.95	156.92	176.31	285.06	327.55	336.78	866.80	787.86	1654.66
	272.97	..	400.04	44.02	378.48	399.92	409.79	741.83	611.90	1089.14	2073.18	2274.91	4348.09
Total	272.97	..	444.06	444.06	778.40	778.40	1151.62	1151.62	1701.04	1701.04	4348.09	4348.09	4348.09
BRDB													
+ MOST													

G—GREE

P—PWD

APPENDIX IV

Summary of Observations/Recommendations

Sl. No.	Para No. of Report	Recommendation/Observations
1	2	3
1.	1.13	<p>The Committee note that the Border Roads Development Board has as its Chairman, the Prime Minister. This is probably because the Prime Minister also holds the Defence portfolio. The Committee also note that the composition of the Board does not indicate any of its members as its Dy. Chairman, although originally when the Board was set up for the first time in March 1960, it had a Dy. Chairman also. The Defence Secretary has not been able to inform the Committee the reasons for not appointing any member of the Board as its Dy. Chairman and only maintained that the need for Dy. Chairman had never been felt as the date and time of meetings of the Board were fixed in consultation with the Chairman. Although the Defence Secretary expressed the view before the Committee that the existing composition of the Board was satisfactory, the Committee feel that it may facilitate the working of the Board if a Dy. Chairman is also designated to discharge the functions of the Chairman if the latter is absent or otherwise unable to chair a particular meeting of the Board.</p>
2.	1.18	<p>The Committee were informed during evidence that the Border Roads Development Board meets once a year. The Board, being a high-powered body, has to take major decisions involving heavy financial commitments on project proposals of strategic importance. Besides, the Board is required to review the reports</p>

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brought before it regarding the progress of works on individual projects. It is hardly believable that it would be possible for the Board meeting only once a year, to devote adequate time and attention to highly important matters accumulated over the past year for its consideration and decision. The Committee are of the firm view that if the Board is to discharge its functions effectively, its meetings have to be more often than once in a year.

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The Committee do not appreciate the absence of members from the meetings of the Board, specially when the Board had been meeting only once a year. The very idea of membership of the Board being made high-powered appears to have been that matters coming up before the Board should receive consideration at the highest level representing different Ministries, Organisations and user interests concerned. Further, when membership of the Board is specific, it is not clear how any other officer could deputise for a senior officer unless he himself has the designation as mentioned in the Government order constituting the Board. The perfunctory attendance at the meetings of the Board indicates that the members have not been giving as much importance and attention to the Board and to the matters coming before it as they deserved. The Committee expect all the members of the Board to attend all its meetings personally so that they are able to give full and final picture and make final commitments on behalf of their departments on the matters coming up before the Board for consideration. The Committee would like their observations to be brought to the notice of all the members of the Border Roads Development Board.

1	2	3
4.	2.18	<p>The Committee note that the delegation of powers to officers at various levels in the Border Roads Organisation was last revised in 1983. As there has been sizeable escalation in prices since then, it is high time that these are reviewed and revised suitably to make them realistic in the changed situation. The Committee would like such a review being made urgently so that the executing agencies are not hampered in carrying out the works entrusted to them expeditiously and smoothly. In this context they would also suggest that the delegation of powers to officers at various levels should roughly correspond to the delegation of powers in sister organisations like the MES. While making a review of the delegation of powers, this point may also be kept in view.</p>
5.	2.19	<p>The Committee trust that the progress report in respect of projects in hand received from various field formations are being scrutinised carefully and quickly on receipt so that the factors responsible for the delay in the execution of any work are identified well in time and necessary corrective measures taken in the matter promptly.</p>
6.	2.25	<p>The Committee are distressed to find out a very large number of posts, both in Officer and Subordinate cadres (technical and non-technical), are lying vacant in the Border Roads Organisation. This must be affecting adversely the efficiency of the organisation and the orderly and timely progress of projects. The Committee have been informed of the measures taken to tide over the situation. As the vacancies are persisting and the organisation is not able to attract sufficient number of persons it is obvious that these measures are not adequate. The Committee would like the BRDB to conduct an in-depth study to identify the reasons as to why persons are not coming forward to join the services of the Border Roads Organisation, when there is an</p>

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acute unemployment problem in the country. The result of this study should be earnestly followed up. The unattractive features of the services in the Border Roads Organisation should be adequately compensated by improving the pay structure and service conditions of GREF personnel. The Committee would also like the Board to launch a systematic and sustained publicity campaign for attracting the unemployed youth to the services of the Border Roads Organisation through mass media like Radio, T.V. and the Press. The visits of Mobile Recruitment Units should be so programmed as to cover all the States and Union Territories especially the remote and inaccessible areas. These visits should be preceded by adequate publicity of the programme of visit and the type of personnel proposed to be recruited.

1. 2.26 The Committee consider that proportionately more civil personnel should be inducted in the services of the Border Roads Organisation at all levels, so that Service officers are relieved to devote themselves to Service requirements. They learn that a proposal is already under way in this regard and the matter is being shortly put up to the Cadre Review Committee for approval. The Committee hope that the final decision in the matter would be taken urgently.
8. 2.37 The Committee note that there are disparities in the scales of ration, leave, clothing etc. between the Army personnel and GREF personnel working in the Border Roads Organisation. The Committee consider it unfortunate that some of the GREF employees had to form an Association and resort to strike in December, 1979, in violation of Section 21 of the Army Act, 1950 to press their demands for the removal of these disparities. Some of the employees had also to go to Supreme Court for the redressal of their

grievances. The Supreme Court in their judgement dated 6 May, 1983 gave a very clear directive that the Government might well consider the advisability of taking steps for ensuring that the disparities, if any, between the terms and conditions of service, such as, salary, allowance, ration etc. of Army personnel posted in GREF units and other Officers and men in GREF is removed. The Committee note that in the light of the judgement of Supreme Court some steps have since been taken by Government to remove some of the disparities. However, much needs to be done, as disparities still exist even after the lapse of more than two and a half years from the date of the judgement of the Supreme Court. The Committee feel that since the Army personnel and the GREF personnel are to work shoulder-to-shoulder in the same conditions and they are both governed by the Army Act, 1950 and Army Rules, 1954, there appears to be no justification for maintaining disparity in their terms and conditions of service.

9. 2.46 The Committee note that the number of officials being imparted training at Recruitment-cum-Training Centre, Pune has come down substantially in the years 1984-85 and 1985-86. This naturally should have resulted in under-utilisation of the capacity of the institute. The Committee need not emphasise that systematic and purposeful training can go a long way in toning up the employees and improving their skills to the benefit of both the employees and the employer organisation. It is, therefore, imperative that all the training programmes should be properly chalked out and implemented so that the employees are exposed to the modern and latest techniques of road construction and maintenance and management, general as well as technical, of the projects handled by the BRO. The Committee further recommend that short-term refresher courses in various disciplines for

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the officers/employees should also be arranged at regular intervals. The Committee would also like Government to step up the intake of the Recruitment-cum-Training Centre, Pune to optimum level so that its capacity is fully utilised.

10. 2.52&2.53 The Committee note that there are only 15 temporary employees in category 'C', who have put in more than three years service and have not yet been made quasi-permanent and that their cases are 'under-consideration'. The Committee would like the Government to quickly finalise their cases.

The Committee trust that the officers and staff are also being made permanent as soon as vacancies arise and that there is no undue delay in this regard.

11. 2.60 & 2.61 The Committee regret that in the matter of payment of Special Compensatory Allowance an exception has been made in the case of category 'D', employees of GREF to whom Special Compensatory Allowance is not being paid, whereas it is being paid to all other categories of GREF employees. The Committee do not appreciate the reasons advanced for denying this allowance to category 'D' GREF employees who also work in the same difficult terrains and tough conditions at the high altitude as others, and strongly recommend that Special Compensatory Allowance should be admissible to all categories of GREF employees if they fulfil the other conditions.

The Committee feel that the Question of payment of snow clearing allowance to the employees of the Border Roads Organisation engaged on such operations and some special allowance to those working at very high altitudes, stated to be under-consideration merits favourable consideration. The Committee hope that this matter will be finalised quickly.

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| 12. | 2.71 | The Committee recommend that recruitment to non-skilled Group 'D' posts in GREF should be made largely from the casual labourers deployed in various projects if they fulfil the medical standard of fitness prescribed. The casual workers possessing the minimum basic qualifications and skills should be encouraged to join, and preferred for appointment to, Group 'C' posts. Such personnel can be given on-the-job-training to improve their skills and standards. |
| 13. | 2.72 | The Committee note that about 60 per cent of the casual labourers working in the Swastik project are females and the over all position is that 80 per cent of the total casual labour force are males and 20 per cent are females. They further note that the Recruitment Rules, both under the Army Act and GREF do not permit females to be employed in the Organisation. The Committee see no reasons why the female labourers, who are actually working in various projects on casual basis should not be regularised merely because they happen to be females. They would like the Ministry to review the Recruitment Rules applicable to GREF and see whether these could be amended suitably to end this discrimination on grounds of sex. The Committee feel that conditions of work in GREF should be made known to the women candidates at the time of recruitment and it should be left to them to decide whether they could adjust to those conditions or not. |
| 14. | 2.73 | The Committee also recommend that the Border Roads Organisation should take up with the State Governments concerned the question of providing maternity care and other facilities in or near areas where there is a large concentration of female workers. In addition, the Medical facilities of the GREF should be available to the female workers. |

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|-----|---------|---|
| 15. | 2.81 | <p>The Committee consider that an efficient and well-organised system of vigilance in the Border Roads Organisation in a <i>sine qua non</i> for safeguarding against any misuse and mis-appropriation of funds and materials, thereby keeping the cost of operations to the minimum. The Committee note that although the number of cases referred to the vigilance organisation during the last five years was 350, only 11 persons have been found to be guilty. They suggest that the working of the vigilance organisation should be reviewed to make it more effective and result-oriented. There is also a need for immediate follow-up action on the findings of the vigilance organisation in each case referred to it.</p> |
| 16. | 2.89 | <p>The Committee note that the pendency of pension cases pertaining to retired GREF personnel with CDA (Pensions) was 1168 in 1981, 305 on 1-7-1985 and only 13 on 1-11-85. While appreciating the steps taken and efforts made to clear the arrears of pension cases, the Committee emphasise the need for so streamlining the procedures and systems that the pension cases are finalised within a specified period, say within three months of the retirement and that no further arrears are created. The Committee feel that it is not impossible to introduce the ideal system under which a retired person starts getting his pension from the month following his retirement. This can be feasible if action to complete the service book and service records is initiated about a year before the retirement of the individual and complete papers are put up to the pension sanctioning authority before the person actually retires.</p> |
| 17. | 3.6&3.7 | <p>The Committee note that the budget estimates as originally formulated under various Heads of Expenditure had to be substantially revised subsequently during each of the last five years. They desire that at the initial stages of formulation of budget estimates, an in-depth study of the resources available and the capacity of the</p> |

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Border Roads Organisation to utilise these resources in consonance with the work-load should be made so that the budget estimates are formulated on a realistic basis, thus obviating the need to substantially revise them.

3.7 The Committee also note that there have been huge shortfalls in the expenditure under almost all Heads. As a result of the non-utilisation of the funds allocated for various items of work, the progress in those items of work must have suffered a set back. At the same time based on the expenditure envisaged in Revised Estimates, it would not have been possible for the Government to sanction expenditure on some other items necessitating their postponement. The Committee expect the Ministry to do a better budgetting and once the funds asked for are sanctioned to ensure that the funds are utilised fully so that the progress of work is not hampered.

18. 3.12 The Committee note that the Govt. constituted a high Powered Committee to examine the factors responsible for high cost of construction and maintenance of roads in pursuance of the recommendation of this Committee made in their 122nd Report (4th Lok Sabha). The Committee further note that the High Powered Committee made a series of recommendations for effectively controlling the cost of construction and maintenance of roads. They, however, are unhappy to find that only 11 recommendations of the High Powered Committee have been implemented so far and another 11 recommendations are stated to be still under examination. The Committee would like the Government to take final decisions on the pending recommendations without any further loss of time.

19. 3.13 The Committee note that the monthly evaluation of the work in progress is done by the Task

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Force Commander and quarterly evaluation reports are sent to the Chief Engineers and Directorate General of Border Roads. The Committee need hardly stress that the returns on receipt should be immediately and critically analysed so as to ensure that the factors responsible for hampering the work and thereby resulting in the cost escalation, are dealt with promptly and effectively.

20. 4.10 The Committee are happy to note that by and large the Border Roads Organisation has been able to complete the construction of certain important roads within the stipulated period. The Committee feel that to quicken the pace of development, the construction/maintenance of roads should be progressively mechanised.
21. 4.11 The Committee would like the Government to consider whether in the exigencies of work, an approach road, immediately linking the main road to be constructed by the Border Roads Organisation could also be taken over for maintenance by the Border Roads Organisation temporarily till the construction of the main road is completed so that the main work is not hampered due to the poor maintenance of the approach road.
22. 4.12 To avoid damage to roads by excess load carrying trucks the Committee would like the Ministry of Transport (Department of Surface Transport) to take up with the Ministry of Heavy Industry the question of manufacture of trucks and other heavy load bearing transport with a suitable number of rear axles. The feasibility of installing weigh bridges at suitable locations on the National Highways so detect and prevent plying of trucks carrying loads beyond a limit should also be examined in consultation with the State Governments.
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23	4.24	<p>The Committee are unhappy to learn that the work on the National Highways Nos. 52, 53 and 54 could only be started after February, 1982 even though these roads had been declared as National Highways as early as September, 1980. This shows that the Ministries concerned and the agencies involved in the execution of the work have handled this matter in a leisurely fashion. Government should fix the target dates for the upgradation of these roads to National Highways standard immediately and strictly adhere to those targets.</p>
24.	4.25	<p>The Committee consider that the Leh-Manali Road is not only of considerable strategic importance but has great socio-economic importance also for the inhabitants of those areas. The Committee therefore strongly recommended that high priority should be accorded to the project for improvement of this road and for building of Tunnels <i>en route</i> at the Rohtang and other passes. The Committee hope that shortage of funds would not come in the way of early completion of this project.</p>
25.	4.26	<p>The Committee feel that Bhadarwah-Chamba road has also great potential for the economic development of the backward areas not only of Jammu & Kashmir but of Himachal Pradesh as well. The proposal made by Jammu & Kashmir Government for declaring it as a National Highway therefore deserves favourable consideration by Government. In case it is not found feasible to agree to this proposal, Government may consider extending Central financial assistance for improvement of this road.</p>
26.	4.30	<p>Border Roads Organisation has the existing planned potential of about 540 kms. of formulation cutting/improvement/upgradation and 1265 kms. of surfacing/resurfacing. Accordingly the</p>

Organisation proposes to complete the future programme of work indicated to them by the user agency in the next 8 years. The Committee would like the Government to consider raising the capacity of the Border Roads Organisation to handle heavier work-load and complete the projects assigned to them earlier than envisaged as with the passage of time the cost of construction is likely to escalate.

27. 4.34 The Committee are distressed to note that the construction of long span bridges of about 30 metres or more is lagging behind mainly due to non-response from private contractors, reluctance of such contractors to undertake works in remote and forward areas, and exorbitant quotation of costs. The Committee, therefore, strongly recommend that not only the present two sub-soil investigation, design and planning units be converted into bridging units as proposed, but more such units should be created so that maximum work could be handled departmentally and the dependence on the private contractors is minimised.
28. 4.43 The Committee note that as in 1984-85, the Border Roads Organisation had a total entry of stores to the tune of Rs. 11200.79 lakhs at book value and of Rs. 7673.10 lakhs at the depreciated value. They also note that the value of unserviceable equipment numbered 1006 as on 1-4-1985 with book value of Rs. 875 lakhs and the depreciated value of Rs. 43.17 lakhs. The Committee are unable to appreciate why so many unserviceable items of equipment are lying with the Border Roads Organisation. Keeping unserviceable equipment for long periods results in over capitalisation and blocking of valuable space besides reducing of the equipment. The Committee therefore desire that survey should be made of all such items and these be disposed off without

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| | | delay. The Committee expect to be informed of the progress made in this regard in six months time. |
| 29. | 4.44&4.45 | <p>The Committee would like utmost attention being given to maintenance of the machinery, tools, plants and equipment available with the Border Roads Organisation. Through proper and effective maintenance only, the life of equipment as well as its operational efficiency can be maintained at the optimum level.</p> <p>Adequate storage facilities and security arrangements are necessary for the proper upkeep and preservation of stores. The Committee trust that this aspect pointed out by the Vigilance Organisation is being attended to by the Border Roads Organisation.</p> |
| 30. | 4.50 | <p>The Committee are distressed to find that as many as 91 cases of the total depreciated value of Rs. 46 lakhs are still awaiting sanction for being written off. Among them are cases older than even 1979-80. The Committee would like a crash programme to be launched for investigation and finalising action on these cases within the next six months. The Committee would like to be informed of the progress made in this direction.</p> |