

E.C. No. 114D

FIFTY-NINTH REPORT
ESTIMATES COMMITTEE
(1983-84)

(SEVENTH LOK SABHA)

MINISTRY OF SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT-
NATIONAL HIGHWAYS



(Presented to Lok Sabha on 22 December, 1983)

LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI

December, 1983/Agratayamo, 1905 (Saka)

Price : Rs. 2.80

Corrigenda to 50th Report of Estimates
 Committee on the Ministry of Shipping
 and Transport - National Highways (1983-84).

Page	Para	Line(s)	For	Re ad.
Cover Page	-	On Top	1041	1040
(i)	-	7th	Works	Projects
(iii)	-	Sl.No.3	-	<u>Add</u> 'Era' before 'Anbarasu'
(iii)	-	Sl.No.7	Chauduri	'Chaudhuri'
3	1.9	3	-	<u>Add</u> ', after ' 'Calcutta'
4	1.10	2	Secretaries	'Secretaries'
5	1.14	3	National	'National'
25	3.15	After last line	-	<u>delete</u> '(Sl.No.10)'
25	3.16	After last line	-	<u>delete</u> '(Sl.No.11)'
30	4.11	27th from above	4.11	4.12
36	5.1	1st line	Rs.1 lakhs 21	Rs.21 lakhs
38	6.1	4th from below	(PUC)	'PU'
60	-	Sl.No.22	6.45	6.42

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(1983-84)

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1. Shri T. R. Krishnamachari—*Joint Secretary.*
2. Shri Bipin Behari —*Chief Financial Committee Officer.*
3. Shri D. M. Chanan —*Senior Financial Committee Officer.*

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INTRODUCTION

1. The Chairman of Estimates Committee having been authorised by the Committee to submit the Report on their behalf, present this Fiftyninth Report on the Ministry of Shipping & Transport—National Highways.

2. The Committee took evidence of the representatives of the Ministry of Shipping & Transport on 20, 21 and 22 July, 1983. The Committee wish to express their thanks to the Officers of the Ministries/Department for placing before them the material and information which they desired in connection with the examination of the subject and giving evidence before the Committee.

3. The Committee also wish to express their thanks to the representative of the Central Road Research Institute, New Delhi for giving evidence and making valuable suggestions to the Committee.

4. The Committee also wish to express their thanks to all other institutions, bodies and individuals, who furnished memoranda on the subject to the Committee.

5. The report was considered and adopted by the Committee on 19 December, 1983.

6. For facility of reference the recommendations/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 ;

BANSI LAL,

December 19, 1983
Agrahayana 28, 1905 (S)

Chairman,
Estimates Committee.

CHAPTER I

ORGANISATIONAL SET UP

Responsibility of Central Government

1.1 Under the Constitution, the Central Government is responsible for planning, development and maintenance of National Highways. It is also concerned with the growth of research in the field of highway engineering. The Roads Wing of the Ministry of Shipping & Transport is the Central Agency for planning, development and maintenance of National Highways.

Functions of Roads Wing in the Ministry of Shipping & Transport

1.2 The Committee are informed that the Roads Wing of the Ministry of Shipping & Transport is concerned with the following matters :

- (a) Advising Government on all general policy matters relating to road development.
- (b) Development and maintenance of roads declared as National Highways in the country.
- (c) Development and maintenance of roads other than National Highways in Union Territories and Centrally administered areas ;
- (d) Provision of Central aid for selected State Roads including bridges of inter-state or economic importance ;
- (e) Development and maintenance of roads considered necessary on strategic grounds.
- (f) All ad-hoc projects which the Govt. of India might want to be undertaken from time to time such as roads/bridges projects which might be financed with external aid like World Bank assistance, although they are also supposed to be part of normal plan ;
- (g) Administration of Central Road Fund ;
- (h) Evolution of road, bridge standards, promotion of research and coordination of road development ; and
- (i) All policy and other matters, relating to the Indian Road Construction

Corporation set up by this Ministry as a Public Sector Undertaking for road/bridge construction works abroad ;

- (j) All matters requiring Govt. approval relating to the Highway Training Institute.

1.3. Besides handling the work of sanctioning and implementation of different Central Sector Road Programme and Project estimates for the development and maintenance and upkeep of National Highways, the Roads wing is also responsible for coordination and control, standards and specifications, settling priorities and general administration in respect of National Highways. In addition, the Organisation is to coordinate the road policies of the Centre and the States. The Organisation functions as a Central Design Office and acts as a repository of technical information on roads and bridges. The Roads Wing also advises and assists the Planning Commission and other Ministries regarding road matters and State roads.

Organisational Structure

1.4. The Roads Wing is headed by the Director General (Road Development), who is also ex-officio Additional Secretary to the Govt. of India. He is assisted by the following officers :—

Additional Directors General—	2
Chief Engineers	—15
Superintending Engineers	—44

Each Superintending Engineer has a complement of Executive Engineers, Asstt. Executive Engineers etc.

1.5. During evidence, the representative of the Ministry informed the Committee that the staff strength of the Roads Wing as on 1.4.1983 was as follows :—

Technical

Gazetted	251
Non-Gazetted	134

Non-Technical

Gazetted	39
Non-Gazetted	380
Total	<u>804</u>

Project Units

1.6. Out of 15 Chief Engineers, 8 (four each on the Roads and Bridges side) deal with projects. The project Chief Engineer is responsible for sanction of all works costing upto Rs. 50 lakhs. This includes association in the survey and investigation, project preparation and scrutinising, inviting tenders and fixing agency and monitoring during execution both in respect of quality and time schedule. He is also to look after the maintenance of roads/bridges.

Specialist Units

1.7. Besides the Project Units, several specialist Units function in the Headquarters, each headed by a Chief Engineer. These are :—

Planning,
Roads Standards & Research Coordination,
Traffic & Transportation,
Bridges Standards & Research Coordination,
Monitoring
Mechanical

Regional Offices

1.8. Besides the Headquarters' staff, the Roads Wing has nine Regional Offices which are located as follows :—

Uttar Pradesh (Lucknow)
Bihar (Patna)
Karnataka (Bangalore)
Rajasthan (Jaipur)
West Bengal (Calcutta)
Maharashtra (Bombay)
Tamil Nadu (Madras)
& Assam (Gauhati).

1.9. These Regional Offices are headed by Superintending Engineers excepting one at Gauhati which is headed by Chief Engineer. In addition, four Superintending Engineers (Mechanical) are also posted at Calcutta, Lucknow, Bangalore and Jaipur to look into all matters relating to Central road building equipment, assist the State PWDs and provide feed-back to the Headquarters. Besides the Regional Offices there are 13 offices in various regions headed by Engineer Liaison Officers of the rank of Executive Engineer who function under the overall supervision of the Regional Officers. These offices associate with States for investigation, for project preparation, and for processing of all estimates within the delegated powers of States viz. Rs. 10 lakhs. Observations pertaining to sites and rates in respect of estimates beyond their delegated powers would be forwarded to the Headquarters for final action

there. They also associate with State authorities for tender settlements, for overseeing quality of works executed monitoring and for maintenance of National Highways.

Secretariat Staff

1.10 On the Secretariat side, Director General (Roads Wing) is assisted by one Director, one Deputy Secretary, four Under secretaries and fourteen Sectt. sections.

Expenditure on Establishment

1.11 Asked to indicate the expenditure incurred on (i) Engineering and technical ; (ii) Non-technical establishments during 1982-83 separately for capital and Revenue works, the Ministry have stated that the expenditure incurred on establishment is treated as Revenue expenditure and the details of such expenditure incurred during 1982-83 are as under :—

	<i>Rs. in lakhs</i>
(a) Engineering & Technical	97.72
(b) Non-Technical	48.57
Total	<u>146.29</u>

Cadre Review

1.12 In a written reply the Ministry of Shipping & Transport informed the Committee that the Roads Wing was subjected to a work Measurement Study by the Staff Inspection Unit of the Ministry of Finance in 1980. The implementation of S. I. U's recommendations which were accepted in full had resulted in a net annual saving of Rs. 5,54,400/- per annum.

1.13 It is stated that the work Study by the Staff Inspection Unit was restricted to Headquarters staff at Delhi and did not include the Regional Offices located at Various places in the country. The Study also did not take into accounts the requirements of technical officers for the additional work in respect of North-Eastern Region Development of Roads in the Tribal areas and Traffic Engineering Cell. S. I. U. assessed the strength on actual requirement basis and did not include leave reserve/Training reserve and Deputation reserve. Consequently, a Cadre Review proposal was also processed simultaneously and was finalised at a meeting of the Cadre Review Committee under the Chairmanship of Cabinet Secretary held on 25.5.81. The Cadre Review Committee recommended creation of 49 additional Group 'A' Technical posts. As S.I.U. had reduced 19 Group 'A' Technical posts at Headquarters, the net additional Group 'A' Technical posts in the various grades was 30. The recommenda-

tions of the Cadre Review Committee were also accepted. The net over-all expenditure was Rs. 6,53,316/- per annum, after adjusting the savings in abolition of posts recommended by the S. I. U. The additional posts recommended by the S. I. U. and the Cadre Review Committee were approved by the Cabinet and have accordingly been created. Thus the recommendations of both Staff Inspection Unit and the the Cadre Review Committee relating to abolition and creation of posts have been implemented in full.

Work Norms

1.14 When asked to state the norms laid down for employment of personnel, the Secretary Ministry of Shipping & Transport informed the Committee that, "in the Ministry there are no national norms as to how many people we should have to do the whole job." He added :—

"This is not really an executive body as such. The works are turned over to the State Governments on an agency basis. They are mostly planners, monitors and repository of the technical knowledge so far as the construction and maintenance of national highways is concerned. So, there are no norms so far as the Central Road Wing is concerned where this body of engineers has been formed to look after the national highways and their maintenance from a distance. In the year 1981 we went up for the Cadre Review. The Cadre will again be reviewed after three years. There again we will project our total workload and put up proposals if there is any need for creation of more posts."

Delegation of Powers

1.15 In the Preliminary Material furnished to the Committee, the Ministry stated that "the project Chief Engineer is responsible for sanction of all works costing upto Rs. 50 lakhs.....Projects costing more than Rs. 50 lakhs are also examined by Chief Engineer and put up to Additional Director General & Director General (RD) for approval. Additional Director Generals have powers to technically sanction estimates costing upto Rs. 150 lakhs. Director General (RD) has full power for according similar approval for all estimates costing above Rs. 150 lakhs."

1.16 The Secretary Ministry of Shipping & Transport further informed the Committee during official evidence that these limits were fixed in 1968. When it was pointed out by the Committee that whether were these limits merit a review, the Secretary replied "We do agree that there is a case for reviewing these limits because of the escalation of the cost." He further added that "we have no satisfactory answer on the point as to why we did not think earlier of increasing these powers during the intervening period of 15 years."

Delegation of Powers to State Governments

1.17 According to the Ministry, "State/U. Ts. can themselves technically approved and financially sanction projects costing upto and including Rs. 10 lakhs in terms of their delegated powers after such projects have been accorded administrative approval by the Ministry on the basis of rough cost estimates. Estimates costing more than Rs. 10 lakhs are forwarded to the Ministry's finance Division for their clearance. Works costing more than Rs. 200 lakhs require the approval of expenditure Finance Committee after the proposal has been cleared by all the appraising agencies."

1.18 When asked to comment on the need for review of such powers, the Secretary of Ministry informed the Committee during evidence that "the limit of Rs. 10 lakhs for sanctions of works by the State themselves was given in the Ministry's notification dated 15.10.76 and we do agree that in view of the cost escalation this limit requires a review."

Highway Training Institute

1.19 In regard to the setting up of a Highway Engineering Institute at Chandigarh under the Ministry of Shipping & Transport, a non-official organisation in its memorandum to the Committee stated as follows :

"The outlay on the Chandigarh Training Centre is expected to be of the order of Rs. 35 lakhs. The Centre is not expected to have any supporting Research Wing and the lectures would be mostly by non-research engineers.....the existing infrastructure and facilities already available at the Central Road Research Institute, could be augmented to an extent so as to cover the additional training proposed to be provided by the Centre, with only a fraction of the amount envisaged for the Centre.

It is estimated that with only about 20% of the amount earmarked for that Centre, the training facilities at CRRI could be stepped up to accommodate additional number of trainees which the proposed Centre is likely to train."

1.20 Asked to comment on the aforesaid position, the Secretary, Ministry of Shipping & Transport stated before the Committee during evidence that "our view is that the broad objective of starting this Highway Training Institute will not be met by any make shift arrangement of tagging it to the Institute whose performance is, if I may say so, largely different from the that of the Training Institute. The Central Road Research Institute, as we all know, is principally engaged in research aspect of road development whereas the idea behind the commencement of this Training Institute was to train the people who are already on the job, into the higher aspects of road making, road

maintenance and contract matters. So, it would be something like a training to be imparted to the people who are already on the job connected with the development, construction and maintenance of highways. So, they are to be given in-service training, they are to be trained in modern techniques by way of talks etc. This is going to be a regular Institute which will impart training to these people. So, our view is that essentially, the Research Institute will not be able to do justice."

1.21 Asked what was the existing system of imparting training to Chief Engineers, SEs. etc. about the latest technology in the field, the D.G. (Roads Wing) informed the Committee that at present there were no such organisational facilities in the Ministry. Answering the question raised during evidence as to why the functions of CRRI could not be expended to include Research as well as Training in Highway Engineering, the D'G. (Road Wing) stated that the basic function of CRRI was of Research and not to impart training while the idea behind the institute at Chandigarh was to impart training facilities exclusively.

1.22 The actual execution of projects as well as maintenance work in respect of national highways is got done by Road Wing of the Ministry of Shipping & Transport through the agency of the State Governments/Union Territories Administrations for which agency charges of 10% of the cost are paid to them. The Roads Wing has a strength of 804 men (technical and non-technical) entailing an annual expenditure of the order of about Rs. 1.5 crores. The Road Wing is responsible *inter alia* for the development and maintenance of roads declared as National Highways in the country. This is mainly in the nature of coordination and control, standards and specifications, setting priorities and general administration. The Committee have dealt with the exercise of these functions later in this Report and indicated how it could be improved. The Committee do not get any precise idea as to the part of the strength of and expenditure on the Roads Wing attributable to the exercise of this responsibility. Nevertheless, they have received a strong impression that together the agency charges and the expenditure on the Roads Wing account for a high rate of overhead expenses out of proportion to the cost of National Highway works. If this had resulted in ensuring better construction and maintenance in quantitative and qualitative terms one would not mind it too much. But this is not the case today. The Committee, therefore, desire that an independent review of the strength of the Roads Wing and the rate of agency commission should be made and economy effected consistent with the efficient administration of National Highways.

1.23 In this connection the Committee find that a work study made in 1980 of the organisation by the Staff Inspection Unit of the Ministry of Finance was confined to headquarters of the Road Wing. The Ministry had undertaken a Cardé Review in 1981 which resulted in net increase of 30 Group 'A' technical

posts instead of reduction of posts as suggested by the SIU. The Committee feel that there is an urgent need for a closer and comprehensive scrutiny of the staff strength, particularly at senior levels, of the Roads Wing by an outside body which should independently look into the need for the number of posts at various levels keeping in view the limited role and functions of the Road Wing of the Ministry of Shipping and Transport.

1.24 Spelling out the role of the engineering officers of the Roads Wing, the Director General (RW) tried to justify the absence of work norms for officers at different levels in his organisation. The Committee are unable to agree with him and recommend that some norms should be evolved to regulate the strength of officer at different levels from time to time depending upon the workload.

1.25 The Committee note that the delegation of powers to Chief Engineers for sanction of works costing upto Rs. 50 lakhs and to the Additional Directors General for sanction of works costing upto Rs. 150 lakhs was made sometime in 1968. In view of the price escalation during the last 15 years, there is a clear case for revising these limits upwards. The Secretary, Ministry of Shipping and Transport while agreeing with this view had no satisfactory explanation why it was not considered by the Ministry all these 15 years. The Committee recommend that the delegation of powers to the Chief Engineers and Additional Directors General should be reviewed and revised and that in future there should be periodic review atleast at 5-yearly intervals. The Committee further recommend that the powers of technical approval and financial sanction of projects costing upto Rs. 10 lakhs delegated to the State Governments/Union Territory Administrations made in 1976 should also be reviewed and made realistic.

CHAPTER II

PLAN TARGETS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Fifth Plan Financial Targets and Achievements

2.1 According to the Ministry of Shipping and Transport the allotment of funds made and expenditure incurred from the 1974-75 (commencement of 5th Five Year Plan) to 1979-80 are as follows :—

Year	National Highway (Original)		Maintenance & Repairs	
	Allotment	Expenditure	Allotment	Expenditure
			(Rs. Crores)	
1974-75	55.53	51.55	17.50	17.18
1975-76	55.47	56.82	18.57	21.40
1976-77	67.98	65.98	21.23	23.64
1977-78	76.02	72.94	25.30	25.66
1978-79	82.40	82.07	28.85	28.85
1979-80	84.00	84.84	30.20	33.61
Total	421.40	414.20	141.65	150.34

Fifth Plan Physical Targets and Achievements

2.2 The Ministry furnished the following figures of the physical targets and achievements in regard to National Highways system during 5th Plan (1974-78), 1978-79 and 1979-80 :—

Sl. No.	Principal Schemes	Vth Plan Period		During 1978-79		During 1979-80	
		Tar-gets	Achieve-ments	Tar-gets	Achieve-ments	Tar-gets	Achieve-ments
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1.	Constructing Missing Links Bypasses and Diversions (Kms.)	230	317	100	73	148	132

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
2.	Improvement to Low Grade Sections (Kms.)	400	234	100	101	81	22
3.	Widening & Strengthening single lane sections to Two Lanes. (Kms.)	3400	3604	800	656	900	560
4.	Widening to two lanes without strengthening (Kms.)	1800	1794	800	537	850	390
5.	Strengthening weak two lane sections. (Kms.)	1600	1343	450	129	470	212
6.	Construction of Missing Major Bridges, Sub-mersible Major Bridges/weak and Narrow. (Nos.)	118	87	36	13	20	6
7.	Construction of Minor Bridges (Nos.)	1150	647	300	124	181	99

2.3 Asked to indicate the reasons for the non-achievement of the targets during these years, the representative of the Ministry of Shipping and Transport during evidence gave the following reasons for the shortfall :—

- (i) in the case of bridges under construction inadequate survey and investigation.
- (ii) Shortage of cement and its quality.
- (iii) Escalation in prices of material rendering the achievement of targets within the allotment impracticable.
- (iv) Incomplete works not being reflected in the achievement report.
- (v) Fixation of targets being on the higher side.

Allocation of Funds for 6th Plan Period

2.4 The ministry stated in the Preliminary Material that for removing the deficiencies in the National Highways system an investment of Rs. 2700 crores at 1981 price level would be required and that the Ministry drew up the 6th Five Year Plan proposing an outlay of Rs. 935 crores for National Highways. The Planing Commission, however, pruned down the plan to provide only Rs. 660 crores for National Highways. It was further stated that in the first four years of the 6th Plan, the actual allocations amount to only about Rs. 438 crores as against the prorata requirements of Rs. 528 crores, thus resulting in a heavy shortfall. Thus, according to the Ministry making up for the increase in costs of projects, only about 50% of the projects included in the approved plan document would be actually taken up for execution.

2.5 When asked to state the efforts made by the Ministry of Shipping & Transport to get more funds for its proposals, the representative of the Ministry informed the Committee during evidence that "last year we moved to Planning Commission with our Annual Plan proposals aggregating to Rs. 220 crores. But when the meeting was taken by the Planning Secretary and *inter se* priority came to be fixed, it was slashed."

2.6 In this connection the Secretary, Ministry of Shipping & Transport also informed the Committee that "we have been talking to the Planning Commission that for upgrading the present roads to the State of National Highways, we would require an outlay of a particular order which is as high as about Rs. 3000 crores if we go by the present day price escalation..... We had quarterly review the other day with Planning Commission and we told them and their officers acknowledged the fact that the allocations are poor."

2.7 In reply to the question from the Committee as to why did the Ministry not declare the National Highways as a core sector, the Director General (Road Wing) stated that "we have got a reply from the Planning Commission that there is nothing like a core in the Planning sector." Asked whether the National Highways could be brought in the category of "infrastructure" the witness replied :

"Yes it comes under infrastructure. Not only infrastructure, but it should be a core sector."

Sixth Plan Financial Targets and Achievements

2.8 The Ministry furnished following written information indicating the allotment of funds and expenditure made during the 6th Plan period so far in respect of both original and maintenance works pertaining to National Highways :—

Year	National Highways (Original)		Maintenance & Repairs	
	Allotment	Expenditure	Allotment	Expenditure
	(Rs. Crores)			
1980-81	92.31	88.73	37.75	40.84
1981-82	109.45	114.35	47.00	47.73
1982-83 (Provisional)	128.32	128.73	51.00	51.25

Sixth Plan Physical Targets and Achievements

2.9 According to the Ministry details of the physical targets and achievements in the National Highways system during the first three years of the Sixth Plan Period are as follows :—

VI Plan Works

Sl. No.	Principal Schemes	1980-81		1981-82		1982-83	
		Tar-gets	Achieve-ments	Tar-gets	Achieve-ments	Tar-gets	Achieve-ments
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1.	Constructing Missing Links By-passes and Diversions (Kms.)	148	106	95	144	29	20
2.	Improvement to Low Grade Sections (Kms.)	27	36	1	1	—	—
3.	Widening & Strengthening single lane sections to Two Lanes (Kms.)	860	677	400	393	800	650
4.	Widening to Two Lanes without strengthening (Kms.)	570	406	260	404	450	350
5.	Strengthening weak two lane sections (Kms.)	375	414	375	343	375	375
6.	Construction of Missing Major Bridges sub-mersible major Bridges/Weak and Narrow Bridges (Nos.)	27	27	22	14	26	20
7.	Construction of Minor Bridges (Nos.)	200	148	130	98	110	80

2.10. Asked to state the reasons for non-achievements of targets in respects of Sl. No. 3, 4 and 7, the Secretary Ministry of Shipping & Transport admitted during evidence that "there has been shortfall. I confess that there has been failure." It was further pointed out by the Committee that since funds were available, could not the position be improved, the Director-General (Road Wing) assured the Committee that "your suggestion is well taken. I hope in this year and in the sub sequent year the position will be much better."

2.11 The Committee find that during the Fifth Plan period and the subsequent two years (1974-75 to 1979-80), there has been sizeable shortfalls in the achievement of physical targets in respect of various schemes relating

to National Highways. The Committee take a serious view of this lapse. Among the reasons cited are inadequate survey and investigation before undertaking certain bridge works, fixation of targets being on the higher side and the system of reporting achievements wherein efforts put-in in respect of works not fully completed do not get reflected. These are administrative lapses which could have been remedied in time to project a better picture of performance during the period.

2.12 The Committee have also been informed that escalation in prices of materials rendered achievement of targets within the allotment of funds impracticable. The Committee appreciate the position but are unable to understand why at the time of Annual Plan discussions adequate funds to realise the plan targets having regard to price inflation could not be ensured or if there was financial constraint why targets were not revised. The Committee expect that the Ministry would in future take care in this regard and present a true picture in order to enable proper evaluation of the efficiency of the organisation.

2.13 During the first three years of the Sixth Plan period also the Committee find that though the financial allotments have been utilised in full, there have been sizeable shortfalls in the annual targets relating to almost all principal schemes of National Highways. The representative of the Ministry of Shipping and Transport admitted during evidence that "there has been failure" and assured the Committee that "this year and in the subsequent year the position will be much better". The Committee emphasise the need for stricter monitoring of the control over the execution of works by the Roads Wing of the Ministry of Shipping and Transport to see that the annual targets fixed with reference to financial allotments are achieved and the projects are not delayed leading to escalation in costs and denial of timely facilities. They hope that in the remaining years of the Sixth Five Year Plan period, the Ministry will be able to achieve the targets laid down for the Plan period.

2.14 The Committee understand that an investment of Rs. 2,700 crores as 1981 price would be needed for removing the deficiencies in the National Highways system. Though the Ministry proposed an outlay of Rs 935 crores for the Sixth Plan, the planning Commission could allocate only Rs. 660 crores. However, the actual allotment during the first four years of the Plan was only Rs. 438 crores as against the pro rate allocation of Rs. 528 crores. According to the Ministry, only 50 per cent of the projects included in the Plan would be actually taken up for execution within the allotments in view of the increasing costs. The position thus is obviously unsatisfactory. The Committee are of the view that once the need is identified taking an overall view of the economy and projects are included in the Plan, money has to be found to carry them out. Else there could be imbalances in the economy and the Plan will cease to have real purpose. The Committee have

later in this Report pointed out how the national highways have not developed fast since independence, despite the need. What is worse is that the present system, inadequate as it may seem suffers from many deficiencies. There must after all be a perspective plan for National Highway development as an essential infrastructure in a country of this size and nature and it must be put through. A critical examination of the position by the Ministry and the Planning Commission in the light of this is necessary for appropriate corrective steps in future. The Committee would await the result of the examination.

CHAPTER III

DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL HIGHWAYS

National Highways

3.1. So far the Ministry of Shipping and Transport has declared 63 routes as National Highways. The National Highway No., the route, the States/U.Ts through which it passes and the agencies which are responsible for their maintenance is given in the following statement :—

Sl. No.	N. H. No.	Name of the Route	States/U.Ts through which it passes	Agency responsible for their maintenance	Remarks
1	2	3	4	5	6
1.	1	Delhi-Ambala-Jullundur-Amritsar-Indo/Pak Border	Delhi Haryana Punjab	The respective State/U.T. PWDs.	
2.	IA	Jullundur-Pathankot-Madhampur-Jammu-Banihal-Srinagar-Baramula/Uri	Punjab H.P. Jammu & Kashmir	The respective State PWDs except the route between Pathankot & Uri is with BRDB except Jammu Bypass which is with the State PWD.	
3.	IB	Batote-Doda-Kishtwar	Jammu & Kashmir	With the State PWD.	

1	2	3	4	5	6
4.	2	Delhi-Mathua-Agra-Kanpur Allahabad-Varanasi- Mohania-Barhi-Palsit- Baidyati-Bara-Calcutta	Delhi Haryana U.P. Bihar W. Bengal	The respective State/U.T. P.W.Ds.	
5.	3	Agra-Gwalior-Shivpuri-Indore Dhule-Nasik-Thane-Bombay	U.P. Rajasthan M.P. Mahara- shtra	The respective State P.W.Ds.	
6.	4	Jn. with N.H. 3 near Thane- Pune-Belgaum-Hubli-Banga- lore-Ranipet-Madras	Mahara- shtra, Karnataka A.P. Tamil Nadu	The respective State P.W.Ds.	
7.	4A	Belgaum-Anmod-Ponda Panaji	Karnataka Goa	The respective State PWDs.	
8.	5	Jn. with N.H. 6 near Baharagora-Cuttack Bhu- baneswar Vishakapatnam- Vijayawada-Madras	Orissa A.P. Tamil Nadu	—do—	
9.	5A	Jn. with N.H. 5 near Hari- daspur-Paradip Port.	Orissa	The State P.W.D.	
10.	6	Dhule-Nagpur-Raipur- Sambalpur-Baharagora- Calcutta	Mahara- shtra M.P. Orissa Bihar W. Bengal	The respective State/P.W.Ds.	
11.	7	Varanasi-Mangawan-Rewa- Jabalpur-Lakhnadon-Nag- pur-Hyderabad-Kurnool- Bangalore-Krishnagiri- Salem-Dindigul-Madurai. Cape Comorin (Kanya Kumari)	U.P., M.P. Maharashtra A.P. Karnataka Tamil Nadu	—do—	

1	2	3	4	5	6
12.	7A	Palayankottai-Tuticorin Port	Tamil Nadu	The State	P.W.D.
13.	8	Delhi-Jaipur-Ajmer-Udaipur-Ahmedabad-Vadodara-Bombay	Delhi Haryana Rajasthan Gujarat Maharashtra	The respective	State/U.T. P.W.D.s
14.	8A	Ahmedabad-Bimbdi-Morvi-Kandla	Gujarat	The State	P.W.D.
15.	8A	Bamanbore-Rajkot-Porbandar	„	„	
16.	8C	Chiloda-Gandhinagar-Sarkhej	„	„	
17.	9	Pune-Sholapur-Hyderabad-Vijayawada	Maharashtra, Karnataka A.P.	The respective	State P.W.Ds.
18.	10	Delhi-Fazilka-Indo/Pak Border	Delhi Haryana Punjab	The respective	State/U.T. P.W.Ds.
19.	11	Agra Jaipur-Bikaner	U.P. Rajasthan	U.P. & Rajas-	than PWDs
20.	12	Jabalpur-Bhopal-Biaora-Rajgarh-Khilchipur-Aklara-Jhalawar-Kota-Bundi-Devli-Tonk-Jaipur	M.P. Rajasthan	The respective	State P.W.Ds.
21.	13	Sholapur-Chitra-durga	Maharashtra Karnataka	„	„
22.	15	Pathankot-Amritsar-Bhatinda, Ganga-nagar-Bikaner-Jaisalmer-Barmer-Samakhiali (near Kandla)	Punjab Rajasthan Gujarat	„	„
23.	17	Panvel-Mahad-Panaji-Karwar-Mangalore-Cannanore-Calicut	Maharashtra Goa Karnataka	„	„

1	2	3	4	5	6
		(Kozhikode)-Feroke- Kuttipuram-Pudu-Ponnani- Chowghat-Cranganur Jn. with N2H. 47 near Edapally	Kerala		
24.	17A	Jn. with N.H. 17 near Cortalim-Marmagao	Goa	The State/U.T. P.W.D.	
25.	21	Jn. with N.H. 22 near Chandigarh-Rupar-Bilaspur- Mandi-Kulu-Manali	Chandi- garh Punjab H.P.	The respective State/U.T. P.W.Ds.	
26.	22	Ambala-Kalka-Simla- Narkanda-Rampur-Chini Indo/Tibet Border near Shipkila	Haryana Punjab H.P.	The respective State P.W.D. Portion beyond Simla and upto Shipkila with BRDB and the rest is with the State PWD.	
27.	23	Chas-Ranchi-Rourkela- Talcher Jn. with N.H. 42	Bihar Orissa	The respective State/P.W.Ds.	
28.	24	Delhi-Bareilly-Lucknow	Delhi U.P.	The respective State/U.T. PWD	
29.	25	Lucknow-Kanpur-Jhansi- Shivouri	U.P. M.P.	The respective State PWDs.	
30.	26	Jhansi-Lakhnadon	U.P., M.P.	—do—	
31.	27	Allahabad-Mangawan	U.P., M.P.	—do—	
32.	28	Jn. with N.H. 31 near Barauni-Muzaffarpur-Pipra- Gorakhpur-Lucknow.	Bihar U.P.	—do—	
33.	28A	Jn. with N.H. 28 near Pipra-Sagauli-Raxaul- Indo-Nepal Border	Bihar	The State P.W.D.	
34.	29	Gorakhpur-Ghazipur- Varanasi	U.P.	—do—	
35.	30	Jn. with N.H 2 near Mohania-Patna-Bakhtiarpur	Bihar	—do	

1	2	3	4	5	6
36.	31	Jn. with N.H. 2 near Barhi-Bakhtiarpur-Mokamesh-Purnea-Dalkola-Siliguri-Sivok-Cooch Behar-North Salmara-Nalbari-Charali-Amingaon-Jn. with N.H. 37.	Bihar W. Bengal Assam	The respective State P.W.Ds.	
37.	31A	Sivok-Gangtok	W. Bengal Sikkim	With B.R.D.B.	
38.	31B	North Salmara-Jn. with N.H.37 near Goalpara	Assam	The State P.W.D.	
39.	31C	Near Galgalia-Baghdogra-Chalsa-Nagrakata-Goverkata-Dalgaon-Hasimara Rajabhatkhawa-K ochugaon-Sidli-Jn. with N.H. 31 near Bijni	W. Bengal Assam	The respective State P.W.Ds.	
40.	32	Jn. with N.H. 2 near Gobindpur-Dhanbad-Jamshedpur	Bihar W. Bengal	—do—	
41.	33	Jn. with N.H. 2 near Barhi-Ranchi-Jn. with N.H. 6 near Baharagora	Bihar	The State P.W.D.	
42.	34	Jn. with N.H. 31 near Dalkola-Berhampore-Barasat-Calcutta	W. Bengal	—do—	
43.	35	Barasat-Bangaon Indo/Bangladesh Border	W. Bengal	—do—	
44.	36	Nowgong-Dabaka-Dimapur (Manipur Road)	Assam Nagaland	The State PWD Portions lying in Nagaland State is with B.R.D.B.	
45.	37	Jn. with N.H.31B. near Goalpara-Gauhati-Jorahat-Kamargaon-Makum-Saikhoaghat.	Assam	The State P.W.D.	

1	2	3	4	5	6
46.	38	Makum-Ledo-Lakhapani	Assam	—do—	
47.	39	Numaligarh-Imphal-Palel-Indo-Burma Border	Assam Nagaland Manipur	The State PWD Portions lying in Nagaland & 24 Kms upto Maram in Mani- pur is with BRDB. The rest of the length in Manipur is with the State P.W.D.	
48.	40	Jorabat-Shillong-Indo-Bangladesh Border near Dawki	Meghalaya	The State PWD.	
49.	41	Jn. with N.H.C near Kola-ghat-Haldia Port	W. Bengal	—do—	
50.	42	Jn. with N.H. 6 near Sambalpur-Angul-Jn. with N.H.5 near Cuttack	Orissa	—do—	
51.	43	Raipur-Vizianagaram-Jn. with N.H. 5	M.P. Orissa A.P.	The respective State P.W.Ds.	
52.	44	Shillong-Passi-Badar-pur-Agartala	Meghalaya Tripura Assam	(i) Portion between Shillong & Jowai is with Megha- laya PWD (ii) Portion between Jowai & Agartala is with BRDB.	
53.	45	Madras-Trichirapalli-Dindigul	Tamil Nadu	The State P.W.D.	
54.	46	Arishnagiri-Ranipet	—do—	—do—	

1	2	3	4	5	6
55.	47	Salem-Coimbatore- Trichur-Ernakulam-Tri- vandrum-Cape Comorin (Kanniya Kumari)	Tamil Nadu Kerala	The respective State P.W.Ds.	
56.	48	Bangalore-Hassan Mangalore	Karnataka	The State P.W.D.	
57.	49	Madurai-Dhanush-Khodi	Tamil Nadu	The State PWD.	
58.	50	Nasik-Jn. with N.H. 4 near Pune	Maharashtra	—do—	
59.	51	Paikan-Tura-Dalu	Assam Meghalaya	The State PWDs	
60.	52	Baihata Charali-Tezpur- Bander Dewa-North Lakhimpur-Passighat- Tezu-Sitapani-Jn. with N.H. 37 near Saikhoaghat	Assam Arunachal Pradesh	With BRDB	
61.	52A	Bander Dewa-Itanagar	Assam Arunachal Pradesh	With respective State/U.T. PWDs.	
62.	53	Jn. with N.H. 44 near Badarpur-Jirighat- Imphal-Silchar	Assam Manipur	With BRDB	
63.	54	Silchar-Aizawal-Lunglei	Assam Mizoram	—do—	

Classification of National Highways

3.2 As stated earlier, under the constitution the Central Government is primarily responsible for the development and maintenance of National Highways in the country.

3.3 The Ministry have informed the Committee that [the criteria for the selection of roads for declaring them as National Highways are as follows :—

- (a) They should be main Highways running through the length and breadth of the country ;
- (b) They should connect Foreign Highways ;
- (c) They should connect State Capital ;
- (d) They should connect major Ports and large Industrial or tourist Complexes ;

- (e) They should meet strategic requirement ; and
- (f) They should help in opening up backward and hilly areas and should also provide for reduction in travel distance.

3.4 The Ministry have further stated that after the selection of the roads is made on the basis of the above criteria, their *inter se* priority on an All-India basis is prepared and taking into considerations the funds available for the purpose, roads are declared as National Highways. Once the road is declared as a National Highway, the Central Government immediately assumes full responsibility for its development and maintenance. The financial implication of declaring any road as a National Highway depends on the state of the road at the time of declaration and the improvements considered necessary to have it up-graded to atleast single lane National Highway standard. This varies from one route to another and improvements are carried out in a phased manner depending on the availability of financial resources for the purpose.

3.5 A non-official Institute in its memorandum furnished to the Committee stated that ".....the earlier 1943 classification of the Indian Highways was basically an administrative classification and not based on technical considerations. A technical classification of the road system could be framed on the traffic reassessment. Some of the State Roads may carry heavier loads because of which, their construction and maintenance costs would be so very high that the States may not be able to fund it adequately. These roads though they may be carrying Inter-State-goods, may not always qualify for the nomenclature of National Highways as per the existing norms."

3.6 The representative of CRRI also stated during evidence that the classification should be based on the traffic volume, the number of people and the number of vehicles which used that road. This, according to him was more or less the basis of classification of a road net work in other parts of the world.

3.7 Reacting to the aforesaid proposition, the representatives of the Ministry of Shipping & Transport stated during evidence that :—

"Roads other than National Highways in States are a State subject.

So personally I feel if within a State there is a patch of roads where there is a very heavy traffic, I don't think at any particular point, we could consider it to be declared as a National Highway. But it is for the State Government to widen and strengthen it according to the needs of the traffic. It certainly will get declared as National Highways provided at the national level it is needed.

Addition to the National Highways

3.8 The Ministry have, in Preliminary Material furnished to the Committee, stated that at the time of formulation of the National Highways System in 1947, the total length of National Highways in the country was 21,440 Kms. Today, the total length of the National Highways is only 31,358 Kms. which means that there has been a very meagre addition of only 9918 Kms. in the last 35 years or so. According to the Ministry of Shipping & Transport, 63 routes have been declared as National Highways so far. When asked to state the reasons for such slow progress in the addition of New National Highways the representatives of the Ministry ascribed the reasons to the lack of funds.

3.9 Asked whether any proposals were pending with the Ministry for declaring Highways as National Highways, the Ministry have informed the Committee in writing that "since the commencement of the 6th Five Year Plan 1980-85, the Ministry have so far received 107 proposals from the State Governments for declaration of various routes as National Highways. However owing to financial constraints the Government of India are not in a position to take over any roads as National Highways at present in any State. This position has been made clear to all the concerned States, and as such, no proposal for declaration of any road as National Highways can be said to be pending in the Ministry." Asked whether non-development of roads with high density of traffic upto National Highway standards was detrimental to the smooth movement of goods, the Secretary admitted during evidence that "there is no doubt that with the high density of traffic gradually rising, the non-development of roads upto National Highways standards is definitely detrimental to the smooth movement of goods and traffic."

3.10 Director General (RD) of the Ministry also informed the Committee during evidence that :—

"We had planned earlier for declaring certain roads as National Highways which will bring the total to 51,200 Kms. (at present, we have 31,358 Kms. of National Highways), but we have not been able to do so because we are not able to do any kind of justice to the National Highways that we have already. If we declare more, we will have more problems. We need to strength and widen the existing roads first. At the 1980 level, we had calculated that we would need Rs. 2700 crores. This figure would now be much more. Now, in the 6th Plan, we are getting only Rs. 660 crores."

3.11 It was suggested during evidence that, considering the fact that "our country has progressed very much industrially" and sometimes "heavy machinery is transported which is more than the capacity of the roads, bridges,

culverts etc.” the Ministry should have changed the criteria for declaring highways as National Highways so as to convince the planning Commission of the need for adequate funds for construction and maintenance of the National Highways. The Secretary replied that it was “absolutely correct” but added that “the whole point is how to dovetail these requirements in to the National economy.

Expenditure on New National Highways

3.12 The Ministry have stated in the Preliminary Material furnished to the Committee that :—

“In the 6th Five Year Plan (1980-85) an amount of only Rs. 50 crores is earmarked for new National Highways. Against this, 7 routes totalling a length of 2335 Kms. had been declared as National Highways (mostly in the North Eastern region). Actually the development of these newly created routes is not taking place at the required place because of the extremely low allocation being made available to Ministry by the Planning Commission every year.”

3.13 Asked to comment on the achievement against the provisions made in the 6th Plan concerning the newly declared National Highways, the D.G. (R.D.) stated during evidence that “because of the paucity of funds, we have not been able to achieve much in improving these newly declared National Highways. Against a total provision of Rs. ₹60 crores in the Plan, Rs. 50 crores is for the new National Highways. But the money which is coming to us is far less than what has been accepted in the 6th Plan. We expect that there may be a shortfall of nearly Rs.150 crores.” The witness added that these new National Highways were declared in the month of September, 1981. So, in 1980-81, there was no provision and neither was there any expenditure because that was the time when the planning process was going on. During 1981-82, an allocation of Rs. 1.63 crores was made against which the expenditure was Rs. 0.82 crores. Basically, the shortfall was because of the beginning of the projects. It was totally a new situation and therefore whatever money was available could not be spent. According to the witness, in 1982-83, there was a provision of Rs. 5.53 crores against which an expenditure of Rs. 5.49 crores was incurred. So far as the Physical targets were concerned, the witness stated that they had envisaged construction of nearly 71 Kms. against which the achievement was 51 kms. According to him, “we will be needing nearly about Rs. 257 crores for bringing these roads upto a National Highways standard.”

3.14 The total length of the National Highways in the country in 1947 was 21,440 kilometres. Today the total length is only 31,358 kilometres. This shows that during the last 36 years only 9918 kilometres of roads were declared as National Highways. The Committee have been informed that the Ministry had

planned for declaring certain roads as National Highways bringing the total length to 51,200 kms. but could not go ahead with it, as even the existing National Highways could not be developed and maintained within the financial resources available. The Committee wish to emphasise in this connection that our Plans to ought to be needbased and resources must be found to meet the need at the same time ensuring that optimum use of the resources are made by the executing authorities. The Committee have earlier in this Report called for an examination of this question in depth.

3.15 The Committee note that since the commencement of the Sixth Five Year Plan in 1980, the Ministry of Shipping and Transport received as many as 107 proposales from the State Governments for the declaration of various roads as National Highways but only 7 routes of a total length of 2335 kms., mostly in the North-Eastern region could be declared as National Highways. The Committee have been told that although Rs. 50 crores were earmarked in the Sixth Five Year Plan for the new National Highways, during the first three years of the Plan only Rs. 7.16 crores were allocated for the purpose against which the expenditure of Rs. 6.31 crores had been incurred. The representative of the Ministry stated before the Committee that about Rs. 257 crores will be needed for bringing these roads upto National Highways standard. In view of the special need of the region the Committee wish to emphasise that the new routes should be developed soon and the resources therefor should be found somehow. (Sl. No 10.)

3.16 According to the criteria now adopted, only roads of national importance are declared as National Highways. This may seem to be appropriate on the face of it. But a deeper look at the criteria would reveal that these would not necessarily ensure intergrated development of the road system in the country. The Committee agree with the representative of the Central Road Research Institute that the density of traffic ought to be the basis for classification of roads, which incidentally according to him is the basis adopted in other parts of the world. It should be noted that as admitted by the Secretary, Ministry of Shipping & Transport, nondevelopment of roads with high density of traffic, especially feeder roads, to the National Highway standards is detrimental to the smooth movement of traffic in the country. The Committee accordingly recommend that the criteria for declaring roads as National Highways must be changed or ways and means should be found to develop such roads upto the National Highways standards otherwise. The Committee would, in particular suggest that, on strategic consideration, roads connecting Delhi-Bikaner, Delhi-Rohtak Ludhiana, and Agra-Jaipur should be declared as National Highways. (Sl. No. 11)

CHAPTER IV

AGENCY SYSTEM

Agency System

4.1 As per the National Highways Act, 1956, the development and maintenance of National Highways are the responsibility of the Central Govt. But the works of construction and maintenance of these highways are carried out by the concerned States or Union Territories as agents of the Government of India. The details of existing system of construction and maintenance have been indicated to the Committee as under :

Construction of National Highways (Plan works) :

- (i) All development works on the National Highways are taken up for execution as per provision in the plan. Five Year Plans for National Highways are drawn up keeping in view the on-going works as also urgent new works according to broad policy guidelines and available resources. Detailed discussions are held with the States/U. Ts before the list of works to be included in the Plan is finalised. Based on its 5 years programme and budget provisions for each year, Annual Plans are prepared which lists out the works to be sanctioned in a particular year.
- (ii) Annual Plan provisions as approved by the Planning Commission and Ministry of Finance form the basis on which project estimates for development of National Highways are framed by the States or the Union Territories through which they pass. They, as Agents of the Central Govt., carry out field surveys and investigations, prepare project drawings and cost estimates based on their schedule of rates in force.
- (iii) On receipt of estimates from the States/U.Ts. the Ministry examine them from all technical angles and, if found technically in order, these are processed for financial sanction. States/U.Ts. can themselves technically approve and financially sanction projects costing upto and

including Rs. 10 lakhs in terms of their delegated powers after such projects have been accorded administrative approval by the Ministry on the basis of rough cost estimates. Estimates costing more than Rs. 10 lakhs are forwarded to the Ministry's Finance Division for their clearance. Works costing more than Rs. 200 lakhs require the approval of Expenditure Finance Committee (E.F.C.) after the proposal has been cleared by all the appraising agencies.

(iv) After the sanction is issued, work is executed by the P.W.D. of the State/U.T. on the basis of specification laid down for National Highway Works and conditions stipulated in the Technical Note issued with the letter of sanction.

(v) The Roads Wing monitors the progress of each job through quarterly progress reports as also through periodic reviews with Chief Engineer of the State/U.T. and his officers. In addition, the Regional Officers of the Ministry inspect works in progress, oversee the quality of work at the time of inspections, examine records of quality control tests, and point out deficiencies wherever necessary.

(vi) After the work is completed in all respects, a completion report is sent to the Ministry for Information and record.

(2) Maintenance (Non-Plan Works)

4.2 Before the beginning of every year, each State/U.T. Admn. Prepares abstract estimates in regard to the normal maintenance consisting of ordinary and surface renewals to be carried out on each National Highways based on their condition evaluation and also on the norms and guidelines laid down by a technical group set up for this purpose. These abstract particulars which are prescribed to be received in Ministry by end of January every year are examined in the Ministry of Transport and technically approved keeping in view the norms laid down by the Group as also the funds available for that particular year. The Chief Engineer on receipt of these funds carry out maintenance operations accordingly. The stretches for surface renewals are finalised by the Regional Officers of the Ministry on the basis of site evaluation and in consultation with the concerned State Govt. Officers.

4.3 In addition, detailed estimates for special repairs to specific section of National Highways requiring minor improvement of original nature not covered under development programme are submitted by State/U.T. Admn. as and when required. These estimates are examined in the Ministry and individual sanctions are accorded to proposals found acceptable and funds are allotted separately for these sanctioned works.

4.4 Further, whenever there are damages due to unforeseen and natural calamities such as floods, cloudbursts, cyclones, earthquake etc. State/U.T.

administration prepare and submit detailed estimates for restoration of the damaged roads to the predamage conditions which are examined in the Ministry in the light of comments and recommendations given by the Regional Officers of the Ministry. The repairs are carried out by the State/U.T. Administration on the basis of sanctions issued by the Ministry to individual works for which funds are allotted separately. In case of emergency due to damages resulting in blockage or disruption of traffic, provision is made in the rules under the N.H. Act 1956, allowing the executing agency to start the work of restoration of traffic in anticipation of the sanction to the estimate after intimating the Ministry and the concerned audit officer of the nature of work and its likely cost to be followed in due course by a detailed estimate for sanction.

4.5 A non-official organisation stated in their memorandum furnished to the Committee that in regard to agency system "Construction and maintenance in the hands of the State authorities gets delayed and thus the cost of maintenance goes up." Asked to comment on the functioning of the agency system, the Secretary stated during evidence that "as things stand today, we do not see an alternative to the agency of the State Government acting on behalf of the Central Govt." What is required is an effective improvement in the system. It will have a wider implication because the system will also include such things as quality control, avoiding delays in the implementation and properly and methodical maintenance of roads." The witness further added that "there was actually delay in the execution of works. There was time over-run as well as cost-over-run in some cases. Since the State Government is largely influenced by the local conditions, they do not take the overall picture of the situation."

4.6 Asked about the deficiencies in the functioning of the agency system, the representative of the Ministry informed the Committee that "during the last three or four years, the work which was being done by the State Government on behalf of the Central Governments whether it was road work or bridge work came for scrutiny before the Ministry of Shipping and Transport and the Planning Commission. Certain unpleasant things come to our notice. One was that the expenditure was being incurred by the State beyond the sanction and ultimately post-facto sanction was to be made by the Central Governments which was against all the canons of financial discipline and public fund/expenditure control system. Then, at the State level, the scope of the work was also changed, which again was against the planning discipline. We came across the situation where thousands of works are lingering on from the 4th Plan and the 5th Plan and thereby attracting huge time and cost over-run. Now, higher the cost over-run, greater the agency charge of the State Government. They collect 9% plus 1% for quality control. If you take the total plan allocation, 10% goes to the State Government for management. So many things came to our notice during the last three years and the Governments has no option but to appoint Vobra Committee."

4.7 It may be mentioned here that the Government of India, in February 1982, set up a Committee under the Chairmanship of Shri B.B. Vohra with the following terms of reference :—

“To review the Agency System for National Highways as well as suggest remedial measures, with particular reference to :—

- (i) Administrative arrangements;
- (ii) Agency, Charges;
- (iii) Financial arrangements;
- (iv) Technical and financial approval of project ;
- (v) Actual implementation/execution of the projects with a particular reference to cost and time controls;
- (vi) The general conditions of the National Highways net-work in the country; its shortcoming and measures for improvement; and
- (vii) Recommendations on other matters for the improvement of National Highways e.g. prevention of ribbon development alongside National Highways; removal of encroachments; improvement of aesthetics; provision of resting places for track operators etc.”

4.8 The Committee has submitted its report to the Government on 2nd September, 1983. According to the Ministry, the Govt. have yet to take a view on the various recommendations of the Committee.

Check on Utilization of Funds

4.9 The Ministry have stated that as soon as the ‘Vote on Accounts’ is passed by the Parliament, funds for two months equal to 1/6th of the total yearly allocation are released to the State Govts. immediately. Thereafter, when the Budget is passed finally by the Parliament,, the total allocation for the year as a whole is intimated to the State Govts. (PWDs) concerned. State PWDs claim reimbursement of the expenditure incurred by them on a monthly basis through the Regional Pay & Accounts Officer of the Controller of Accounts in the Ministry through the respective State Accountant, General. These claims are required to be supported by schedules of works expenditure and other relevant documents etc. On the basis of these details the pay & Accounts Officers of the Controller of Accounts authorities the reimbursement of the expenditure involved after exercising some preliminary checks.

4.10 So far as the system and procedure for ensuring that the funds are properly utilised for the purpose they are released, the Ministry have stated that these objectives are sought to be achieved through monitoring machinery of the

Ministry which both at the Headquarter and the regional level, besides checking the progress reports received for each work from the State Chief Engineers, also conducts critical work-wise reviews of each project periodically with the State Chief Engineers. During these reviews, the progress of the project, the money spent on them and all such other requirements are gone into in great detail which provide a complete check to find out that the funds are properly utilised for the purpose which they are released.

4.11 Asked whether the critical work-wise review of each project was confined to discussions with the Chief Engineer only or the monitoring machinery of the Ministry also visited the sites of the projects to verify physically the progress reported in the progress Report with the actual progress in the fields, the Secretary of Ministry informed the Committee during evidence that "the monitoring machinery of the Ministry carries out critical review of each project. But the monitoring machinery does not visit the site. The site is visited by the project Chief Engineer as well as the officers of the Regional Office." Asked about the coordination between the persons visiting the site and the one sitting in office, the witness stated that "the principal coordination link was the Regional Office of the Ministry, the head of which was of the status of Superintending Engineer. He is supposed to keep close liaison with the State Govt. machinery which is responsible as our agents to execute the work.....it is his principal business to see that there is a tie-up between the state machinery on the one hand and the Central monitoring machinery on the other. when the progress is reviewed, the project Chief Engineer from the Ministry goes to the State Headquarters and meets the Chief Engineer and Secretary, P.W.D., to review the progress of the work. He is fed by data by the inspecting officers who work at the regional levels."

4.11 The Secretary also assured the Committee, "I would myself like to review whether this system is perfect or it requires remedial measures to make it more effective in the matter of co-ordination." Director General (RD) also informed the Committee that "In Ministry we have created monitoring cell which is headed by the Chief Engineer. He monitors the project. He [carries out a critical review once a year."

Financial Control over funds allotted to state PWDs

4.13 The Vohra Committee have, in their report (1983) pointed out that under the existing system, the State Governments (PWD) claim reimbursement of the expenditure incurred by them during each month from Controller of Accounts in the Ministry through the respective State Accountants General. These claims are required to be supported by schedules of works expenditure and other relevant documents. The State Accountant General, however, does

not scrutinise either the correctness of the claim or the vouchers but simply passes them on to the Controller of Accounts in the Ministry who has to authorise the reimbursement of the expenditure involved after exercising some preliminary checks, even though the expenditure might have exceeded the sanctioned estimates and/or the annual allocations; refusal of any part of the expenditure already incurred on these grounds is not at present permissible. Thus, basically, this system suffers from lack of accountability.....As a result, the actual expenditure incurred by the State Govts. on the execution of National Highway (original) works still exceeds the allotments made for these works from year as will be evident from the table below :-

(Rs. lakhs)

Year	Final Allotment	Actual Expenditure.	Expenditure NH (O) Works	
			Excess (+)	shortfall (-)
1976-77	6798.00	6822.54	(+)	24.54
1977-78	7602.43	7661.23	(+)	58.80
1978-79	8239.96	8328.88	(+)	88.92
1979-80	8400.00	8548.31	(+)	148.31
1980-81	9231.00	10013.32	(+)	782.32
1981-82	10944.67	12102.03	(+)	1157.36

4.14 Besides, in the present system, in quite a number of States, the State PWDs/AGs delay rendering monthly divisional account to the State AGs and, Controller of Accounts-the period of delay varying widely in each case. This results in huge variations in the Appropriation Accounts; excesses on individual works beyond permissible limits and beyond budgetary allotments. What is reflected in the accounts of the Central Government in a year has no relation to the actual expenditure on National Highways for that particular year.

4.15 To overcome these difficulties, a revised procedure was suggested by the Task Force appointed by the Ministry of Finance which recommended that funds for expenditure on National Highways should flow from the Consolidated Fund of India into the Consolidated Fund of the State Governments as in the case of grants-in-aid, so that thereafter all withdrawals against these funds would be subject to the normal Budgetary and Accounting controls of the State Governments. It was further recommended that the transfer of funds from the Consolidated Fund of India to the Consolidated Fund of the State should be provided in the Central Budget as "Payment for Services rendered."

Quality Control

4.16 It was represented to the Committee by an Ex-D.G. (RD) that there was need to improve quality control and for this in the State PWD organisations.

they, should have independent quality control cells and material testing laboratories responsible directly to State's Chief Engineer. Also besides this step, the State Governments should strengthen the contracting agencies for qualitative and timely execution of works and also set up State Govt. construction Corporations as parallel supplementary arrangements for healthy competition"

4.17 It was also pointed out in a non-official memorandum furnished to the Committee that "of the total National Highways system there is not a single km. which has adequate thickness and, therefore, the strength to meet the present day requirements of traffic and excess loading which is the rule rather than the exception."

4.18 Asked to explain the position in this regard, the Secretary, Ministry of Shipping & Transport stated during evidence that some efforts were being made to bring about quality control on National Highway Works. One per cent of the estimated cost of works was being given to PWDs as cost of quality control. The witness further stated that "the State Govt. have reportedly also established some quality control units. But my feeling in the matter is that work may be of perfunctory nature at this stage. When I had a discussion on this issue, I was wanting to know from the Ministry whether they are in a position to lay down guidelines in this matter because the Centre only can give well established guidelines? The answer I got was that they have given the guidelines as to how the task relating to quality control should be handled at the State level. But personally I think that there is a need to ginger up the State Govt. to adopt a more rigid and hard line in the matter of ensuring quality control." He further added that "if we cannot maintain the basic standards of quality control, the whole work would go waste." When asked whether there was no supervision for quality control by the Ministry of Shipping & Transport, the Secretary admitted that there was no such system of supervision by the Ministry. When asked to suggest the alternative, the Secretary stated that "since the States Govt. are the agents of the Central Govt. for executing the work, it is upto the State Govt. to maintain the proper quality of the work." He further elaborated that the. "I am not personally satisfied. My suggestion is that the people in the Quality Control Cell of the Directorate General, Ministry of Shipping & Transport must first have a conference with the State Government officials on these issues and they should also visit a few roads to see whether the quality is satisfactory."

Norms for Maintenance of National Highways

4.19 According to the Ministry of Shipping & Transport, in 1968, a Technical Group of 5 States Chief Engineers headed by DG(RD) was appointed by Govt. of India for suggesting suitable norms for assessing maintenance costs. The report of this Group is generally referred to as "1968 Norms" for main-

tenance of National Highways. The components of maintenance are defined in the report as :- (i) Ordinary Repairs, (ii) Periodic Renewals, and (iii) Special and Flood Damage Repairs. The "1968 Norms" indicate the physical inputs required for carrying out various operations of Maintenance under different conditions. The unit rates for various operations given in the "1968 Norms" are applicable to 1968 only. The report indicates that the estimate should be periodically modified preferably biennially because of constantly shifting costs, changing traffic and lane widths.

4.20 The Ministry have stated that the requirement of funds for maintenance of National Highways in each year are worked out on the bases of the physical contents of the "1968 Norms" by applying the current rates for various elements as also accounting for the present day traffic and widths of the various roads. This requirement of funds relevant to the present day prices which is reasonable is then projected to the Ministry of Finance for allocation of funds. The release of funds to the States is however based upon the actual allotment made available. It has generally been experienced that the actual allocations are considerably less than the demand as per norms (see Table below) and consequently, the release of funds to the States is also proportionately less.

(Rs. in lakhs)

Year	Requirement as per norms at current rates of the year	Actual allotment
1978-79	3266.04	2885.00
1979-80	4531.50	3070.00
1980-81	4562.76	3774.95
1981-82	6100.00	4700.00
1982-83	6900.00	5100.00

4.21 Elaborating the position in this regard during evidence, the D.G. (RW) stated that "the Committee (1968) worked out the physical inputs required for undertaking the ordinary repairs, periodical renewals and special repairs.....so far as special repairs and flood-damage repairs are concerned' they said that whatever is the total money which will be given for ordinary repairs and periodical repairs' a certain percentage of that should go towards special repairs and flood damage repairs." The witness added that "because of paucity of funds, the Ministry did not get the money according to the norms laid down in 1968 and with the passage of time it was realised that the percentage which was mentioned in the formula for taking care of special repairs and flood damage was not sufficient and therefore, a group had already been constituted by the Ministry to decide what ought to be done regarding flood damage and the method of computation and how should the funds flow towards flood damage to the National Highways."

4.22 Asked what was the amount given to the States per km. for maintenance of National Highways, the witness informed the Committee that the Ministry gave Rs.8000/-per km. to the concerned State Government for that portion of the National Highway which passed through the urban areas, and for other portion of the National Highways, it worked out to an average of about Rs. 16000 per km in 1982-83.

4.23 When asked whether the Ministry gave funds to the concerned State Governments for maintenance of National Highways according to the norms the D.G. (RD) replied 'No'. It was suggested by the Committee that amount for flood damage should be got sanctioned separately. The D.G. (RW) stated that "the suggestion is well taken."

4.24 Under the present system of execution of National Highways works through the agency of State Governments/Union Territory Administrations, there is substantial time and cost overrun and the expenditure has been largely in excess of the sanctioned estimates of individual works and overall always in excess of the amount voted by Parliament. In the process the agents have nothing to loss but they gain by way of higher agency charges at the rate of 10 per cent of actual expenditure. The financial control is evidently lax and the general impression is one of lack of proper accountability. This had naturally led to the appointment of a committee under the Chairmanship of Shri V.V. Vohara "to review the agency system for National Highways." The Committee would await the action taken on the report of the committee submitted to Government in September 1983.

4.25 The Committee are anxious that the monitoring and review of the National Highways works by the Roads wing should not be confined to review of Progress Reports received from the executing agencies and that it should be effectively backed by an inspection machinery. Though according to the Ministry the inspections are carried out by the Regional offices of the Roads wing, the Committee desire that as agreed to be the Secretary, Ministry of Shipping & Transport, the effectiveness or otherwise of this link provided between the executing agencies and the Roads Wing headquarters should be reviewed by him for such improvement as may be needed.

4.26 The Secretary of the Ministry of Shipping & Transport admitted before the Committee the need to "ginger up the State Governments to adopt a more rigid and hard line in the matter of ensuring quality control" and added that "if we cannot maintain the basic standard of quality control, the whole work would go waste." Confessing that at present there was no system of supervision by the Ministry over the quality of works executed by the State PWDs, he suggested that the Quality Control Cell of the Directorate General (RD) of the Ministry should have a conference with the State Government officials on these issues and they should also visit a few roads to see whether the quality was satisfactory.

The Committee hope that the Ministry will take action as suggested and evolve a quality control mechanism at the Central level to ensure that the works carried out by the State PWDs/UT Administrations as agents of the Central Government are according to the technical standards laid down. It should also be ensured that the executing agencies have set up adequate quality control units as they are paid one per cent of the cost of the works towards quality control.

4.27 The Committee observe that the allotment of funds for maintenance of National Highways is considerably less than what is justified on the basis of 'norms'. For instance, as against Rs. 69 crores required as per norms, the allotment for the year 1982-83 was only Rs. 51 crores. the *Ad hoc* reduction in allotments against requirements could be an alibi for non-performance or bad performance in the field. The Committee feel that once proper norms for maintenance and repairs are fixed, the requirements of funds for the purpose should be met in full.

4.28 The norms of expenditure on maintenance include a certain percentage towards special repairs and flood damage repairs. However, with the cut in the allotment for maintenance these repairs which are unavoidable get affected. The Committee are of the firm opinion that separate funds should be made available for meeting an unforeseen contingency such as damage to National Highways caused by floods, earthquake etc.

CHAPTER V

MAJOR PROJECTS

Major National Highways projects under Construction

5.1 The Ministry furnished a statement of 32 major National Highway works each costing Rs. 2 crores and above. It is noted that almost all works had been delayed or were likely to be delayed. The delays ranged between nearly 1 year to 10 years. The corresponding cost escalations vary between Rs. lakhs 21 to Rs. 1177 lakhs.

5.2 According to the Ministry, some of the reasons for delays can be categorised as follows :—

- (1) Delay in awarding works and finalisation of tenders.
- (2) Delay due to land acquisition.
- (3) Delay due to shortage of hot mix plants and their low output in initial stages.
- (4) Increase in the cost of the materials and unforeseen difficulties.
- (5) Delays due to changes in specifications.

5.3 Asked to elaborate on the aforesaid reasons, the Secretary informed the Committee during evidence that all these projects were being executed by the State Govts. and there was nothing basically wrong. But, there was definitely scope for improvement. According to the witness "we can think of pre-qualification of contractors. We can also think of further delegation of powers. We can also think of a standard notice for non-completion of work in time." Giving the reasons for shortage of hot mix plants and their low output, the witness stated that it initially took some time in some States to instal the plants and to operate them. Regarding problem relating to land acquisition, the witness stated that "as we all know land acquisition proceedings take a long time because of injunction brought by affected parties who go to the courts. Now we have decided to separate the land acquisition components and sanction it in the first instance. Construction work is sanctioned later on

after the land is acquired. This is a new reformatory measure that has been introduced. Unless the land acquisition proceeding is completed, no sanction is given to the construction. Formerly, these things used to be sanctioned even before the land was in our hands." Regarding cost escalation and the revised estimates of the projects, the witness informed the Committee that out of 32 works, revised estimates were not required for three works and of these remaining 29 works, revised estimates were sanctioned for 9 works while for 11 works they were under scrutiny and revised estimates in respect of 9 works were awaited from the States. The witness further added that "recently we have had quarterly review meeting held in the Planning Commission. They desired that all these work which are old should be completed in any case before 31.3.86. We will be issuing instructions to State Govts. thsee that complete the old works quickly." When asked to indicate the factors which necessitated the changes in specification of the project mid-way through, the Secretary Ministry of Shipping & Transport stated that "changes in specifications are necessitated on account of actual site conditions. Investigations are done of the subsoil data and it may sometimes happen that the exploratory investigation may reveal that there has been inadequate investigation in the initial stage. This initial investigation has not been done carefully; to that extent there is an element of bad planning."

5.4 Regarding the lack of monitoring system, the Secretary, stated that "there is scope for streamlining the system, and bring about greater co-ordination and greater vigilance, watching technically the progress with a greater measure of intensity and also frequency. We will see how it can be done. There is need for Management Information System, with the help of computers in Headquarters."

5.5 The Committee are distressed to note the extensive time and cost overrun in the completion of National Highway works. From the details of 32 major works each costing Rs. 2 crores and above furnished to them, the Committee find that this is a general phenomenon. The delays ranged upto 10 years and the cost escalation upto Rs. 11.77 crores. The revised estimates have not been sanctioned in 11 cases and in 9 cases the revised estimates were awaited from the States. The Committee wonder how expenditure in excess of estimates could be incurred without further sanction. Evidently the monitoring machinery of the Roads Wing is weak. The Ministry ought to ensure the regularity and propriety of the expenditure as well as timely execution of works scrupulously in future by qualitative strengthening of its machinery. The system should be thoroughly revamped for effective surveillance over execution of National Highway works, identifying bottlenecks and finding solutions therefor in coordination with the State Governments concerned.

CHAPTER VI

GENERAL

Widening of National Highways

6.1 According to written information furnished by the Ministry to the Committee, following are the capacity norms which are used to decide the necessity for widening the National Highways from single lane to 2-lane or 2-lane to 4-lane carriage ways :—

<i>Road Type</i>	<i>Recommended capacity</i> <i>(Both directions)</i>
1. Single lane roads with satisfactory earth shoulders.	upto 1000 PCUs per day.
2. Single lane roads with 5 ft. wide all weather shoulders on either side.	Over 1000 PCUs but less than 2500.
3. 2-lane roads under ideal conditions.	Over 2500 PCUs but upto 10,000 PCUs per day.
4. 4-lane roads	10,000 to 30,000 PCUs. In this case the animal-drawn traffic is to be ignored.

(Note : PUC stands for Passenger Car Unit)

The Secretary, Ministry of Shipping & Transport informed the Committee during evidence that the criteria fixed above were realistic to ensure smooth movement of goods and passenger traffic.

6.2 The representative of the Ministry was asked during evidence as to the number of lanes that he thought should be there on trunk routes like Delhi-Bombay ; Delhi-Calcutta ; Madras-Delhi etc. considering the traffic load. The Director General (Road Wing) informed the Committee that "while preparing the 5th Plan, we had identified the deficiencies, and we had worked out what

is the total kilometreage which needs double laning." On the need for 4-laning on all trunk routes being emphasised by the Committee, the witness informed the Committee that "in the year 1980, the Ministry had estimated roughly about 2000 km. for 4-laning." "But this needs updating," he added.

Prevention of Ribbon Development on National Highways

6.3 For removal of encroachment and preventing ribbon development along the National Highways it was suggested to the Committee by non-officials that the National Highways Act should be amended. Asked to state the position in this regard, the Director-General (PW) stated during evidence that :—

"All the national highways pass through various States. The land on either side of them is the State land or land belonging to an individual living in that State. We cannot bring in any kind of a legislation from the Centre, unless we get the permission of the State Government concerned. We had prepared a draft legislation on this, and circulated it. We have got consent from 8 or 10 States. We had also prepared a draft note for the Cabinet, and circulated it to the Ministries concerned for their concurrence before submitting the matter to the Cabinet. Further the Ministry of Law said that there was some court case in Andhra Pradesh, and that till a decision was arrived at on it, we should wait. We have prepared a draft Cabinet note once again, and propose to circulate it to the Ministries concerned again for their concurrence. Meanwhile, we hope a decision on the Andhra case would come about."

6.4 In a post evidence communication, the Ministry have stated as follows :—

Prevention of ribbon development alongside National Highways and removal of encroachments from National Highways are two distinct problems and have to be dealt with separately. These are accordingly discussed below individually.

(i) Prevention of ribbon development actually amounts to controlling the use of land outside the National Highways boundaries. Amendment of the National Highways Act, 1956 would not serve the purpose and a separate legislation for dealing with this problem is necessary. Actually, the Government of India cannot undertake a legislation for the prevention of ribbon development along National Highways directly but would have to do so under Article 252(i) of the Constitution by getting an authority from the States through a Resolution passed by their respective Legislatures authorising the Central Government to undertake this legislation on their behalf.

This Ministry had prepared, quite some time back, a draft legislation for prevention of Ribbon Development along the National Highways and circulated the draft to the States for authorising the Central Government through a Resolution of the State Legislature. Such Resolutions have been received from about 8 to 10 States/Union Territories and the matter is being pursued with the rest of the States. Pending receipt of the Resolutions from the remaining States, the Ministry wanted to go ahead with the formulation of the required legislation and accordingly circulated a Draft Cabinet Note to the various Ministries concerned for their concurrence. However, the Law Ministry returned the Paper with the observations that this matter needed to be held over for some time as certain legislation framed under Article 252(i) of the Constitution by some other organisations had been struck down by certain High Courts like the Urban Land Ceiling Act. Since this Ministry have not heard anything further from the Law Ministry, it is now proposed to approach them again for their concurrence in the matter.”

(ii) Encroachments

Similarly in regard to the removal of the 'encroachments on National Highways a separate legislation is contemplated.

Pending the enactment of the above Legislations this Ministry have been issuing administrative instructions/circulars to the State Governments for regulating ribbon development and removal of encroachments on National Highways. In this connection a comprehensive circular was issued in January, 1977. The circular covers all aspects of Ribbon Development like land width required for different classes of roads, access points, control of building activities, Standard for Building lines and Control Lines, control on Advertisement, Prevention and Removal of Encroachments etc.

The question of removal of encroachments was also examined in consultation with the Ministry of Law who have advised that the following legal remedies are available to the State Governments for removal of encroachments :

- (1) Action to be taken under section 133 of the Criminal Procedure Code. In order to bring the case under section 133, the prosecution has to prove that the land in question is either a public way or a public place.
- (2) Encroachment upon a public road is an obstruction to the public path and it is nuisance in itself under Section 269 of the Indian Penal Code. No argument by a user can justify an encroachment upon a

public way. The question of sufficient width of road being left in support of the encroachments for public use is no ground for allowing encroachment, or obstruction to continue. It is the duty of the Magistrate to come to a finding whether the claim of the person complaining of such encroachment is benefide or not. The question of possession is relevant for this purpose.

- (3) Criminal proceedings may be initiated against the wrong doer under the various provision of Indian Penal Code, criminal Procedure Code and such of the Police Acts as are applicable to Central subjects like National Highways which are a Union subject under the Constitution.
- (4) Section 291 of the Indian Penal Code punishes a person continuing a nuisance after he is enjoined by a public servant not to repeat or continue it. Section 142 and 143 of the Code of Criminal Procedure empower a Magistrate to forbid an act causing a public nuisance. The Civil Procedure Code also empowers a Court to issue temporary injunction. To be able to expedite removal of encroachments each PWD Division must prepare accurate land maps and keep them handy for checking and for producing in evidence.

6.5. The above advice of the Ministry of Law have been brought to the notice of the State Governments/Union Territories on number of occasions by means of circulars and also during discussions in various forums.

Bye-Passes

6.6 The Ministry in Preliminary Material informed the Committee that in view of the paucity of resources the construction of bye-passes was generally given low priority as compared to the improvement work, such as, widening, strengthening, reconstruction of weak/damaged bridges etc. Asked whether the Ministry did not think that the construction of bye-passes had become imperative because of the congestion caused by growth of urban population as also the fast moving traffic, the Director General (Road Wing) informed the Committee that the Ministry had identified 322 by-passes required to be constructed in the country. Asked about the action taken on these 322 identified by-passes, the witness added that, "No, if we have to remove all the deficiencies as worked out by us in the year 1980, we need Rs. 2,700 crores at 1980 price level, whereas in the Sixth Plan we have been given only Rs. 660 crores."

Road Over-Bridges

6.7 Level crossings are a serious bottleneck to the smooth movement of road traffic and also pose safety hazards. According to current guidelines for replacement of level crossings by road over-bridges, if the minimum number of daily stoppages of fast moving vehicles exceeds 50,000 in case of existing roads

and 25,000 in case of new by-passes, then an over-bridge is considered necessary.

6.8 At the beginning of the 6th Five Year Plan (1980-85) it was assessed that about 400 ROBs were required on National Highways in the country. Of these, on the basis of the availability of resources only 60 ROBs at an estimated cost of Rs. 17.27 crores were included in the 6th Five Year Plan (1980-85). However, even out of these due to paucity of funds, only 9 ROBs have so far been sanctioned up to the end of March 1983 for a total cost of Rs. 7.26 crores.

6.9 The cost of ROBs is met by the Ministry of Shipping & Transport and Railways from the allocation of funds made against their normal annual plans.

6.10 In case of replacement of an existing level crossings by ROB the cost of the structure and the approaches (excluding the cost of land acquisition) is shared equally by the Ministry of Shipping & Transport and Railways. The cost of land acquisition is borne entirely by the Ministry of Shipping and Transport.

6.11 In case the ROB is not in replacement of an existing level crossing, then the entire cost is borne by the Road Authority.

6.12 On the basis of sanctioned provisions of the works, the execution of the road over-bridge (in respect of the portion falling within railway boundary) is done by the Railways and the remaining portion is generally done by the Road Authority.

6.13 Asked to state the policy in this regard, the Director General (Road Wing) stated that :—

“The policy regarding over-bridges is that when they are to be constructed within Municipal limits, it is for them to do it. With regard to National Highways in rural areas, if there is a crossing, and the product of closures per day and the vehicular traffic exceeds 50,000 stoppages in a day, we have to construct it there. When we talk of railway over-bridges, we talk of stoppages and the number of vehicles.”

6.14 Stating the criteria in detail for the construction of over-bridges on National Highways, the Ministry have stated as follows in a Post Evidence reply :—

“Railway level crossings are a serious traffic hazard. They also entail considerable stoppage of highway vehicles which results in loss of

fuel due to idling and loss of time of vehicle occupants and freight. The number of such level crossings is in the neighbourhood of 400 all over the country. Since the resources available for converting these into road over-bridges are extremely limited, the Ministry has been following tentative criteria for their progressive conversion. The criteria recommended by the Indian Roads Congress is as below :—

Grade separations should be provided across existing railway crossings if the product of ADT (Average daily traffic, fast vehicles only) and the number of trains per day exceeds 50,000 within the next 5 years. In new constructions such as bye-Passes, such grade separations should be provided when this figure is greater than 25,000.

The above formula gives weightage to not only the traffic on the roads but also to the intensity of railway traffic. As such, the formula can be considered to be realistic.

The Criteria for conversion of level crossings in bye-passes provides for a lower figure of 25,000 as against 50,000 in the case of existing roads because bye-passes themselves are constructed to avoid delay caused by traffic moving on the congested portion of existing cities and towns.

The above criteria has been generally followed whenever cases of conversion of existing level crossings in to over-bridges come up for decision in the Ministry. It may also be mentioned here that this criteria has also been accepted by the Railways.”

Check Posts

6.15 The Ministry of Shipping and Transport in Preliminary Material stated that in November, 1980 detailed instructions were issued to the State Governments regarding removal/rationalisation of barriers across National Highways. Asked to state the response of the State Governments to these instructions, the Director General (Road Wing) stated during evidence that :—

“So far as the barrier is concerned, we have told the State Governments that it should not be there. If at all they have to put it up, it should be according to the design finalised by the Indian Roads Congress which takes care of the traffic which has to stop, and which has not be. In other words, those who have to pay octroi are supposed to take a different lane, so that the through traffic which has not to pay octroi-like cars, motor cycles etc; can go through. But, unfortunately, the situation is not very happy, as we all see every day. The octroi barriers have also not been removed.”

National Highway Patrolling Scheme

6.16 It was stated in Preliminary Material furnished by the Ministry that apart from road improvement measures, steps were being taken for introducing a National Highway Patrolling Scheme with a view to rendering immediate first aid to accident victims and early clearing of accident site. Ambulance vans and mobile cranes were envisaged under the scheme. The scheme was, however, to be implemented by the State Governments concerned.

6.17 Asked to give the details of the aforesaid scheme, the Director General (RD) informed the Committee that :—

“In the month of February 1982, a scheme of patrolling was prepared by the Government of India and passed on to the State Government. The idea was that some of the States were already patrolling the Highways. They were already providing some kind of aid. It was picked up from there and was circulated to the State Governments. The idea was to have traffic posts where anybody could walk in and get information about the places. These are supposed to be trained police men. There supposed to be wireless sets by which they could flash a message. They were supposed to have mobile cranes to lift the vehicles so that the traffic was clear. Our information is that in certain sections in Maharashtra, Haryana, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Jammu and Kashmir, such traffic posts have already come in. Then patrolling is going on to a certain extent.

6.18 Giving details about the patrolling scheme, the Ministry in a post evidence information have submitted as follows :—

“The road accidents especially in big cities of the country are showing an upward trend resulting in loss of precious lives and damage to property. The total road accidents from 55476 in 1960 (Report on Road Accidents, 1977 by Central Road Research Institute, New Delhi) to 147651 in 1980, (Motor Transport Statistics) registering an increase of 5% per annum. Similarly the fatalities increased from 5106 in 1960 to 24085 in 1980, resulting in increase of 7.9% per annum. on an average. Although Separate data on the accidents occurring on the National Highways are not available, it is well known that the absolute number of such accidents are going up. In Delhi, where the length of National Highways is comparatively small, 19.5% of fatal accidents and 14.2% of the total accidents occurred on the National Highways. This highlights the seriousness of the problem of road accidents on National Highways. Moreover, unlike in urban areas, it is becoming almost impossible to rush medical help to accidents victims in rural areas for want of a proper infrastructure in terms of communication and first-aid arrangements. It is in this context that the Ministry of Shipping and Transport (Transport Wing) are keen on establishing a

system of highway patrol backed by an effective communication network to flash news of accidents to Traffic aid posts which have to be provided with recovery vans, mobile cranes and first aid arrangements to attend to the people/vehicles involved in the accidents.

Duties of Traffic Aid Post

6.19 The duties assigned to the Traffic Aid Posts are as under :—

- (i) to give assistance to the motoring public in matters of routes, information regarding nearest petrol pumps, hospitals and police stations and rest houses etc.;
- (ii) to give assistance to the injured;
- (iii) to give assistance to vehicles which have broken down;
- (iv) to convey messages regarding accidents etc. to the police stations;
- (v) to help the traffic police in approaching defaulting motorists or in establishing the identity.

6.20 Those posts already existed in Maharashtra have been found useful for :—

- (a) providing better security on the highways,
- (b) detection of overspeeding by vehicles,
- (c) detection of missing or stolen vehicles,
- (d) detection of vehicles involved in hit and run cases,
- (e) detection of smuggling of gold and other contraband goods,
- (f) detection of cases of kidnapping,
- (g) detection of cases of copper wire thefts.
- (h) clearing traffic during journeys of VIPs,
- (i) guiding the tourists with information about nearest doctors, post offices, police stations etc.

Plan for Traffic Aid Posts

6.21 (a) *Location* :—One Traffic Aid Post could be located at every 50 Kms. along with National Highways. It should however be ensured that the traffic aid post is located at such a place where there is no over-lapping with the existing Police Station, Police Outposts situated along the National Highways. Wherever Police Stations/Police Outposts are already available, additional facilities could be provided to them to cater to the needs of the new responsibilities.

(b) *Staffing Pattern* :—One Head Constable and 7 Constables (2 per shift) should be sufficient to man the traffic aid post (+ 1 reserve) round the clock.

These constables will be trained in first-aid so that they will be able to render to first-aid the accident victims. All [such posts in addition could be under] the direct charge of the Superintendent of Police of the concerned district. If the number of such posts exceeds 16 in a district, there should be some supervising staff in the District Police Head Quarters. One post of Inspector, Sub-Inspector and Assistant Sub-Inspector each is considered sufficient for this work.

6.22 At the state level, one of the Deputy Inspector General of Police at the Headquarters, could supervise and coordinate the activities of all the traffic aid posts situated in the state.

6.23 At the national level, an officer of the rank of Inspector General of Police with necessary supporting staff can be posted in the Ministry of Shipping and Transport to whom all the States DIGs can report on the accidents casualties and road safety matters. The existing Directorate of Transport Research will assist this office for the analysis of data of road accidents for identifying causative factors with a view to take speedy remedial measures. The Directorate of Transport Research will have to be strengthened by providing extra staff in order to take up the additional duties and responsibilities.

6.24 (c) *Communication net work* : Presently most of the Police Stations are provided with wireless communication facilities and 100% coverage is expected soon for the entire country. Communication link is available among police stations, District Headquarters and state capital and the National Capital is linked with all State Capitals.

A 25 WATT VHF set, with a range of 40-50 Kms. is considered sufficient for the use by Traffic Aid Posts. Provision could be made for the use by Traffic Aid Posts. Provision could be made for increasing the range, in case necessary, by modifying the antenna of the set.

6.25 (d) *Equipment* : It is desirable to provide each Traffic Aid Post with a mobile crane and an Ambulance to attend to the Vehicle Break down on the highways and providing immediate medical aid to the injured, involved in road accidents. But in view of the large scale expenditure involved to finance such a set up, it is suggested that one mobile crane and an ambulance could be made available to the respective district police headquarters for the use of the Traffic Aid Post, provided they are located within a range of 50 Kms., from the District Headquarters. Since the Traffic Aid Posts could contact the district headquarters through wireless net-work, the services of the mobile crane and ambulance could be requisitioned without any loss of time from the district concerned or the neighbouring district or State. If the radial distance from the traffic aid post to the district headquarters is more than 50 Kms., the above

vehicles may be located at the traffic aid posts itself at the rate of one such vehicle for every 2 traffic aid posts.

6.26 In addition, the traffic aid posts should be provided with a first aid kit box, a tool box (for attending vehicle break down), a set of extrication tools and equipments such as pick axe, portable power saw, crow bars etc., stop sign-boards (reflecting type) torch light etc.

Financial Implication

6.27 In order to work out a realistic estimate for establishing a net work of Traffic Aid Posts, it is necessary to have the following information :—

- (i) Data on number of Police Stations/Police Outposts located along National Highways ;
- (ii) Whether they are provided with wireless communication net-work ;
- (iii) Distance between two such Police Stations/Police Outposts and the distance from Police Stations/Police Outpost to district Headquarters;
- (iv) Length of National Highway passing through each district and the maximum and minimum distance from district headquarters to the respective National Highway.

6.28 According to the available data, the total road length of National Highways is 31,335 Kms. Assuming that a check-post is to be established at every 50 Kms., of National Highway, 628 check-posts will be required to cover the entire road net-work. However, this number could be brought down after taking into consideration, the possibility of entrusting the duties and responsibilities of Traffic Aid Post to the Police Station/Police Outposts already located along the National Highways.

6.29 Estimated expenditure for establishing a Traffic Aid Post is Rs. 50,000/- per annum (recurring) and the non-recurring expenditure will be around Rs. 2.44 Lakhs.

Traffic and Transportation Unit

6.30 It was stated in Preliminary Material furnished to the Committee that the 'traffic and transportation unit is incharge of evolving designs for inter-sections and for traffic signs and signals with main emphasis on providing better safety measures. The Unit is also to collect data and statistics on road accidents and suggest improvements based on the same. It also deals with provision of wayside amenities.'

6.31 Asked to state the main achievements of the traffic and transportation unit the secretary stated during evidence that :—

“the traffic and transportation unit was established in the Ministry in August, 1982. They [have prepared 30 designs for inter-sections on National Highways in Maharashtra, Gujarat, Punjab, Rajasthan, Haryana, Orissa, M.P., and Tamil Nadu. This has been the only achievement made by the unit since its inception in August 1982 and nothing more. Of course they have asked [the State Governments to provide road signs of suitable locations. I have myself asked our Ministry people the question whether they have any system of receiving from the States by way of the feedback what they have done in this regard. There is no such system.”

6.32 Regarding wayside amenities, the witness informed the Committee that :—

“We have been able to provide one in Haryana and one in Punjab for truck drivers.”

6.33 According to the witness, the Ministry on an experimental basis, had selected Murthal in Haryana and Jullundur in Punjab and in Andhra Pradesh for development of way side amenities-

Land Scaping

6.34 An organisation in a memorandum drawn the attention of the Committee to the problem of land scaping as follows :

“Land scaping, which in broad terms is concerned with all aspects, which affect the appearance of roads, emerging as an important component of highways, particularly for truck routes. By proper land scaping of the road, it will help reduce fatigue of drivers and keep them alert. This aspect has been found to reduce accidents and environmental degradation. For best results, land scaping and highway design should be regarded as complementary to each other and tackled as a single planning task.....for all developmental works on the National Highway system, land scaping should be given greater stress and importance so that the [overall quality of travel improves and environmental degradation is checked.”

6.35 Reacting to the aforesaid suggestion, the Director General (RW) informed the Committee during evidence that :—

“No such land scaping as in and around Delhi has done. On our National Highways passing through Haryana, there are beautiful plantation of trees.” The witness further added that “Almost all the States have now followed the Haryana pattern and they are planting trees on either side ; and most of the stretches have now come up and are coming up.”

Levy of Toll Tax on National Highways

6.36 It was suggested to the Committee that "the concept of toll financing could be used with advantage in our country for providing express way facilities and even bye-passes around the major cities." Another memorandum submitted to the Committee contained a similar suggestion as follows :—

"In a fast developing country encompassing a vast area, like ours, with evergrowing needs for development, capital for development is understandably, in short supply. To [cope with such a situation, many countries resort to the practice of charging the users of the highway facilities directly through imposition of toll charges. In such capital-starved situation, the institution of toll roads becomes instrumental in accelerating the pace of road development."

6.37 Expressing his reaction to the aforesaid suggestion, the Secretary, Ministry of Shipping & Transport stated during evidence that "the Ministry agrees with the concept of toll financing in respect of special projects like the express way. We think that a beginning should be made in this direction. We have already prepared a scheme for an express highway between Ahmedabad and Baroda and the idea is to levy toll tax in the entire length of this road. Toll financing idea is of course acceptable to us."

6.38 With the increasing tempo of economic activity all over the country, road traffic, particularly on the National Highways, has phenomenally increased and is increasing so much so the existing Highway specifications would be inadequate. It is, therefore, necessary that the sections of the National Highways which are taking on heavy traffic should be strengthened and widened. In this context the Committee desire that, to cater for heavy traffic on the Highways and avoid fatal accidents which are on the increase, NH—I and NH—IA should be progressively widened to 8—lanes and the other National Highways to 4—lanes.

6.39 The Committee suggest that action should be initiated to acquire land on both sides of the existing National Highways to enable future widening on the basis of traffic demand. Advance planning on these lines will be cost efficient in the long run. A beginning could be made with overworked section of the National Highways which will have to be widened in the near future.

6.40 An effective control on the use of land outside the National Highway boundaries and prevention and removal of encroachments on the National Highways themselves is absolutely necessary in the interest of smoother flow of traffic along the National Highways. The Committee are informed that the National Highways Act 1956 would not serve the purpose and a separate legislation for dealing with these problems is necessary ; a draft legislation has been circulated by the Ministry of Shipping and Transport to the State Governments asking them to authorise the

Central Government to enact the legislation under Article 252 (f) of the Constitution and that the consent of about 8 to 10 States/UTs. has so far been received and the matter was being pursued with the remaining States. The Committee would like the Ministry to vigorously pursue the proposal with the State Governments and have the Central legislation enacted as quickly as possible.

6.41 The Committee are informed that the Ministry of Shipping & Transport had indentified 322 by-passes which were required to be constructed in the country to enable smoother flow of fast moving traffic on the National Highways in view of acute congestion in urban areas but it is not possible to take up their construction on account of shortage of funds. The Committee would like the Planning Commission and the Ministry to undertake an economic cost benefit analysis of the construction of bypasses taking into account *inter alia* the energy saving and other benefits to the economy and accord priority on that basis.

6.42 The Committee find that as against the assessed need for the construction of about 400 road overbridges on the National Highways at the beginning of the 6th Plan period (1980-81) only 60 road overbridges were included in the 6th Five Year Plan (1980-85) and only 9 road overbridges have been sanctioned during the first three years of the Plan. The Committee would like the Ministries of Shipping and Transport and Railways and the Planning Commission to pay greater attention to the construction of road overbridges on points which have either become major safety hazards for the travelling public or become a serious bottleneck for the smooth flow of traffic.

6.43 The Committee are disappointed that the advice of the Ministry of Shipping and Transport tendered to the State Governments in November, 1980 regarding removal/rationalisation of barriers across National Highways has elicited little response from the State Governments. They would like the Ministry to continue to persuade the State Governments to adopt the standardisation design for the check-posts.

6.44 The Committee underline the need for the setting up of a National Highway Patrolling system with a view to providing assistance to traffic, removing bottlenecks, preventing or tackling crime and provision of first-aid to accident victims on the National Highways. They learn that the Ministry of Shipping and Transport have in February, 1982, commended to the State Governments a scheme for National Highways Patrolling. The Committee recommend that after ascertaining the reactions of the State Governments, the Central Government should take steps for implementation of the scheme in right earnest.

6.45 Land scaping of the National Highways including planting of flowering and shady trees on either side and the provision of way-side amenities at convenient

points between towns is another matter which the Committee would like the Ministry of Shipping and Transport to attend to. The Committee would like to commend to the Ministry the Haryana pattern for emulation by other States.

6.46 The Committee commend the idea of construction of by-passes and auto-bahns. The traffic using such facilities may be required to pay suitably so that the activity could be made self-financing atleast in the long run.

NEW DELHI ;

December 19, 1983.

Agrahayana 28, 1905 (S)

BANSI LAL

Chairman,

Estimates Committee.

APPENDIX

Statement of recommendations/observations

<i>S/ No.</i>	<i>Para No.</i>	<i>Recommendation/observation</i>
1	2	3
1	1.22	<p>The actual execution of projects as well as maintenance work in respect of national highways is got done by the Road Wing of the Ministry of Shipping & Transport through the agency of the State Governments/Union Territories Administrations for which agency charges of 10% of the cost are paid to them. The Roads Wing has a strength of 804 men (technical and non-technical) entailing an annual expenditure of the order of about Rs. 1.5 crores. The Roads Wing is responsible <i>inter alia</i> for the development and maintenance of roads declared as National Highways in the country. This is mainly in the nature of coordination and control, standards and specifications, setting priorities and general administration. The Committee have dealt with the exercise of these functions later in this Report and indicated how it could be improved. The Committee do not get any precise idea as to the part of the strength of and expenditure on the Roads Wing attributable to the exercise of this responsibility. Nevertheless, they have received a strong impression that together the agency charges and the expenditure on the Roads Wing account for a high rate of overhead expenses out of proportion to the cost of National Highway works. If this had resulted in ensuring better construction and maintenance in quantitative and qualitative terms one would not mind it too much. But this is not the case today. The Committee, therefore, desire that an independent review of the strength of the Roads Wing and the rate of agency commission should be made and economy effected consistent with the efficient administration of National Highways.</p>
2.	1.23	<p>In this connection the Committee find that a work study made in 1980 of the organisation by the Staff Inspection</p>

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		<p>Unit of the Ministry of Finance was confined to head quarters of the Road Wing. The Ministry had undertaken a Cadre Review in 1981 which resulted in net increase of 30 Group 'A' technical posts instead of reduction of posts as suggested by the SIU. The Committee feel that there is an urgent need for a closer and comprehensive scrutiny of the staff strength, particularly at senior levels, of the Roads Wing by an outside body which should independently look into the need for the number of posts at various levels keeping in view the limited role and functions of the Road Wing of the Ministry of Shipping and Transport.</p>
3.	1.24	<p>Spelling out the engineering officers of the Roads Wing, the Director General (RW) tried to justify the absence of work norms for officers at different levels in his organisation. The Committee are unable to agree with him and recommend that some norms should be evolved to regulate the strength of officers at different levels from time to time depending upon the workload.</p>
4.	1.25	<p>The Committee note that the delegation of powers to Chief Engineers for sanction of works costing upto Rs. 50 lakhs and to the Additional Directors General for sanction of works costing upto Rs. 150 lakhs was made sometime in 1968. In view of the price escalation during the last 15 years, there is a clear case for revising these limits upwards. The Secretary, Ministry of Shipping and Transport while agreeing with this view had no satisfactory explanation why it was not considered by the Ministry all these 15 years. The Committee recommend that the delegation of powers to the Chief Engineers and Additional Directors General should be reviewed and that in future there should be periodic review atleast at 5—yearly intervals. The Committee further recommend that the powers of technical approval and financial sanction of projects costing upto Rs. 10 lakhs delegated to the State Governments/Union Territory Administrations made in 1976 should also be reviewed and made realistic.</p>
5.	2.11	<p>The Committee find that during the Fifth Plan period and the subsequent two years (1974-75 to 1979-80), there has been sizeable shorfalls in the achievement of physical</p>

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targets in respect of various schemes relating to National Highways. The Committee take a serious view of this lapse. Among the reasons cited are inadequate survey and investigation before undertaking certain bridge works, fixation of targets being on the higher side and the system of reporting achievements wherein efforts put-in in respect of works not fully completed do not get reflected. These are administrative lapses which could have been remedied in time to project a better picture of performance during the period.

6. 2.12 The Committee have also been informed that escalation in prices of materials rendered achievement of targets within the allotment of funds impracticable. The Committee appreciate the position but are unable to understand why at the time of Annual Plan discussions adequate funds to realise the plan targets having regard to price inflation could not be ensured or if there was financial constraint why targets were not revised. The Committee expect that the Ministry would in future take care in this regard and present a true picture in order to enable proper evaluation of the efficiency of the organisation.
7. 2.13 During the first three years of the Sixth Plan period also the Committee find that though the financial allotments have been utilised in full, there have been sizeable short-falls in the annual targets relating to almost all principal schemes of National Highways. The representative of the the Ministry of Shipping and Transport admitted during evidence that "there has been failure" and assured the Committee that "this year and in the subsequent year the position will be much better." The Committee emphasise the need for stricter monitoring of the control over the execution of works by the Roads Wing of the Ministry of Shipping and Transport to see that the annual targets fixed with reference to financial allotments are achieved and the projects are not delayed leading to escalation in cost and denial of timely facilities. They hope that in the resremaining years of the Sixth Five Year Plan period, the Ministry will be able to achieve the targets laid down for the Plan period.
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8.	2.14	<p>The Committee understand that an investment of Rs. 2,700 crores at 1981 price would be needed for removing the deficiencies in the National Highways system. Though the Ministry proposed an outlay of Rs. 935 crores for the Sixth Plan, the Planning Commission could allocate only Rs. 660 crores. However, the actual allotment during the first four years of the Plan was only Rs. 438 crores as against the pro rate allocation of Rs. 528 crores. According to the Ministry, only 50 per cent of the projects included in the Plan would be actually taken up for execution within the allotments in view of the increasing costs. The position thus is obviously unsatisfactory. The Committee are of the view that once the need is identified taking an overall view of the economy and projects are included in the Plan, money has to be found to carry them out. Else there could be imbalances in the economy and the Plan will cease to have real purpose. The Committee have later in this Report pointed out how the national highways have not developed fast since independence, despite the need. What is worse is that the present system inadequate as it may seem, suffers from many deficiencies. There must after all be a perspective plan for National Highway development as an essential infrastructure in a country of this size and nature and it must be put through. A critical examination of the position by the Ministry and the Planning Commission in the light of this is necessary for appropriate corrective steps in future. The Committee would await the result of the examination</p>
9.	3.14	<p>The total length of the National Highways in the country in 1947 was 21,440 kilometres. Today the total length is only 31,358 kilometres. This shows that during the last 36 years only 9918 kilometres of roads were declared as National Highways. The Committee have been informed that the Ministry had planned for declaring certain roads as National Highways bringing the total length to 51,200 kms. but could not go ahead with it, as even the existing National Highways could not be developed and maintained within the financial resources available. The Committee wish to emphasise in this connection that out plans ought to be need based and resources must be found to</p>

meet the need at the same time ensuring that optimum use of the resources are made by the executing authorities. The Committee have earlier in this Report called for an examination of this question in depth.

10. 3.15 The Committee note that since the commencement of the Sixth Five Year Plan in 1980, the Ministry of Shipping and Transport received as many as 107 proposals from the State Governments for the declaration of various roads as National Highways but only 7 routes of a total length of 2335 kms., mostly in the North-eastern region could be declared as National Highways. The Committee have been told that although Rs. 50 crores were earmarked in the Sixth Five Year Plan for the new National Highways, during the first three years of the plan only Rs. 7.16 crores were allocated for the purpose against which the expenditure of Rs. 6.31 crores had been incurred. The representative of the Ministry stated before the Committee that about Rs. 257 crores will be needed for bringing these roads upto National Highway standard. In view of the special need of the region the Committee wish to emphasise that the new routes should be developed soon and the resources therefor should be found somehow.
11. 3.16 According to the criteria now adopted, only roads of national importance are declared as National Highways. This may seem to be appropriate on the face of it. But a deeper look at the criteria would reveal that these would not necessarily ensure integrated development of the road system in the country. The Committee agree with the representatives of the Central Road Research Institute that the density of traffic ought to be the basis for classification of roads, which incidentally according to him is the basis adopted in other parts of the world. It should be noted that as admitted by the Secretary, Ministry of Shipping & Transport, nondevelopment of roads with high density of traffic, especially feeder roads, to the National Highway standards is detrimental to the smooth movement of traffic in the country. The Committee accordingly recommend that the criteria for declaring roads as National Highways must be changed or ways and means should be found to develop such roads upto the National Highway standards.
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otherwise. The Committee would, in particular suggest that, on strategic considerations, roads connecting Delhi-Bikaner, Delhi-Rohtak-Ludhiana, and Agra-Jaipur should be declared as National Highways.

12. 4.24 Under the present system of execution of National Highways works through the agency of State Governments Union Territory Administration, there is substantial time and cost overrun and the expenditure has been largely in excess of the sanctioned estimates of individual works and overall always in excess of the amount voted by Parliament. In the process the agents have nothing to lose but they gain by way of higher agency charges at the rate of 10 per cent of actual expenditure. The financial control is evidently lax and the general impression is one of lack of proper accountability. This had naturally led to the appointment of a committee under the Chairmanship of Shri V.V. Vohra "to review the agency system for National Highways." The Committee would await the action taken on the report of the committee submitted to Government in September 1983.
13. 4.25 The Committee are anxious that the monitoring and review of the National Highway works by the Roads Wing should not be confined to review of Progress Reports received from the executing agencies and that it should be effectively backed by an inspection machinery. Though according to the Ministry the inspections are carried out by the Regional offices of the Roads Wing, the Committee desire that as agreed to by the Secretary, Ministry of Shipping and Transport, the effectiveness or otherwise of this link provided between the executing agencies and the Roads Wing headquarters should be reviewed by him for such improvement as may be needed.
- 14 4.26 The Secretary of the Ministry of Shipping and Transport admitted before the Committee the need to "ginger up the State Governments to adopt a more rigid and hard line in the matter of ensuring quality control" and added that "if we cannot maintain the basic standard of quality control, the whole work would go waste." Confessing that

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at present there was no system of supervision by the Ministry over the quality of works executed by the State PWDs, he suggested that the Quality Control Cell of the Directorate General (RD) of the Ministry should have a conference with the State Government officials on these issues and they should also visit a few roads to see whether the quality was satisfactory. The Committee hope that the Ministry will take action as suggested and evolve a quality control mechanism at the Central level to ensure that the works carried out by the State PWDs/UT Administrations as agents of the Central Government are according to the technical standards laid down. It should also be ensured that the executing agencies have set up adequate quality control units as they are paid one per cent of the cost of the works towards quality control.

- 15 4.27 The Committee observe that the allotment of funds for maintenance of National Highways is considerably less than what is justified on the basis of 'norms'. For instance, as against Rs. 69 crores required as per norms, the allotment for the year 1982-83 was only Rs. 51 crores. The *ad hoc* reduction in allotments against requirements could be an alibi for non-performance or bad Performance in the field. The Committee feel that once proper norms for maintenance and repairs are fixed, the requirements of funds for the purpose should be met in full.
- 16 4.28 The norms of expenditure on maintenance included a certain percentage towards special repairs and flood damage repairs. However, with the cut in the allotment for maintenance these repairs which are unavoidable get affected. The Committee are of the firm opinion that separate funds should be made available for meeting an unforeseen contingency such as damage to National Highways caused by floods, earthquake etc.
- 17 5.5 The Committee are distressed to note the extensive time and cost overrun in the completion of National Highway works. From the details of 32 major works each costing Rs. 2 crores and above furnished to them, the Committee find that this is a general phenomenon. The delays

- ranged upto 10 years and the cost escalation upto Rs. 11.77 crores. The revised estimates have not been sanctioned in 11 cases and in 9 cases the revised estimates were awaited from the States. The Committee wonder how expenditure in excess of estimates could be incurred without further sanction. Evidently the monitoring machinery of the Roads Wing is weak. The Ministry ought to ensure the regularity and propriety of the expenditure as well as timely execution of works scrupulously in future by qualitative strengthening of its machinery. The system should be thoroughly revamped for effective surveillance over execution of National Highway works, identifying bottlenecks and finding solutions therefore in coordination with the State Governments concerned.
18. 6.38 With the increasing tempo of economic activity all over the country, road traffic particularly on the National Highways, has phenomenally increased and is increasing so much so the existing Highway specifications would be inadequate. It is, therefore, necessary that the sections of the National Highways which are taking on heavy traffic should be strengthened and widened. In this context the Committee desire that, to cater for heavy traffic on the Highways and avoid fatal accidents which are on the increase, NH-I and NH-IA should be progressively widened to 8-lanes and the other National Highways to 4-lanes.
19. 6.39 The Committee suggest that action should be initiated to acquire land on both sides of the existing National Highways to enable future widening on the basis of traffic demand. Advance planning on these lines will be cost efficient in the long run. A beginning could be made with overworked section of the National Highways which will have to be widened in the near future.
20. 6.40 An effective control on the use of land outside the National Highway boundaries and prevention and removal of encroachments on the National Highways themselves is absolutely necessary in the interest of smoother flow of

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