

THIRD REPORT

COMMITTEE ON PETITIONS

(FOURTEENTH LOK SABHA)

(Presented to Lok Sabha on 20 December, 2004)

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**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI**

September, 2004/Bhadrapada, 1926 (Saka)

CONTENTS

Composition of the Committee on Petitions	(iii)
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I. INTRODUCTION	(v)
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II. REPORT:

- (i) Action Taken by the Government on the recommendations of the Committee on Petitions (Thirteenth Lok Sabha) in their Twenty-fifth Report on the representation regarding grievances of passengers of Murshidabad District due to inefficient Railway Transport System.....
- (ii) Action taken by the Government on the recommendations made by the Committee on Petitions (Thirteenth Lok Sabha) in their Twenty-ninth Report on the representation requesting to open a branch of a Nationalized Bank at Gobindnagar, Bankura, West Bengal.....
- (iii) Action taken by the Government on the recommendations made by the Committee on Petitions (Thirteenth Lok Sabha) in their Fortieth Report on the representation against the closure of the Office of Development Commissioner for Iron and Steel and its four Regional Offices (DCI&S Organisation).....

III. MINUTES

Minutes of the Second sitting of the Committee held on 1.9.2004

COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE ON PETITIONS

Shri Prabhunath Singh - Chairman

Members

2. Shri Raj Babbar
3. Shri Nandkumar Singh Chauhan
4. Shri N.S.V. Chitthan
5. Dr. M. Jagannath
6. Shri Jitin Prasad
7. Shri Baliram Kashyap
8. Shri Suresh Kurup
9. Ms. Nivedita Mane
10. Mohd. Muqueem
11. Shri Dharmendra Pradhan
12. Shri Jyotiraditya Madhavrao Scindia
13. Shri Damodar Barku Shingada
14. Shri Mansukhbhai D. Vasava
15. Shri Vijay Krishna

SECRETARIAT

1. Shri John Joseph - Additional Secretary
2. Shri R.C. Ahuja - Joint Secretary
3. Shri Brahm Dutt - Director
4. Shri J.V.G. Reddy - Assistant Director

THIRD REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON PETITIONS (FOURTEENTH LOK SABHA)

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairman, Committee on Petitions, having been authorised by the Committee to present the Report on their behalf, present this Third Report of the Committee to the House on the following matters:-

- (i) Action Taken by the Government on the recommendations of the Committee on Petitions (Thirteenth Lok Sabha) in their Twenty-fifth Report on the representation regarding grievances of passengers of Murshidabad District due to inefficient Railway Transport System.
- (ii) Action taken by the Government on the recommendations made by the Committee on Petitions (Thirteenth Lok Sabha) in their Twenty-ninth Report on the representation requesting to open a branch of a Nationalized Bank at Gobindnagar, Bankura, West Bengal.
- (iii) Action taken by the Government on the recommendations made by the Committee on Petitions (Thirteenth Lok Sabha) in their Fortieth Report on the representation against the closure of the Office of Development Commissioner for Iron and Steel and its four Regional Offices (DCI&S Organisation).

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2. The Committee considered and adopted the draft Second Report at their sitting held on 1 September, 2004.

3. The observations/recommendations of the Committee on the above matters have been included in the Report.

NEW DELHI;

1 September, 2004
10 Bhadrapada, 1926(Saka)

PRABHU NATH SINGH
Chairman,
Committee on Petitions.

CHAPTER - I

ACTION TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE COMMITTEE ON PETITIONS (THIRTEENTH LOK SABHA) IN THEIR TWENTY-FIFTH REPORT ON THE REPRESENTATION REGARDING GRIEVANCES OF PASSENGERS OF MURSHIDABAD DISTRICT DUE TO INEFFICIENT RAILWAY TRANSPORT SYSTEM.

1.1 The Committee on Petitions (Thirteenth Lok Sabha) in their Twenty-fifth Report presented to Lok Sabha on 25th February, 2003 had dealt with a representation regarding grievances of passengers of Murshidabad District due to inefficient Railway Transport System.

1.2 The Committee made certain observations/recommendations in the matter and the Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) were requested to implement those recommendations and furnish action taken notes for the consideration of the Committee.

1.3 Action Taken notes have been received from the Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) in respect of the recommendations contained in the Report.

1.4 The Committee will now deal with the action taken by the Government on their recommendations.

1.5 In paragraphs 2.28, 2.37 and 2.38 of the Report, the Committee recommended as follows:-

“The main demands of the petitioners relate to change in the timings of 257 UP Azimganj-Rampurhat passenger trains for office goers,

introduction of Diesel Multiple Unit (DMU) train between Azimganj and Nalhati with departure of Azimganj at 1600 hrs. extension of 3017/3018 Howrah-Rampurhat Ganadevata Express upto Azimganj, change in timings of 248 Azimganj-Rampurhat passenger train, extension of any terminating trains at Azimganj upto Malda town; electrification and doubling of Sealdah-Lalgola Rail Section, construction of bridge over Bhagirathi Connecting Nashipur and Azimganj, provision of second class waiting room and provision of Computerised Passenger Counter at Azimganj Station and electrification and doubling of Katwa-Azimganj Rail Section. Apart from the above demands, the petitioners have requested that the vendors/hawkers at Railway Station should not be exploited and the punctual running of the 839 UP Azimganj-Bharharwa Passenger Train should be ensured.”

[Paragraph 2.28]

As regards the restoration works at Azimganj-Jiaganj Section and the construction of a bridge across Bhagirathi river, the Committee note that the proposal is under consideration of the Planning Commission for necessary approval. The Committee recommend that Railways should pursue the matter vigorously for obtaining requisite approval of the project. Needless to emphasise, after getting approval, early steps would be taken to start the project.

[Paragraph 2.37]

On the question of doubling and electrification of the Azimganj-Katwa Section, the Committee note that no survey has been conducted in recent past by the Railways. In case of electrification, a survey had been conducted by Eastern Railway in the year 1999-2000 and the cost of electrification had been estimated to Rs.53.18 crores at that time. The Committee are of the firm view that the Azimganj-Katwa Section should be electrified in order to provide faster EMU trains for the convenience of passengers after carrying out a fresh survey. The Committee also recommend that a proper and comprehensive survey of this section is carried out for doubling of the rail line. Henceforth, suitable budgetary allocation may be made for sanctioning of the electrification and doubling works at Azimganj-Katwa Section.

[Paragraph 2.38]

1.6 In their action taken note, the Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) have stated as follows:-

(i) Doubling of Sealdah-Lalgola section.

From Krishnanagar to Lalgola, a survey for doubling of Krishnanagar-Lalgola Section was conducted in 2001-2002. The results of the survey have revealed cost of doubling of the 127.67 Km. long line as Rs.224.00 crore with a negative rate of return. In view of the grossly unremunerative nature of the project coupled with the severe resource constraints, the proposal could not be taken up for consideration.

Regarding doubling from Krishnanagar to Sealdah, it is stated that the work of doubling of Kalinarayanpur-Krishnanagar section including extension of gauge conversion from Krishnanagar-Shantipur and new line from Krishnanagar-Chartala is an approved work which has been taken up. Two tenders for earthwork have been awarded and work is in progress. The anticipated expenditure incurred on the project upto 31.3.2002 is Rs.5.23 crore. An outlay of Rs.1 crore has been allocated for the work in Budget 2003-04. The work would be progressed and completed in the coming years as per availability of resources.

The traffic on Kalinaryanpur-Ranaghat section has not yet reached the level to justify its doubling. Doubling will be considered once the traffic warrants the same, subject to availability of resources.

The section from Ranaghat-Sealdah is already doubled.

(ii) Construction of bridge over Bhagirathi connecting Nashipur and Azimganj.

The work of restoration of line from Azimganj to Jiaganj (Nasipur) upto the Ghats was included in the Budget 2001-2002 at an anticipated cost of Rs.22.78 crore subject to the proviso that work would be taken up after obtaining requisite clearances. Meanwhile, a survey for construction of a rail link between Azimganj and Jiaganj including a new bridge across river Bhagirath between Azimganj and Nasipur/Jiaganj, has been completed. As per the results of the survey, the cost of construction of the 6.5 km. long line alongwith the rail bridge has been assessed as Rs.46.70 crore with a negative rate of return (-5.60%). At present the rail link between the two towns is via Sealdah – Ranaghat – Krishnanagar which is about 417 km. long. The construction of the bridge over river Bhagirathi alongwith link lines will improve rail connectivity between the two existing lines on either side of the river. Necessary action for obtaining clearances for the work of restoration of line from Azimganj to Jiaganj (Nasipur) alongwith construction of the bridge, has been initiated. The Planning Commission to whom the proposal was referred for conveying 'in principle' approval have not supported the proposal.

(iii) Doubling of Azimganj – Katwa rail section.

Doubling of single line sections is taken up when their carrying capacity is saturated. The traffic on Azimganj-Katwa section has not yet reached the level to justify its doubling. Doubling will be considered once the traffic warrants the same subject to availability of resources.

As far as electrification is concerned, the comments are as under:-

Sealdah-Krishnanagar section is already electrified. The electrification of Krishnanagar-Lalgola is a sanctioned work and targeted for completion by March 2005.

So far as electrification of Katwa-Azimganj is concerned, due to constraint of resources and relative priority for electrification of other high density routes, there is, at present no proposal to electrify this section.

Provision of computerised reservation counter at Azimganj:

Computerized reservation facilities are capital intensive and also involve significant recurring costs. These are provided at railway stations registering a large number of reservation related transactions. The reservation workload at Azimganj Railway Station is not high enough to warrant this level of investment at present.

1.7 In paragraphs 2.29 and 2.30 of the Report, the Committee observed as follows:-

“The Committee have been apprised that remedial action would be taken through Director-General of Police, West Bengal to prevent exploitation of vendors/hawkers at the Railway Stations under Eastern Railways. The Committee also note with satisfaction that instructions have been issued to concerned railway authorities to keep a close watch on the punctual running of 839/840 UP Azimganj-Barharwa Passenger Train. The Committee have been assured that Railways are trying their best to run trains as per the schedule.

[Paragraph 2.29]

The Committee also note that the 241/242 Malda Town-Azimganj Passenger Train has been introduced between Malda Town and Azimganj w.e.f. 15.8.2001. The Committee trust that this step must have benefited the large number of passengers on Malda-Azimganj-Barharwa Sections.

[Paragraph 2.30]

1.8 In paragraph 2.31 of the Report, the Committee recommended as follows:-

“The Committee are informed that the Eastern Railways is agreeable to the proposal of extension of 257 UP Azimganj-Rampurhat Passenger Train and running of this train at office time for the benefit of the railway passengers. The Railway Board is following up the proposal. As regards the timings, the Committee are happy to note that Railways have decided to prepone the timings of 257 Azimganj-Rampurhat Train, Ex-Azimganj w.e.f. 01.7.2003 on an experimental basis for three months. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the proposed review of the extension of the 257 Azimganj-Rampurhat Passenger Train should be expedited keeping in view the larger interests of passengers of the areas.”

1.9 In their action taken notes, the Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) have stated that the main demand was to run 257 Azimganj-Rampurhat Passenger on Office time upto Rampurhat not the extension of train upto Rampurhat as this train is already running upto Rampurhat. Further it is proposed to change in the timings of 257 Azimganj-Rampurhat Passenger Ex.Azimganj at 0730 hours and reaching Rampurhat at 0945 hours from 01.07.2003 on an experimental basis for three months.

1.10 Elaborating the latest position in the matter, the Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) vide their communication dated 9 February, 2004 have stated that the main demand was to run 257 Azimganj-Rampurhat Passenger on Office time upto Rampurhat not the extension of train upto Rampurhat as this train is already running upto Rampurhat. 257 UP Azimganj-Rampurhat Passenger used to run between Azimganj and Rampurhat Ex.Azimganj at 0900 hours arriving Rampurhat at 1110 hours. On recommendation of this Petition Committee the timings of 257 Azimganj-Rampurhat Passenger has been changed Ex.Azimganj at 0730 hours and reaching Rampurhat at 0945 hours from 01.07.2003 on an

experimental basis for three months. In view of mass scale agitations, representations from local MP and other passenger Associations, the previous timings of the train has been restored from 16.9.2003.

1.11 In paragraph 2.32 of the Report, the Committee recommended as follows:-

“In respect of introduction of Diesel Multiple Unit (DMU) train between Azimganj and Nalhati; the Committee have been apprised that an additional DMU train is not considered feasible by Railway authorities due to acute shortage of DMU rakes and lack of maintenance facilities for DMU (push pull) of rakes in the vicinity of Azimganj. The Committee note that in 2002-2003, 40 BG DMU coaches have been planned to be procured. Also in 2003-2004, it has been planned to manufacture 40 BG DMU coaches. The Committee, therefore, recommend that suitable measures be taken to procure necessary number of DMU coaches so as to provide DMU trains wherever required to improve railway facilities. The Committee desire that feasibility of provisions of at least one DMU in Azimganj-Nalhati Section with provision for maintenance facilities of DMU rakes near Azimganj be explored.”

1.12 In their action taken note, the Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) have stated that 5 pairs of trains are running on Azimganj-Rampurhat section. These are considered adequate for the existing level of traffic offering on the section. Introduction of DMU train between Nalhati and Azimganj Ex.Nalhati at 1600 hours is not feasible as no maintenance facilities for DMU (Push Pull) Rakes is available in the vicinity of Azimganj.

However, 255 Rampurhat-Nalhati-Azimganj Passenger used to leave Rampurhat at 14.50 hours and ex.Nalhati at 15.22 hours towards Azimganj. The timings of this train have been revised with departure Rampurhat at 15.10 hours and ex.Nalhati at 15.45 hours arriving Azimganj at 17.25 hours on the recommendations of the Committee. Regarding provision of maintenance facilities of DMU push pull rakes near Azimganj, presently there is no

maintenance facility for DMUs. Investment in maintenance infrastructure for the maintenance of only one DMU rake will not be economically viable.

1.13 In paragraph 2.33 of the Report, the Committee recommended as follows:-

“The Committee are informed that the work of giving the provision of a waiting hall at Azimganj Station had been considered in preliminary works programme 2002-2003 for inclusion in the Final Works Programme 2002-2003. However, this work could not be finally included in the works programme in view of the limited availability of resources. The Committee desire that suitable budgetary provisions should be earmarked and sanctioned for the construction of the waiting hall at Azimganj Station for the convenience of the passengers, at the earliest possible.”

1.14 In their action taken notes, the Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) have stated that the suggestion regarding provision of waiting hall at Azimganj at the earliest possible has been noted. In the meantime, the work of provision of one bay platform shed on platform No.4 at Azaimganj has been completed for the convenience of passengers.

1.15 In paragraph 2.34 of the Report, the Committee recommended on follows:-

“The Committee note that the Sealdah-Krishnanagar Section is already electrified whereas the Krishnanagar-Lalgola Section has not yet been electrified. The Committee are deeply perturbed to learn that although the electrification of Krishnanagaar-Lalgola Section had been included in Railway Budget 2000-2001 and targetted to be completed by March, 2003, the target date has not been adhered to. The electrification of Krishnanagar-Lalgola section is now targetted to be completed by March, 2005. The Committee, therefore, recommend that sincere efforts should be made by the Railways for timely completion of electrification works of the Krishnanagar-Lalgola section.”

1.16 In their action taken note, the Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) have stated that the electrification of Krishnanagar-Lalgola section is a sanctioned work at an estimated cost of Rs.63.84 crore. Due to relative priority of other important electrification projects, the work on this project could not be taken up. The preparatory work is in hand and the project is now targetted for completion by March, 2005. All efforts shall be made to adhere to this target.

1.17 In paragraph 2.35 of the Report, the Committee recommended as follows:-

“The Committee note that the survey of doubling of Lalgola-Krishnanagar Section has already been completed. The survey report is under examination of the Zonal Railway and the project would be considered after the results of the survey are finalised. The Committee trust that the said survey report is under examination of the Zonal Railway and the project would be considered after the results of the survey are finalised. The Committee trust that the said survey report would be finalised early, with a view to follow up the project further.”

1.18 In their action taken note, the Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) have stated that a survey for doubling of Krishnanagar-Lalgola section was conducted in 2001-2002 and the results of the survey have been finalized. As per the results of the survey, cost of doubling of the 127.67 km long line had been assessed at Rs.224 crore with a negative rate of return. In view of the grossly unremunrative nature of the project coupled with the severe resource constraints, the proposal could not be taken up for consideration.

1.19 In paragraph 2.36 of the Report, the Committee recommended as follows:-

“As regards the doubling of the Krishnanagar-Kalinaraynpur, the Committee are informed that the work is currently in progress. An expenditure of Rs.3,84 crores has been incurred in this project upto March, 2002 and an outlay of Rs.2 crore has been provided during 2002-2003. The Committee recommend that the doubling works of the Krishnanagar-Kalinarayanpur Section should be completed in coordination with the State Government of West Bengal, expeditiously.

1.20 In their action taken note, the Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) have stated that the work of doubling of Kalinarayanpur-Krishnanagar section including extension as gauge conversion from Krishnanagar-Shantipur and new line from Krishnanagar-Chartala is an approved work which has been taken up. Two tenders for earthwork have been awarded and work is in progress. The anticipated expenditure incurred on the project upto 31.3.2003 is Rs.5.62 crore. An outlay of Rs.1 crore has been allocated for the work in Budget 2003-04. The work would be progressed and completed in the coming years as per availability of resources.

Observations/Recommendations

1.21 From the action taken replies furnished by the Ministry of Railways with regard to all their recommendations, the Committee note that the Ministry have taken up or agreed to take up the works on the following demands of the petitioners:-

- (a) Doubling of Kalinarayanpur-Krishnanagar Section including extension of gauge conversion from Krishnanagar – Shantipur and new line from Krishnanagar – Chartale;**
- (b) obtaining of clearances for restoration of line from Azimganj to Jiaganj alongwith construction of the Bridge over Bhagirathi connecting Nashipur and Azimganj;**
- (c) provision of one bay platform shed on platform No. 4 Azimganj along with provision of a waiting Hall; and**
- (d) electrification of Krishnanagar-Lalgola Section.**

1.22 To obviate time and cost overruns in respect of the above works and also to ensure better rail services to the passengers of the area, the Committee recommend that the Ministry provide adequate budgetary allocation for the works taken up/to be taken up and ensure their completion within the prescribed period. The Committee would like to be apprised of the conclusive action taken in this regard within a period of six months.

1.23 As regards the request of the petitioners for (i) introduction of Diesel Multiple Unit (DMU) train between Azimganj and Nalhati; (ii) Extension of Howrah-Rampurhat Ganadewata Express up to Azimganj; (iii) change in timings of 248 Azimganj-Rampurhat Passenger train; (iv) provision of computerized passenger counter at Azimganj station; (v) doubling of Sealdah-Lalgola Rail Section, etc., the Committee note that the Ministry of Railways have found it difficult to take up these works due to their economic non-viability or administrative difficulty. The Committee desire that these demands would be taken into consideration by the Railways in future while reviewing the passenger amenities/railway facilities/upgradation of railways in the area.

CHAPTER - II

ACTION TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE COMMITTEE ON PETITIONS (THIRTEENTH LOK SABHA) IN THEIR 29TH REPORT ON THE REPRESENTATION REQUESTING TO OPEN A BRANCH OF A NATIONALISED BANK AT GOBINDANAGAR, BANKURA, WEST BENGAL.

2.1 The Committee on Petitions (Thirteenth Lok Sabha) in their Twenty-ninth Report presented to Lok Sabha on 22 July, 2003 had dealt with a representation requesting to open a branch of a nationalised bank at Gobindanagar, Bankura, West Bengal.

2.2 The Committee had made their observations/recommendations in the matter and the Ministry of Finance (Department of Economic Affairs – Banking Division) were requested to implement those recommendations and furnish their action taken notes for the consideration of the Committee.

2.3 Action Taken notes have been received from the Ministry of Finance (Department of Economic Affairs – Banking Division) in respect of the recommendation contained in the report. The recommendation made by the Committee and the replies thereto furnished by the Ministry of Finance (Department of Economic Affairs – Banking Division) are discussed in succeeding paragraphs.

2.4 In para 1.20 of the Report, the Committee had observed/recommended as follows:-

“The representatives of the Ministry and Reserve Bank of India were candid in admitting before the Committee that the people of Gobindanagar need and deserve better banking facilities. They mooted the following possible suggestions:-

- (i) Opening of a Branch by Syndicate Bank in Gobindanagar.
- (ii) One of the Branches of Bank of India and UCO bank which are located within a distance of 800 metres and 1.5 kms. could be shifted to Gobindanagar.
- (iii) An extension counter of a nationalised bank could be opened in any institution like Medical College or Degree College located in Gobindanagar, which could provide space and infrastructure facilities.

The Committee feel that shifting of existing Branches of UCO Bank and Bank of India may cause inconvenience to their customers. Similarly it could be a difficult task to force educational institutions to provide space and infrastructure to open a bank branch or counter. They, therefore, would like the Government to consider the proposal of opening a branch of Syndicate Bank at Gobindanagar earnestly with a view to redressing the grievance of the petitioners and meeting the basic banking needs of the residents of Gobindanagar. The Committee would like to be apprised of the concrete action taken in this regard within six months from the date of presentation of the report.”

2.5 The Ministry of Finance (Department of Economic Affairs – Banking Division) in their action taken replies have stated that,

“The issue of opening of a branch of Gobindnagar has been considered in consultation with Syndicate Bank, UCO Bank and the United Bank of India, which is a Lead Bank for the district of Bankura.

While the United Bank of India agreed that people of Gobindnagar deserve better banking facilities, the Mallabhum Gramin Bank (a RRB) had obtained RBI's permission to open a branch there. As to opening its own branch, the United Bank stated that it would open a branch in due course.

Syndicate Bank and UCO Bank after examining the matter had reported that they are unable to consider the proposal, as opening a branch of Gobindnagar is not economically feasible at present. Syndicate Bank has also further reported that as there is no branch of its own within a radius of 70 kms., it is not possible to open an Extension Counter in the premises of either Medical College or Degree College.

UCO Bank has reported that the banking needs of Gobindnagar area are already satisfactorily being served by Mallabhum Gramin Bank and also its Rajagaram Branch which is only at a distance of 1.5. Kms.

It is further submitted that Reserve Bank of India vide its letter dated 13.8.2001 had given autonomy to the banks in the matter of opening of new branches with the approval of their respective Board of Directors."

Observation/Recommendation

2.6 The Committee take note of the submission made by the Ministry of Finance (Department of Economic Affairs – Banking Division) that the United Bank of India has agreed that people of Gobindnagar deserve better banking facilities and it would open a Branch in due course. Also the Mallabhum Gramin Bank (a RRB) has obtained RBI's permission to open a Branch there.

2.7 The Committee have also been apprised that the Reserve Bank of India vide its letter dated 13.8.2001 had given autonomy to the Banks in the matter of opening of new Branches with the approval of their respective Board of Directors.

2.8. The Committee would like the Ministry of Finance to pursue the matter with United Bank of India to open a Branch of their Bank at Gobindanagar at the earliest, to meet the genuine demand of the petitioners.

CHAPTER-III

ACTION TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE COMMITTEE ON PETITIONS (THIRTEENTH LOK SABHA) IN THEIR FORTIETH REPORT ON THE REPRESENTATION AGAINST THE CLOSURE OF THE OFFICE OF DEVELOPMENT COMMISSIONER FOR IRON AND STEEL AND ITS FOUR REGIONAL OFFICES (DCI&S ORGANISATION)

3.1 The Committee on Petitions (Thirteenth Lok Sabha) in their Fortieth Report presented to Lok Sabha on 30 January, 2004 had dealt with the representation against the closure of the office of Development Commissioner for Iron and Steel and its four Regional Offices (DCI&S Organisation).

3.2 The Committee had made certain observations/recommendations in the Report and the Ministry of Steel were requested to implement those recommendations and furnish their action replies for consideration of the Committee.

3.3 Action taken replies have been received from the Ministry of Steel in respect of all the recommendations/observations contained in the Report.

3.4 The Committee will now deal with the action taken by the Government on their recommendations/observations.

3.5 In para 1.19 of the report, the Committee observed as follows:

“The petitioners, in their representation submitted to the Committee, have submitted that on account of Government decision for the closure of the Office of Development Commissioner for Iron & Steel (DCI&S) and its

four Regional Offices, 188 employees in the main office and 33 employees in the four Regional Offices would be rendered 'surplus'. The petitioners

have also submitted that they apprehend retrenchment if they are not re-deployed within a period of one year. According to the petitioners, the orders have been issued for the closure of DCI&S Office w.e.f. 23rd May, 2003."

3.6 In their action taken reply the Ministry of Steel have stated:

"In pursuance of the recommendations of Expenditure Reforms Commissions (ERC) a decision has been taken to close down the Development Commissioner for Iron and Steel (DCI&S) Organisation including its 4 regional offices w.e.f. 23.5.2003. Surplus Cells have been created and those employees against whom there are no vigilance cases pending or being contemplated have been declared surplus. The apprehension expressed by the petitioners that they will be retrenched in case they are not re-deployed within one year is not correct. As per the Department of Personnel & Training (DOPT) guidelines all surplus employees continue to draw their salaries till such time they get re-deployed to other posts or demit office as a result of their superannuation, resignation or special voluntary retirement.

The above position was reiterated in the Minister of Steel's communication dated 29.9.2003 to the Chairmen Committee on Petitions.

3.7 In para 1.20 of the Report, the Committee observed as follows:-

"The Committee were informed by the representatives of the Ministry of Steel that the closure of the Office of DSCI&S is based on the recommendations of the Expenditure Reforms Commission. The rationale behind the recommendations is reported to be the de-regulation of steel industry in 1992 and also transfer of its other functions to Joint Plant Committee and to the Ministry of Steel. The Committee were also informed that as per Prime Minister's directives, the recommendations of ERC are not to be re-examined de novo."

3.8 In their action taken reply, the Ministry of Steel have stated:-

"The Ministry of Steel has no further comments to offer."

3.9 In para 1.21 of the Report, the Committee observed as follows:-

“In regard to the employees concern about their re-deployment and retrenchment, the Secretary, Ministry of Steel assured the Committee that as per existing Government guidelines, the employees are not to be retrenched; rather they are to be re-deployed. Such employees continue to get their salary until they retire or take voluntary retirement.”

3.10 In their action taken reply, the Ministry of Steel have stated:

“As per the DOPT revised rules on redeployment, all surplus employees continue to draw their salaries till such time they get re-deployed to other posts or demit office as a result of their superannuation, resignation, or special voluntary retirement.”

3.11 In para 1.22 of the Report, the Committee observed as follows:-

“The Committee are yet to get any reply from the Ministry of Steel about the implementation of the recommendations of the Standing Committee on Industry made in their 34th Report recommending a major role for DCI&S and its continuance. The Committee would accordingly await Governments specific reply in this regard including the specific reply to the Committee’s query as to whether this recommendation was considered by the Government at the time of taking the decision for the closure of DCI&S Office. In any case, as assured by the Steel Secretary, none of the employees of DCI&S would be retrenched.”

3.12 In their action taken reply, the Ministry of Steel have stated:-

“The Department Related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Industry (DRPSI) in its 34th report had observed that if the existence of the office of Development Commissioner for Iron and Steel, has any justification for its continuation, especially in view of the Government’s general policy of downsizing its departments, the office has really to play pivotal role for development and growth of the steel industry in general.

However, upon receipt of the recommendations of the Expenditure Reforms Commission, this issue was examined at length. Discussions were also held with representatives of the steel industry. After taking into

consideration all aspects, including the recommendations made by the DRPSCI in its 34th report, it was felt that with transfer of certain functions

-4-

to the Ministry of Steel and by entrusting the Joint Plant Committee with the task of data collection from the secondary sector, the role of the DCI&S office was extremely limited and did not justify its continuance. Hence, a decision was taken to close down the office of DCI&S w.e.f. 23.5.2003.”

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

3.13 The Committee note that the decision to close down the office of Development Commissioner for Iron and Steel (CI&S) Organisation including its 4 regional offices w.e.f. 25.3.2003 was taken in pursuance of the recommendation made by the Expenditure Reforms Commission for downsizing Departments. The Committee further note that while taking this decision due consideration was given to (i) the recommendation made by the Department related Standing Committee on Commerce in their 34 Report for a major role for DCI&S; (ii) views of the representatives of the Steel Industry; and (iii) the limited role of the DCI&S after transfer of certain functions to the Ministry of Steel and entrusting the Joint Plant Committee with the basic data collection from the secondary Sector.

3.14 The Committee also note that as per the Department of Personnel & Training (DOPT) guidelines and assurance given by the Secretary and the Minister of Steel, all surplus employees of DCI&S will not face any retrenchment and they will continue to draw their salaries till such time they get redeployed to other posts or demit office as a result of their superannuation, resignation or special voluntary retirement.

3.15 The Committee trust that the guidelines of the DOPT and assurances of the Minister of Steel in regard to the surplus employees of the DCI&S would be honoured in letter and spirit and the same would not be altered/modified in any manner at a later stage to the detriment of interests of the employees declared surplus.

**MINUTES OF THE SECOND SITTING OF THE COMMITTEE ON PETITIONS
(FOURTEENTH LOK SABHA)**

The Committee on Petitions sat on Wednesday, 1st September, 2004 from 1500 to 1600 hrs. in Committee Room No. 62, First Floor, Parliament House, New Delhi.

PRESENT

Shri Prabhunath Singh - Chairman

MEMBERS

- 2. Shri Nandkumar Singh Chauhan**
- 3. Dr. M. Jagannath**
- 4. Shri Suresh Kurup**
- 5. Mohd. Muqueem**

SECRETARIAT

- 1. Shri John Joseph - Additional Secretary**
- 2. Shri R.C. Ahuja - Joint Secretary**
- 3. Shri Brahm Dutt - Director**
- 3. Shri J.V.G. Reddy - Assistant Director**

2. The Committee considered and adopted their draft First, Second and Third Reports with certain amendments as shown in the Appendix.

3. The Committee decided to hold their next sitting on 16 September, 2004 for taking evidence of the representatives of the Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) on two representations.

The Committee then adjourned.