

Friday,
20th February, 1948

THE
CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY OF INDIA
(LEGISLATIVE) DEBATES

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CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY OF INDIA (LEGISLATIVE)

Friday, 20th February 1948.

The Assembly met in the Assembly Chamber of the Council House at Eleven of the Clock, Mr. Speaker (The Honourable Mr. G. V. Mavalankar) in the Chair.

STARRED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

ORAL ANSWERS

ACHIEVEMENTS OF COUNCIL OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

354. *Shri Damodar Swarup Seth: Will the Honourable Minister of Agriculture be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to have a comprehensive review of the achievements of the Council of Agricultural Research; and

(b) whether any steps are contemplated for its effective functioning, as the clearing house of information relating to agriculture and animal husbandry and expounding its publicity activities?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulatram: (a) and (b). The Governing Body of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research at its meeting held in January, 1948 have approved of the appointment of a Research Reorganisation Committee to review the work so far done by the Council and suggest its future lines of work. The Committee will shortly be constituted.

The proposal for establishing an Information Bureau under the Indian Council of Agricultural Research is under active consideration. This Bureau, when established, will be responsible for undertaking *inter alia* the collection and collation of technical information and knowledge, for answering enquiries pertaining to agricultural and animal husbandry matters and for disseminating results of researches which are capable of practical application in the farmers' fields. The proposed Bureau will also provide satisfactory facilities for training agricultural graduates and officers from the various Provinces and States, and also the centrally administered areas, in the art of propaganda and dissemination of practical knowledge with a view to help in narrowing down the existing gulf between research and its application in actual practice.

Shri T. T. Krishnamachari: May I ask the Honourable Minister if the terms of reference to the proposed Committee are to be confined only to research work of this Council or it is also to include the financial side of its operations as whenever the Council finds it is not convenient, it seems to be in the habit of pushing away its responsibility for research to the Agricultural Department?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulatram: It will consider also the financial aspect of the problem.

Shri Ramnarayan Singh: May I know what are the achievements of these researches within the past few years?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulatram: That exactly is a matter which will be reviewed.

Dr. Bakshi Tek Chand: Will this Committee have any members of this House also or will it consist only of experts?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulatram: I will consider that suggestion.

Shri T. T. Krishnamachari: May I ask the Honourable Minister if he is aware that the last report of the Committee that was issued for the year 1944-45 which was recently received in the Library and no further report of the Committee's activities has been available to the public or this House in the intervening period between 1944-45 and now. Will the Honourable Minister ensure that the efficiency of the work of this Council of Agricultural Research will also form part of the terms of reference to the Committee?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulatram: That will be done.

Shri Ramnarayan Singh: What is the method by which the results of these researches are brought to the actual cultivators?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulatram: There is another question on that point. I will give a full reply when that question is reached.

Shri T. T. Krishnamachari: May I ask the Honourable Minister if his attention has been drawn to the recommendations of the Policy Committee on Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, especially in regard to the reorganisation of the Council of Agricultural Research? Will he take this report into consideration in framing the terms of reference to the Committee?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulatram: That also will be done.

COMPLAINTS AGAINST CONTRACTOR OF HINDU RESTAURANTS ON OUDH AND TIRHUT RAILWAY

355. *Shri Mohan Lal Saksena: Will the Honourable Minister of Railways be pleased to state whether Government are aware that several complaints were lodged with the Traffic and General Managers of the Oudh and Tirhut Railway by members of the United Provinces Legislature and other important persons against the present contractor, who supplies Hindu cooked food at Lucknow Junction and its suburban stations on the Oudh and Tirhut Railway and that no reply has been given and no action taken on the said complaints by these authorities? If so, why?

The Honourable Dr. John Matthai: I am informed that no specific complaints have been made to the General and Traffic Managers of the Oudh Tirhut Railway by members of the United Provinces Legislature or other important persons against the present contractor who supplies Hindu cooked food at Lucknow Junction. Requests have, however, been made for his replacement and suggestions have been advanced as to who might replace him. The Central Advisory Council for Railways last year recommended and the Railway Board accepted their recommendation that contractors who have rendered satisfactory service should not be replaced unless their removal is justified by proved complaints against their service. Consequently the O.T. Railway have not been able to consider the requests made to them. If however specific complaints are made which admit of investigation, I will ask the Railway authorities to examine them.

PROGRESS IN CONSTRUCTION AND USE OF GANNAVARAM AERODROME

356. *Prof. N. G. Ranga: Will the Honourable Minister of Communications be pleased to state:

(a) whether any progress has been made since the last session of the Constituent Assembly of India (Legislative) in preparing the Gannavaram aerodrome for servicing airliners;

(b) whether it is proposed to route any of the Airways Companies via Gannavaram in flights between Calcutta and Madras and Delhi-Hyderabad and Madras;

*Answer to this question laid on the table, the questioner being absent.

(c) whether any Airways Companies have asked for permission to use Gannavaram aerodrome as one of their stopping places during flights between Delhi and Madras, Calcutta and Madras and Delhi-Hyderabad and Madras and if so, which; and

(d) whether any of those Companies have been given permission to have a service from Delhi to Madras via Jubbalpore and Gannavaram and if so, when this service will be started?

The Honourable Mr. Rafi Ahmad Kidwai: (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c). Applications have been received by the Air Transport Licensing Board from Jupiter Airways Limited, Airways (India) Limited and Indian Overseas Airlines Limited for licences to operate air services between Calcutta and Madras with Gannavaram as one of the scheduled halts. Jupiter Airways Limited has also applied for a licence to operate on the route Delhi to Madras with Gannavaram as one of the scheduled halts.

(d) Airways (India) Limited have been granted a provisional licence to operate on the Calcutta-Madras route via Gannavaram. Regular halts at Gannavaram are however not being made as the aerodrome at Gannavaram is not yet properly equipped for the purpose.

PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION OF PAPER IN INDIA.

†357. ***Seth Govinddas:** Will the Honourable Minister of Industry and Supply be pleased to state:

(a) the quantity of paper manufactured in this country in a normal year and its normal annual consumption; and

(b) whether Government propose to take steps to make arrangements for training people in pulp and paper manufacture and to provide the finances for starting such industries in this country with a view to make India self-sufficient in pulp and paper?

The Honourable Shri N. V. Gadgil: (a) The estimated production of paper (excluding boards) during 1946 was 1,06,000 tons and during 1947, 80,000 tons. The estimated consumption now is 2,00,000 tons.

(b) Arrangements for imparting training in Pulp and Paper Industry already exist at the Forest Research Institute, Dehra Dun. In addition, scholarships are awarded periodically to suitable candidates to get technical training abroad.

Government do not consider it necessary to finance Paper and Pulp Industry, as there is no sign of dearth of private capital for schemes connected with the expansion of this industry.

AMALGAMATION OF RAILWAY ACCOUNTS AND AUDIT DEPARTMENTS AND AUDIT OF FOREIGN TRAFFIC EARNINGS

358. ***Shri Damodar Swarup Seth:** Will the Honourable Minister of Railways be pleased to state:

(a) the reason or reasons for not amalgamating Railway Accounts and Audit Departments; and

(b) the reasons for suspending the audit of foreign traffic earnings, by the Chief Auditor, Railway Clearing Accounts?

The Honourable Dr. John Matthai: (a) The Railway Accounts and Audit were separated in 1929 for reasons which will be found stated at length in the reports of various expert committees, e.g., the Acworth Committee, the Dickinson Committee and the Wedgwood Committee, and in the memorandum placed before the Railway Standing Finance Committee on 7th September 1928 all of which are available in the Library of the House. The scheme had the blessings of the Auditor-General and the subject was debated fully on the floor of the old Legislative Assembly. It was also dealt with in the report of the

†Answer to this question laid on the table, the questioner being absent.

Railway Retrenchment Sub-Committee of the Retrenchment Advisory Committee appointed in 1931 who turned down the suggestion to revert to the old system in spite of economies expected from such a course, because in their view "a system under which the Accounts staff worked as part of the Railway organization with an independent Audit establishment under an outside agency was much the better system". Recently the re-amalgamation of Railway Audit and Accounts under the Auditor-General was again suggested by the Secretariat Reorganisation Committee presided over by Sir Girja Shankar Bajpai so as to economise in superior personnel. The matter was examined in detail by a committee including the Financial Commissioner of Railways and the Deputy Auditor-General, who came to the unanimous conclusion that such re-amalgamation was not desirable and no economies in superior man power could result therefrom. Government have accepted this conclusion.

(b) The audit of foreign traffic earnings by the Chief Auditor of Railway Clearing Accounts Office has been suspended by the Auditor-General with the exception of the apportionment of traffic between Indian Government Railways and the Railways which are not the property of the Government of India, because he considered such suspension justified, now that all the principal Railways are under State management.

Shri Mohan Lal Saksena: May I know in view of the fact that there is a difference of views between the recommendations of the Reorganisation Secretariat Committee and the committee appointed by the Honourable Minister, whether he will consider the advisability of appointing an independent committee of this House to go into the recommendations of both and find out as to which should be accepted?

The Honourable Dr. John Matthai: No, the last Committee which went into this question was a committee which was appointed by the Cabinet, and it was the Cabinet also which appointed the Secretariat Reorganisation Committee.

Shri K. Santhanam: May I know why the matter was not brought before the Standing Finance Committee?

The Honourable Dr. John Matthai: There was no Standing Finance Committee then.

Shri K. Santhanam: Will he bring it up now?

The Honourable Dr. John Matthai: No, the matter has been decided for the time being.

POSTS AND GRADES OF SUPERIOR SERVICE OFFICERS IN RAILWAY ACCOUNTS DEPARTMENT

359. ***Shri Damodar Swarup Seth:** Will the Honourable Minister of Railways be pleased to state:

(a) the posts of Superior Service Officers and the grades of each, sanctioned for the Railway Accounts Department, since the separation of Accounts from Audit on Indian Railways; and

(b) whether the posts of Financial Commissioner of Railways, Director of Accounts and Director of Finance in the Railway Board are also included in the posts referred to in part (a) above?

The Honourable Dr. John Matthai: (a) The Superior Service posts sanctioned permanently for the Railway Accounts Department on the 1st April

1929 when the Accounts were separated from Audit were, excluding the Burma Railways, as follows:

Senior Administrative posts	...	...	...	5
Junior Administrative posts	...	...	...	7
Senior Accounts Officers	...	...	...	11
Junior Accounts Officers (including deputation reserve)			...	21
			Total	44

After all company-owned and company-managed railways have been brought under State management, and after the partition, the permanent sanctioned strength at present is as follows:

Senior Administrative posts	...	8
Junior Administrative posts	...	14
Senior Accounts Officers	...	25
Junior Accounts Officers	...	26
	Total	73

(b) Except the post of Director of Accounts, the other posts are not included in the cadre of the Railway Accounts Department.

Mr. R. K. Sidhva: What is the grade of the senior Superior Service officer and the junior service officer?

The Honourable Dr. John Matthai: I am afraid I cannot give the figures offhand, but I will give the Honourable Member the information he wants.

†360. *

IMPROVEMENT IN AGRICULTURAL METHODS AND FUNDS TO BIHAR PROVINCE FOR IRRIGATION PURPOSES.

361. *Shri Ramnarayan Singh: Will the Honourable Minister of Agriculture be pleased to state:

(a) what steps the Government of India are taking at present to improve agricultural methods;

(b) whether any allotment of funds has been made to the Province of Bihar for purposes of irrigation for the year 1947-48; and

(c) the names of all agricultural machinery (including all machinery for irrigation purposes) available for the development of agriculture?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulatram: (a) The Government of India are taking steps to improve agricultural methods in two ways; first by initiating several schemes of research on these methods through the Indian Council of Agricultural Research and second by advising on and actually subsidizing various schemes for improved agricultural methods, such as better facilities for irrigation, introduction of new types of agricultural implements, distribution of improved seeds and manures to the cultivators.

(b) Irrigation schemes of the Bihar Government involving a total expenditure of about 34 lakhs during 1947-48 have been approved by the Government of India in principle so as to enable the work to be proceeded with. The actual share of subsidy to be paid by the Central Government will, however, be decided after the receipt of further details from the Provincial Government.

†Postponed to be answered on the 24th February, 1948.

(c) The Government of India have the following agricultural machinery available with them for the development of agriculture in India: (i) Heavy tractors for the reclamation of land, and (ii) Boring rigs for the construction of tube-wells.

Apart from these machines available with the Government of India, Provincial Governments and the public have gone in for a large number of lighter cultivation tractors, improved ploughs and pumps for irrigation purposes.

Prof. N. G. Ranga: Is it true that a large number of tractors and bulldozers have been purchased by the Government of India and that they are all going to be kept here in Delhi for purposes of demonstration, instead of being distributed between different Provinces for demonstration and other work there?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulatram: No. That is not a fact. Quite a large number of tractors are now at work in the U.P. and will be going also to C.P.

Prof. N. G. Ranga: Is it not a fact that a very large station with a number of these tractors and bulldozers is being built up here in Delhi and that there is not much scope for adequate demonstration work in this area alone?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulatram: I think what the Honourable Member seems to be referring to is a large number of tractors which have recently been purchased and which are undergoing repairs and so are not yet in use.

Shri Ramnarayan Singh: Are there any terms on which the Central Government give contributions to the Provinces, I mean subsidies to the Provinces?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulatram: With regard to subsidies, the position is that the Government of India undertakes to contribute 50 per cent. of the unrecuperative portion of the expenditure.

Prof. N. G. Ranga: Are Government financing any animal nutrition experimental stations?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulatram: How does it arise out of this question?

Prof. N. G. Ranga: For the feeding of cattle?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulatram: I will require notice of that.

Shri Ramnarayan Singh: Is it one of the terms of the Central Government that contribution to cultivators will be given by the Provincial Governments on the condition that the cultivators would share half of the expenditure themselves?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulatram: I will require notice of that.

Dr. P. S. Deshmukh: Have the Government acquired any tractors and bulldozers from the Disposals Department?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulatram: Yes.

Dr. P. S. Deshmukh: Have all of them been acquired?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulatram: I could not say offhand.

Dr. V. Subramaniam: What are the achievements of the Agricultural Institute, Pusa?

Mr. Speaker: The question is vague; the Honourable Member may put a specific question for eliciting information.

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulatram: I am prepared to give the fullest information if a specific question is put next time.

(b) Stocks were imported by wholesale dealers against quotas allotted to the administration by the Sugar Controller for India.

(c) They were to be sold at the price fixed by the local administration on the basis of cost and rates prescribed by the Sugar Controller for India. Under these arrangements the dealers were entitled to get the commission fixed by the Sugar Controller. The allowances to the dealers purported to cover their expenses and profit, but within the allowance the responsibility for profit or loss lay with the dealer.

(d) Stocks at all these places were requisitioned by the District Rationing Officer before decontrol of sugar under Chief Commissioner's Notification No. R/X, dated the 6th December, 1947 issued under the Sugar and Sugar Products Control Order, 1946. The requisitioned stocks except a small quantity of 50 bags which was kept in reserve for emergency purposes were distributed in the rationed towns of Ajmer, Beawar, Nasirabad, Pushkar and Vijayanagar on ration cards on a *per capita* basis as under:

	December	January
Ajmer	4 seers	2 seers
Beawar	6 "	..
Nasirabad	4 " 12 ch.	..
Pushkar	2 "	1 seer
Vijayanagar		

In the case of rural areas, the distribution was made on a *per capita* basis on the recommendation of the local village Panchayat under the supervision of the Sub-Divisional Officer.

(e) Possession of stocks was taken by the District Rationing Officer under the above-mentioned Notification in Ajmer and Beawar on the 6th and 7th December respectively.

QUANTITY OF SUGAR RECEIVED IN VARIOUS TOWNS OF AJMER-MERWARA
IN DECEMBER, 1947

363. *Pandit Mukut Bihari Lal Bhargava: (a) Will the Honourable Minister of Food be pleased to state what quantity of sugar was received in the city of Ajmer and the towns of Beawar, Nasirabad, Pushkar, Vijayanagar and Kekri in the Province of Ajmer-Merwara in respect of the quotas allotted to various dealers subsequent to 7th December, 1947 and who took delivery of such sugar and how it was disposed of?

(b) Were any orders for the distribution of sugar passed by the District Rationing Officer or the Provincial Government on 8th December, 1947 and on subsequent dates in respect of the stocks of sugar with the various dealers in the province? If so, to what effect and under what provision of law or legal authority were such orders passed?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulatram: (a) Quantities of sugar received subsequent to 7th December, 1947, by Ajmer and Beawar dealers were 2,186 and 1,094 bags respectively. No sugar was received at the remaining places mentioned. Deliveries were taken by the District Rationing Officer at Beawar and by the Sugar Merchants Association under Government Orders at Ajmer.

These stocks along with other requisitioned stocks except a small quantity of 50 bags which was kept in reserve for emergency purposes, were distributed in the rationed towns of Ajmer, Beawar, Nasirabad, Pushkar and Vijayanagar on ration cards on a *per capita* basis as under:

	December	January
Ajmer	4 seers	2 seers
Beawar	6 seers	...
Nasirabad	4 seers 12 ch.	...
Pushkar and Vijayanagar	2 seers	1 seer

In the case of rural areas, the distribution was made on a *per capita* basis on the recommendation of the local village Panchayat under the supervision of the Sub-Divisional Officer.

(b) Orders regarding distribution of sugar passed on or subsequent to 8th December 1947 by the District Rationing Officer were in respect of stocks the ownership of which had already passed on to the Local Administration under Chief Commissioner's Notification No. R/X,? dated the 6th December, 1947 issued under the Sugar and Sugar Products Control Order, 1946, and no provision of law or legal authority was necessary to dispose them of.

GOVERNMENT'S PLANS FOR LARGE SCALE CULTIVATION WITH TRACTORS

364. *Shri V. C. Kesava Rao: Will the Honourable Minister of Agriculture be pleased to state:

(a) how far the plans of Government to start large scale cultivation using tractors have matured;

(b) how the plots selected for cultivation will be irrigated;

(c) on what basis these lands are given to the cultivators who have been or are to be settled on the land for the purpose of cultivation; and

(d) whether Government propose to give accommodation to these settlers?

The Honourable Shri Jai Ramdas Doulatram: (a) The progress made in various Provinces in mechanical cultivation is indicated below:

U.P.—The Government of the United Provinces have prepared a scheme for reclaiming 1,50,000 acres of waste land during the next five years. Operations have started for reclaiming 20,000 acres in Meerut Khaddar and 50,000 acres in Nainital Tarai. It is expected that about 10,000 acres will be reclaimed in each of these two areas by the end of May 1948. Arrangements are also being made for follow up cultivation in these areas after the lands have been reclaimed. Tractor operations are also expected to begin shortly in Jhansi for eradication of kans on about 10,000 acres.

C.P. and Berar.—The Government of the C.P. and Berar have a five-year plan for reclaiming 50,000 acres of kans infested lands. The Provincial Government have completed preliminary arrangements for ploughing ten thousand acres of this land in the Saugor district and a unit of 30 tractors has left Delhi for operations in that area. The Provincial Government are also considering the question of purchasing some tractors for ploughing fallow land of the cultivators on demand.

Bihar.—The Government of Bihar have a plan to reclaim about 40,000 acres in Saharsa District. Of this 6,600 acres have already been reclaimed by manual labour. The Provincial Government are also examining the possibilities of reclaiming large tracts of land in South Bihar and Chota Nagpur.

Orissa.—The Government of Orissa have a five year plan for reclaiming 50,000 acres. A unit of the Central Tractor Organisation is expected to reach the site near Sikonda by October 1948 for operations.

The Governments of the West Bengal and Bombay have a five-year plan for reclaiming 50,000 acres and 30,000 acres respectively.

(b) The colonisation areas in the Khadar and Tarai possess sufficient moisture. Artificial irrigation is, therefore, not an important pre-requisite to the successful fruition of development programme in these areas. It is, however, proposed to instal tube-wells to provide water whenever required as an insurance against draught.

(c) Reclaimed land in the Khadar and the Tarai will be allotted to colonists on a 10 acre unit basis on an annual rent of Rs. 6 or Rs. 7 per acre. The cultivators will possess hereditary rights but will not be allowed to sub-let or alienate

their holdings. They will have to conform to the rules and regulations of the Co-operative Societies in the matter of cultivation and management.

(d) Government contemplate building houses for settlers in Khaddar and Tarai areas and will recover the cost in 20 to 25 years. There is no question of giving accommodation in Jhansi as no new settlers are involved at present.

Prof. N. G. Ranga: Is any effort being made to give preference to the landless agricultural workers to be settled on such lands?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulatram: That would be primarily a concern of the Provincial Governments.

Prof. N. G. Ranga: But what is the present position? Is there any information in the possession of the Government of India, or is the Government of India giving any advice to the Provincial Governments to see that preference is given to the landless agricultural workers to be settled on such lands?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulatram: So far as I am aware, there is no specific proposal before the Government of India, but Government of India will consider the suggestion.

Shri H. V. Kamath: Do Government propose to initiate any legislation to prevent the fragmentation of holdings?

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. That would be a subject for the Provinces.

Prof. N. G. Ranga: What is the position, Sir, in regard to these reclaimed lands? Are they going to be cultivated jointly and co-operatively or are they going to be distributed as between these various settlers?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulatram: Except probably in U.P., there is no definite scheme so far as I am aware. It is probably being given to individuals for individual cultivation except in the U.P.

Prof. N. G. Ranga: Will Government consider the advisability of suggesting to the Provincial Governments that co-operative undertakings should be developed instead of these individual holdings again?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulatram: Government will consider that suggestion.

گیانی گورمکھ سنگھ مسافر : کیا گورنمنٹ ویسٹ پنجاب کے ریفریجیز کسانوں کو کوئی زمین کواپریشن لائنوں پر مشرقی پنجاب سے باہر دینے کو تیار ہے ؟

Giani Gurmukh Singh Musafar: Are the Government prepared to grant any piece of land on co-operative lines outside the East Punjab to the West Punjab Refugee peasants?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulatram: Does this arise, Sir, from the present question?

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. This will be a provincial matter, as the Honourable Minister has already said.

Shri Ramnarayan Singh: May I know what is the contribution of the Central Government towards the cost of the reclamation of the land done by the Provinces?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulatram: The contribution is the use of the tractors!

FALLING PRICES OF *Gur* AND ITS EFFECT ON AGRICULTURAL ECONOMY OF INDIA

365. **Ch. Ranbir Singh:** Will the Honourable Minister of Food be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the price of *Gur* has gone down from Rs. 24 to Rs. 8 per maund; and

(b) if so, whether Government propose to take steps to check the fall in the price of *Gur*, so that the agricultural economy of the country may not be disturbed?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulatram: (a) The Honourable Member has not mentioned any particular area and the period to which the fall in price relates. Presumably he has the situation in U.P. in mind, where *gur* prices have fallen substantially since decontrol of sugar and *gur*. In September 1947 the market price of *gur* in U.P. was about Rs. 20 per maund. On the eve of decontrol, i.e., on 1st December, 1947, against the controlled price of Rs. 13-4-0 per maund the market price was Rs. 15-12-0 at Muzaffarnagar, while the price reported for the week ending 6th February, 1948 for the same market was Rs. 8-8-0 to Rs. 9-4-0 per maund. Prices of *gur* in other surplus areas, namely, Madras and Kolhapur, have also fallen, though not to such a large extent,—in Madras from Rs. 15 to Rs. 10 per maund and in Bombay from Rs. 20 to Rs. 15 per maund.

(b) The cause of the great fall in the price of *gur* in the U.P. is the lack of transport. Government are trying their best to find more transport. Government are anxious that the interests of the producers of *gur* should be safeguarded. Short of re-imposing control, government will consider the suitability of any other measures which may be suggested to help the *gur* industry.

Mr. R. K. Sidhva: Will the Honourable Minister state whether the Government will also bear in mind the trade union workers—I mean the industrial workers—while safeguarding the interests of the agricultural peasants, and see that the price does not go up?

Some Honourable Members: Oh! Industrial workers?

Shri Deshbandhu Gupta: May I know, Sir, if the Honourable Minister is aware of the fact that in U.P., particularly in the Meerut district, the present level of price does not permit the kisans to manufacture *gur*; that if due care is not taken to arrange for transport facilities; and that if the same prices continue, the sugar cane crop will dry up and it will not be useful for *gur* manufacturing and the result will be a terrible waste?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulatram: Government will take every possible step to prevent that.

Shri Deshbandhu Gupta: Has there been any response from the Transport Ministry?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulatram: We are trying our best.

The Honourable Dr. John Matthai: As far as the Transport Ministry is concerned, the position in regard to *gur* is that like all foodstuffs, movements on private account have been raised from Class IV to Class II and if there are any cases where on grounds of emergency it is necessary to provide special assistance, I am prepared to make arrangements for lifting specific quotas of *gur* to Class I.

Shri Deshbandhu Gupta: Is it not a fact, Sir, that there are 20 lakhs of maunds of *gur* lying in Meerut district awaiting transport?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulatram: That may be a fact, but as has been stated just now, every effort is being made to speed up their transport.

Shri Deshbandhu Gupta: Has this particular fact been brought to the notice of the Transport Ministry?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulatram: The whole problem of U.P. is before the Transport Ministry.

Ch. Ranbir Singh: Is it not a fact, Sir, that *gur* is being sold at Rs. 8 in Rohtak district in East Punjab?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulatram: That may be so.

Shri H. V. Kamath: Did not Government give an assurance, Sir, some time ago that the prices of agricultural commodities will not be allowed to fall?

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. The question is vague. It need not be answered.

I might here invite the attention of Honourable Members to the rules within which questions are permitted. I find there is an attempt to argue certain matters; to give information; and to make suggestions for action. Now, all questions containing arguments or suggestions for action are not permissible under the Rules, but my difficulty in respect of supplementary questions is this. By the time the Honourable Member has put his question—and I do not know what he is going to ask unless he has put his question—and I find he has put a question which is not admissible, Honourable Minister answer them without waiting for my ruling as to whether the question is admissible or not.

Prof. N. G. Ranga: So much the better, Sir!

Mr. Speaker: No, it is not better. It is bad. Therefore, I am inviting the attention of Honourable Members to the fact that questions are really intended for the purpose of getting information and not for advancing arguments or making suggestions for action to Ministers.

The Honourable Members may, therefore, concentrate on getting information rather than making suggestions. Suggestions could be made individually afterwards. I would request Honourable Members to bear in mind this rule.

Shri Mohan Lal Saksena: But this is taking matters too seriously, Sir.

Mr. Speaker: Yes, we have to take matters seriously.

SCHMES OF DEEP SEA-FISHING FROM TRAVANCORE, MADRAS AND ORISSA

366. *Shri V. C. Kesava Rao: (a) Will the Honourable Minister of Agriculture be pleased to state whether Government have received any schemes on the subject of deep sea-fishing from Travancore, Madras and Orissa?

(b) How many Government-owned factories for fish-curing for industrial purposes exist at present and where are they located?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulatram: (a) Yes.

The Central Government have sanctioned a grant of Rs. 4,93,000 for deep sea-fishing schemes of the Madras Government.

A grant of Rs. 1,82,200 has been made to the Government of Travancore for development of the fisheries of that State. The fisheries development schemes include a scheme for purchase of a Purse Seiner boat of 65 tons and other auxiliary vessels.

The Government of Orissa have asked the Central Government to base one of their fishing vessels at Chandbali port. The question of carrying out fishing operations in the Bay of Bengal and around Orissa is being actively pursued. A fishing vessel will be based at a suitable port in Orissa as soon as it can be obtained from abroad.

(b) Apparently the Honourable Member's question refers to "Fish Curing" yards which are maintained by Provincial Governments for Salting and drying

surplus catches of fish in various centres. According to the available information there are 155 fish curing yards:

West-Coast (Madras and Southern)—

16 in Batnagiri District.

14 in North Canara District.

22 in South Canara District.

34 in Malabar District.

2 Cochin.

12 Travancore.

102

102.

East Coast; Madras ... 49. }
Orissa } 53

TOTAL 155

Shri V. C. Kesava Rao: May I know whether Government have any plans at all to tap this source of wealth?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulatram: They have definite schemes before them. They are trying their best to get the requisite number of trawlers and train men to work these trawlers.

Shri V. C. Kesava Rao: May I know whether anyone has been given powers for fishing in deep sea?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulatram: I require notice of that question.

METEOROLOGICAL OBSERVATORIES IN INDIA

367. *Shri V. C. Kesava Rao: (a) Will the Honourable Minister of Communications be pleased to state the total number of Meteorological Observatories in India?

(b) What is the particular subject studied in these observatories?

(c) Are any of them fitted with Precision Chronometers?

(d) If the answer to part (c) above be in the negative, how is time correctly fixed for astronomical observations?

The Honourable Mr. Rafi Ahmad Kidwai: (a) and (b). There are different types of Observatories maintained by the India Meteorological Department. I lay on the table of the House a statement giving details of these Observatories and the work carried out by them.

(c) and (d). All these Observatories are provided with accurate Chronometers and precision clocks. The Meteorological Department makes accurate determination of time in the observatories by astronomical method, as well as, by reception of radio time-signals issued from Greenwich.

Statement

(1) Number of first class surface observatories which take continuous records of all meteorological elements such as pressure, temperature, humidity, wind velocity, wind direction, rainfall, etc.	14
(2) Number of second class observatories. These take observations of ...	202
Number of third class observatories. meteorological elements ...	10
Number of fourth class observatories: three times or two times ...	8
Number of fifth class observatories. or once daily. ...	16
Number of sixth class observatories. ...	5
(3) Pilot balloon observatories which take observations of the velocity and direction of wind in the upper air.	48
(4) Radio-sonde observatories which make daily sounding of the atmosphere to find out the pressure, temperature and humidity at different levels in the upper atmosphere.	12

In addition, there are about 2,500 rain-gauge stations maintained mainly by Provincial Governments and Indian States.

(5) There is one astronomical observatory at Kodaikanal, which makes continuous observations of the phenomena on the surface of the sun.

(6) There is one magnetic observatory at Bombay which maintains continuous records of the magnetic variations of the earth.

(7) There are four seismological observatories at Bombay, Kodaikanal, Delhi and Calcutta, which are equipped to provide information regarding earthquakes wherever they may occur.

CONSTRUCTION OF RAILWAY LINES OF SMALLER GAUGE THAN NARROW GAUGE

368. *Shri V. C. Kesava Rao: (a) Will the Honourable Minister of Railways be pleased to state whether any scheme was under consideration of Government for the construction of railway lines with a smaller gauge than the narrow gauge?

(b) Is it a fact that such railway lines have been constructed in the State of Nawanagar?

The Honourable Dr. John Matthai: (a) No scheme was contemplated by the Government for the construction of Railways with gauge smaller than 2 feet.

(b) Presumably the Honourable Member is referring to the system of transport known as Skeleton's guideways. If this is so, I would refer him to my predecessor's reply to starred question No. 236, asked by Mr. P. B. Gole on 6th November, 1946 and also to my reply to starred question No. 1471, asked by Mr. Ahmed E. H. Jaffer on 9th April, 1947, in this House. I have nothing further to add.

NON-ARRIVAL OF GOODS FROM WEST PUNJAB DISPATCHED BEFORE PARTITION

369. *Giani Gurmukh Singh Musafar: (a) Will the Honourable Minister of Railways be pleased to state whether it is a fact that goods worth lakhs of rupees despatched by non-Muslims from West Punjab before the partition of Punjab, have not reached India?

(b) What steps do Government propose to take for the restoration of these goods to their rightful owners?

The Honourable Dr. John Matthai: (a) Government understand that goods valued at a substantial amount of money despatched from West Punjab before partition have not yet reached destination stations in India.

(b) Specific instances of non-receipt of goods brought to the notice of the Railways concerned are enquired into and references made to the North Western Railway where necessary.

Shri Mohan Lal Saksena: Will the Honourable Minister try to collect definite information regarding consignments despatched from Pakistan and which have not been received here?

The Honourable Dr. John Matthai: We have tried our best to collect the information, but the Honourable Member will appreciate, that, in the circumstances prevailing, no definite information can be collected.

Shri Mohan Lal Saksena: Sir, has the Honourable Minister not received complaints from consignees giving details about the consignments despatched?

The Honourable Dr. John Matthai: I have had details regarding various cases of this kind, and such enquiries as we have made lead me to think that most of these goods have been looted on the way by mobs.

DISCONNECTION BETWEEN VARIOUS TOWNS OF EAST PUNJAB DUE TO RADCLIFFE AWARD

370. *Giani Gurmukh Singh Musafar: (a) Will the Honourable Minister of Railways be pleased to state whether certain important towns of East Punjab were disconnected from each other consequent on the Radcliffe Award?

(b) Have these towns been connected again by constructing new railway lines?

(c) If not, do Government propose to do so, in the near future?

(d) Have Government any plan to construct new railways in East Punjab, so as to strengthen the Western border of India, as well as to help the re-organization of trade in East Punjab?

(e) If the answer to part (d) above be in the affirmative, when will that plan be implemented?

The Honourable Dr. John Matthai: (a) The only important towns of East Punjab which have lost direct rail connection with each other, consequent on the Radcliffe Award, are Ferozepore and Amritsar. Before the partition, the shortest route between these towns was *via* Kasur which now falls in Pakistan but at present the route passing wholly through Indian territory is *via* Jullundur.

(b) No.

(c) No.

(d) There are no such concrete proposals under consideration at present.

(e) In view of reply to part (d), the question does not arise.

UNSTARRED QUESTION AND ANSWER

DOMESTIC CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION OF INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTS AND RAW MATERIALS

3. Seth Govinddas: (a) Will the Honourable Minister of Industry and Supply be pleased to lay on the table of the House a statement showing the quantity of: (i) domestic production and consumption; (ii) net imports; and

(iii) net exports during a normal year of the following:

- | | | |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|
| 1. Food. | 9. Nitrates. | 17. Chromite. |
| 2. Iron. | 10. Sulphur. | 18. Tungsten. |
| 3. Machinery. | 11. Cotton. | 19. Wool. |
| 4. Chemicals. | 12. Aluminium. | 20. Potash. |
| 5. Coal. | 13. Zinc. | 21. Phosphates. |
| 6. Iron Ore. | 14. Rubber. | 22. Tin. |
| 7. Copper. | 15. Manganese. | 23. Mercury, and |
| 8. Lead. | 16. Nickel. | 24. Mica? |

(b) What are the steps Government propose to take to build up adequate reserves of the industrial products and raw-materials mentioned in part (a) above, and to increase the production of any of the above items, in case India has to depend on import of that industrial product?

The Honourable Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee: (a) A statement is attached.

(b) The Honourable Member must be aware of the efforts being made to increase industrial production in the country. Steps have also been taken to import essential requirements within the limitations imposed by availability in world markets and the country's foreign exchange resources.

Statement

Item	Year	Domestic		Net Imports	Net Exports	Remarks
		Production	Consumption			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Food:						
(a) Fish excluding canned fish	1938-39	@	@	4,715, Tons	16,798 Tons	@ Figures not av-
(b) Fruits and Vegetables	do	@	@	Rs. 13,443,000	Rs. 22,686,000	ail dlu.
(c) Grain, Pulse & Flour	do	@	@	1,602,570 Tons	742,227 Tons	
(d) Provisions and Oilman's Stores (in-	do	@	@	Rs. 24,841,000	Rs. 5,932,000	
cluding fruits and vegetables and						
fish, canned or bottled.						
(e) Spices	do	@	@	103,472 Tons	19,331 Tons	
(f) Sugar	do	791,000 Tons	1,073,000 Tons	35,879 Tons	59,304 Tons	
(g) Condensed Milk	1939-40	Nil.	2,715 Tons	2,715 Tons		
(h) Butter	do	29,025 Tons	29,131 Tons	457 Tons	351 Tons	
(i) Biscuits and Cakes	do	7,621 Tons	9,000 Tons	1,379 Tons		
(j) Rice	Average of	25,508,000 Tons	27,781,000 Tons	1,647,000 Tons	274,000 Tons	
	1936, 37, 1937-					
	38 and 1938-					
	39					
(k) Wheat	do	10,160,000 Tons	9,825,000 Tons	69,000 Tons	404,000 Tons	@ Figures not
(l) Jowar and Bajra	do	9,355,000 Tons	9,347,000 Tons	1,000 Tons	12,000 Tons	available.
(m) Maize	do	1,979,000 Tons	1,979,000 Tons	@	@	@ Figures not
(n) Ragi	do	1,728,000 Tons	1,728,000 Tons	@	@	available.
(o) Barley	do	2,085,000 Tons	2,069,000 Tons	2,000 Tons	18,000 Tons	
(p) Grain	do	3,468,000 Tons	3,463,000 Tons	15,000 Tons	20,000 Tons	
2. Iron						
Fig Iron	1939	1,756,951 Tons	*1,200,000 Tons	266,072 Tons	556,602 Tons	*approximate
Steel	"	842,905 Tons	*1,062,000 Tons	Rs. 190,478,000	46,659 Tons	@ Figures not
Machinery	1938-39	Negligible	@		Rs. 330,000	available.
3. Machinery						
4. Chemicals and Chemical Preparations						
(excluding chemical manures and medicines)	do	28,000 Tons	153,385 Tons	Rs. 30,529,000	Rs. 1,621,000	Major chemicals only have been included.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. Coal	1939	27,769,112 Tons	26,130,450 Tons	49,517 Tons	1,968,179 Tons	
6. Iron Ore	do	3,166,074 Tons	2,902,000 Tons	Nil	264,137 Tons	...
7. (i) Copper (excluding ore)	1938-39	6,000 Tons	@	208 Tons	148 Tons	@Figures not available.
(ii) Copper Ore	1939	360,216 Tons	@	...	...	...
8. Lead	1938-39	Nil	@	7,473 Tons	341 Tons	@Figures not available.
9. Nitrates of Soda	do	Nil	*4,300 Tons	2,137 Tons	Nil	*Approximate.
10. Sulphur (brimstone)	do	Nil	*30,500 Tons	22,284 Tons	Nil	Approximate.
(black)	do	Nil	...	1,178 Tons	...	...
11. Cotton (Raw)	1942-43	839,643 Tons	784,107 Tons	86,071 Tons	@	@Figures not available.
12. Aluminium	1938-39	Nil	@	2,893 Tons	Nil	@Figures not available.
13. Zinc or Spelter	do	Nil	@	26,133 Tons	327 Tons	@Figures not available.
14. Rubber Raw	1939	13,618 Tons	6,952 Tons	**2,240 Tons	**7,686 Tons	**Figures for 1938-39.
15. Manganese Ore	1939	844,663 Tons	...	...	*800,000 Tons	*Approximate.
16. Nickel	...	@	@	@	@	@Figures not available.
17. Chromite (Chrome Iron Ore)	1939	...	...	...	14,606 Tons	...
18. Tungston (Ore)	1939	11 Tons	...	...	11 Tons	...
19. Wool (Raw)	1939-40	*35,714 Tons	...	3,393 Tons	28,571 Tons	*Approximate.
20. Potash	1939	@	1,900 Tons	@	@	@Figures not available.

21. Phosphates
(a) Ammonium

(b) Super

22. Tin

23. Mercury

24. Mica

1938-39	Nil.	@	2,569 Tons	Nil.	@ Figures available.	not
do	Nil.	@	6,788 Tons	Nil.	.	
1938-39		@	2,502 Tons	3,317 Tons	.	
		@	@	@	@ Figures available.	not
1938-39	9,918 Tons	@	140 Tons	3,092 Tons	@ Figures available.	not

CANCELLATION OF MEETINGS OF THE ASSEMBLY FIXED FOR SATURDAYS DURING THE CURRENT SESSION

Mr. Speaker: I have to inform Honourable Members that in consonance with the desire expressed by Members that there should be no meetings of the Assembly on Saturdays, no business has been put down for Saturday, the 28th February, except the presentation of the General Budget at 5 P.M. Honourable Members will please note that we are meeting on the 28th February for the presentation of the General Budget. As regards the remaining Saturdays during the current Session, I have to inform Honourable Members that the meetings for those days have been cancelled. As Saturday, the 6th March, was fixed as one of the days for the voting on demands for grants in respect of the General Budget, I have allotted in lieu of that date, Monday, the 15th March, for the voting on demands for grants.

I may remind Honourable Members that from and after Monday, the 20th, meetings of the Assembly will commence at 10-45 A.M. and not at 11 A.M. I am stating this just as a reminder.

RAILWAY BUDGET—LIST OF DEMANDS SECOND STAGE

Mr. Speaker: The House will discuss the Demands for Grants in respect of Railways now. I understand that a list showing the agreed Cut Motions which will be moved has been circulated to Honourable Members.

As regards the time limit for speeches the usual practice has been to fix a limit of 15 minutes for all speakers including movers of the Cut Motions and 20 Minutes for the Honourable Ministers replying. I trust this suits Honourable Members.

DEMAND NO. 1.—RAILWAY BOARD

The Honourable Dr. John Matthai (Minister for Railways and Transport): Sir, I move:

"That a sum not exceeding, Rs. 32,25,000, be granted to the Governor General to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1949, in respect of the 'Railway Board'."

Mr. Speaker: Motion moved:

"That a sum not exceeding, Rs. 32,25,000, be granted to the Governor General to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1949, in respect of the 'Railway Board'."

I think it would be better if the Honourable Minister also moves Demands No. 3 and 5.

DEMAND NO. 3.—MISCELLANEOUS EXPENDITURE

The Honourable Dr. John Matthai: Sir, I move:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 42,00,000, be granted to the Governor General to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1949, in respect of 'Miscellaneous Expenditure'."

Mr. Speaker: Motion moved:

"That a sum not exceeding, Rs. 41,94,44,000, be granted to the Governor General to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1949, in respect of 'Miscellaneous Expenditure'."

DEMAND NO. 5.—WORKING EXPENSES—REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE

The Honourable Dr. John Matthai: I beg to move:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 42,00,000, be granted to the Governor General to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1949, in respect of 'Working Expenses—Repairs and Maintenance'."

Mr. Speaker: Motion moved:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 41,94,44,000, be granted to the Governor General to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1949, in respect of 'Working Expenses—Repairs and Maintenance'."

Mr. Ramnath Goenka will move his cut motion now.

Point of Order that the Cut Motions should pertain to one grievance only.

Haji Abdus Sattar Haji Ishaq Seth (Madras: Muslim): Mr. Speaker, Sir, before Mr. Goenka moves his cut motion, may I raise a point of order? The cut motion that Mr. Goenka is going to move is for the purpose of discussing the inefficiency and corruption in the Railway Administration. It has been ruled in this House very often that these motions have to be definite and that they should pertain to one grievance only. I have a number of decisions here from the Chair and it has always been held that these motions should pertain to a definite matter, so that the House may be able to vote upon that definite question; and the other is, that a cut motion should treat with only one grievance. The question that my Honourable friend wants to raise is really not definite. He refers to 'inefficiency'. Under 'inefficiency' the whole Railway Administration could be brought under discussion. On this score the whole of yesterday's debate can be repeated today. Then, Sir, 'corruption' is also tagged on to this, which alone could have been one subject. I am not merely raising an academic discussion. This is a matter which concerns the rights and privileges of the House to give expression to its opinion on a particular matter. This thing has been going on even in the last session and you were good enough to relax that rule at that time, as perhaps Members were all new. For future guidance we should have a ruling that these motions should relate only to one definite matter.

I have got a decision here, the latest one in 1942 and that says that the question to be raised under a cut motion should be definite and that it should raise one particular question and should not be a roving motion like the one which my Honourable friend proposes to move. Therefore, I should like to have a ruling from the Chair at least for future guidance.

Mr. Speaker: I entirely agree that any subject for discussion sought to be raised must be a definite one and that, on any motion there could be only one issue and not more than one issue. But even after having stated that general proposition, the difficulty comes in the application of that rule to any concrete case. So far as the present motion is concerned, I do feel that it does not contain one matter. There are two subjects, as the Honourable Member has rightly pointed out. I will, therefore, request the Honourable Member who wishes to move the cut motion to select either the ground of inefficiency or the ground of corruption. They are two different sets of things. There can be inefficiency without corruption and there can be corruption without inefficiency. They are two entirely different issues which may be discussed separately.

An Honourable Member: They are combined, Sir.

Mr. Speaker: They will be two matters.

Shri Mohan Lal Saxena (U. P.: General): Does not one lead to another, Sir?

Mr. Speaker: No. I do not think they could be conveniently tagged together. There could be both corruption, inefficiency and what not. That is another matter. Then they can be raised at the general discussion, but when a Member wants to move a cut motion, he must restrict himself to one specific subject or matter.

[Mr. Speaker]

As regards the other point about want of definiteness, I feel a real difficulty. Supposing we were discussing about the subject of inefficiency, I cannot see how it could be made more definite unless the Honourable Member means that specific instances of inefficiency have to be the subject of discussion. In that case, there will be individual cases. One understands what inefficiency means and I do not think that in order to make it definite, I should call upon members to cite individual cases or instances of inefficiency. The same observations will apply to 'corruption'. It is perfectly competent for the Honourable Member to table such a motion and to restrict the scope, for example, he can say, if he so likes, inefficiency in dealing with the passenger traffic. That will be specific as the Honourable Member thinks. Anyway, I think inefficiency and corruption when it is alleged on a very large scale in a particular administration is definite enough to be made a charge without referring to any specific branch of the administration or any specific individual instance. What does the Honourable Member choose?

Shri Ramnath Goenka (Madras: General): Inefficiency, Sir.

Dr. P. S. Deshmukh (C. P. and Berar: General): While bowing to the ruling of the Chair, may I respectfully submit that so far as such a matter is concerned, when it is intended that the Honourable Member wants merely to raise a discussion, the motion need not be so definite or otherwise as is otherwise required? I would therefore like that whenever only eliciting of information or discussion is sought, the rule of definiteness of the subject-matter of the motion need not be so strongly insisted upon.

Mr. Speaker: Unfortunately, I am unable to agree with that view. That could be done, as I said, in a general discussion, but the object of a cut motion is to discuss a specific aspect of the question and therefore, one has to be definite about it. The other course would be that he may table as many cut motions as he likes. In the present case, the Honourable Member is performing 'inefficiency' to 'corruption'. So the word 'corruption' will be deleted from the motion as moved by him.

DEMAND NO. 1.—RAILWAY BOARD

Inefficiency in Railway Administration.

Shri Ramnath Goenka: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I move:

"That the demand under the head 'Railway Board' be reduced by Rs. 100."

[At this stage Mr. Speaker vacated the Chair, which was then occupied by Shri K. Santhanam (one of the Panel of Chairmen).]

Sir, you asked me to choose between 'corruption' and 'inefficiency'. Of course 'inefficiency' is better than 'corruption'. So I have chosen the subject 'inefficiency'. Now, Sir, in spite of the high appreciation for the manner and spirit in which the Honourable the Railway Minister answered the criticisms and points raised by the Honourable Members in this House in the general debate, still I feel that I should move this motion because I find that this is the first real budget statement on behalf of the National Government in respect of Railways. But I regret to say that one misses any national touch in regard to the handling of the problems as indicated by the Railway Minister. I find that the whole budget speaks in the same language and has the same substance and the same apologies for *status quo ante*. I find that the figures also epitomise the usual mediocre accountability. I am sorry to use this kind of language but I find nothing in the budget that I can appreciate, except the same old manner in which the budget had been introduced in this House from time immemorial. The Honourable Minister says in his budget speech that the best informed and most intelligent estimates that his advisers have been able to make give him these figures. But looking at these figures you will

find that they are nothing except the revised estimates divided by $7\frac{1}{2}$, multiplied by 12, and 10 per cent. added thereto. The total revised figure for $7\frac{1}{2}$ months comes to 1 crore and 8 lakhs; dividing that by $7\frac{1}{2}$, multiplying the result by 12 and then adding 10 per cent. to it gives you 190 crores. Now, Sir, these figures for $7\frac{1}{2}$ months relate to a period $4\frac{1}{2}$ months before January, and three months from January last. Owing to a rise in the fares and freights the anticipated revenue—I have no figures to go upon—was to be 9.15 crores more than the previous months. It is 3 crores a month more, i.e., 20 per cent. more. The previous figures are $4\frac{1}{2}$ months or $7\frac{1}{2}$ months comprising $4\frac{1}{2}$ months of the pre-1st January figure and 3 months for post-1st-January figure; namely, on an average the rise is 8 per cent. If you work $4\frac{1}{2}$ months on the previous figure and you work 4 months on a 20 per cent. rise you come to a figure of 8 per cent. on the $7\frac{1}{2}$ months. The advisers of the Honourable Minister gave him a ready-made formula,—add 10 per cent. more and that will be the estimated figure. If you add it comes to 18 per cent.; the rise is about 20 per cent.

Now, Sir, we have been given assurances by the Honourable Minister that a lot of spare parts, machine tools, wagons, improvements in locomotives, etc. are expected in the coming year. If they are expected in the coming year, a rise in revenue must be expected. This 18 per cent. rise on which the figures have been based by the Honourable Minister only gives you the basis of the present movements of traffic and movements of goods less 2 per cent. I expected it would be more.

That is one part of the story. Yesterday I found the Honourable Minister getting rather indignant over the use of the word 'bottleneck' in transport. I understand that, but the fact remains that there is a bottleneck in the transport system of the country today which is affecting the national life of the country and affecting practically every industry in the country. We are supposed to manufacture in this country about 25 lakh tons of cement. Cement is the greatest necessity of the day; but either for carrying raw material or fuel or for taking the finished material to the consuming places we find that actually, owing to the bottleneck in transport, the factories are moving or rather sending to the consuming places only about 16 or 17 lakh tons of cement. Then take the paper industry. We are paying dollars for importing paper but we cannot manufacture paper to the capacity of our factories in this country, simply because our raw materials cannot be transported to the factory side. During the war the military alone used to get priority number one, industries used to get the second and third priorities, and under priority number four you could move anything. Today you can move nothing unless you are enterprising number one.

During question hour this morning we heard of prices of *gur* being reduced to Rs. 8 per maund in certain centres, Rs. 10 per maund in other centres and the price being as much as Rs. 30 per maund in certain centres. This is purely due to bottleneck in transport. Sir, economist as the Honourable Minister is, statistician as he is, and having been in office for more than a year, he should have seen that all statistics and facts and figures are prepared, so that with these on his finger-tips he could face any situation, in which case only he would know what to do in particular circumstances. Today, as I said in regard to the figures, it is a stone which is thrown into a blind alley,—add 10 per cent. more, and then you get these figures. We have no figures here

12 noon and no facts from which we can judge whether the figures given by the Honourable Minister will be right or wrong. The facts as I have shown will show that there are reasons to doubt the accuracy of those figures. The Honourable the Railway Minister said that production is the bottleneck. May I ask him a straight question? What was the number of wagons in 1944? What is the number of wagons today? Have any figures

[Shri. Ramnath Goenka]

been given to the House in regard to the passenger miles run by the railways? In regard to the freight-ton miles covered by the railways? And what he expects to cover in the next year? Do those estimates show anything at all? What is the basis on which these estimates have been prepared? Then, Sir, unless you give me the freight-ton miles moved, and which you expect to move, the passenger miles moved and the passenger miles expected to move, it is impossible to say anything on the matter.

Another point, we have been asked to vote a grant of Rs. 25 crores on grain deficit. Sir, according to the figures which I have been able to gather, there are one million men employed in the railways. If you calculate, you will find that you pay for this deficit at the rate of Rs. 250 a year for every individual. You can really feed the one million people with this Rs. 25 crores instead of grant it for this deficit. And what are we asked to do? We are asked to endorse that we agree to this deficit of Rs. 25 crores for grains. Are there not figures, facts and details of the commodities which are being supplied and at what rate they are purchased and at what rate they are being supplied? Nothing of the sort.

Again passenger amenities. Two crores and all have been asked to be budgeted for amenities to passengers. Are there any figures? Are there any details of how this Rs. 2 crores and odd is going to be spent? Have any details been given? Do they really propose to spend this amount, or is it only an eye-wash?

The other day it was brought to my notice that a machine tool plant was purchased from Germany at a cheap price and that machine tools were also purchased and these machine tools and the machine tool plant will be useful at the present juncture for the railways. What do we find? That plant and those machine tools are rotting in Bombay for a long time. No use is being made of them.

Then again, we found during the war that 1700 miles of pipe-line was established between Calcutta and China for transport of oil, petrol, kerosene, etc. That pipe-line was sold. If our railways were so over-worked, why did not the railways purchase that pipe-line and put it between Calcutta and Kalka and relieve things to a certain extent? But that has been purchased by a private firm and those pipes are now being sold in the open market. Even now, it is not too late. All over the world these oils are being carried by pipe-lines.

Mr. Chairman: Cut motion moved:

"That the demand under the head 'Railway Board' be reduced by Rs. 100."

Mr. Frank E. Anthony (C. P. and Berar: General): Sir, I rise to support this motion. In fact I had given notice of rather a similar motion with regard to deterioration in the railway administration. My Honourable friend who moved this cut motion has spoken from the point of view of a business man. I propose to speak on this motion as a person who has a great deal to do with employees on the railways and with railway labour generally.

Before I endeavour to indicate, in the few minutes at my disposal, what I regard as some of the cardinal reasons for this deterioration in the working of the railways, I want to say that I do appreciate the tribute which the Honourable Minister for Railways had paid to the railway worker. He said quite rightly that, essentially our railwaymen were among the best in the world. I know there are many persons in this House who will not agree with this tribute. But I do ask Members in this House, when they criticise what I also regard as the deterioration of efficiency in the railways, to separate the

sheep from the goats: to remember that there is a very large number of first-class workers on the railways. These workers have been responsible for maintaining the life-line of our national existence during periods of crises. During the recent great war and more recently since division, when our railways were denuded to the extent of 40 to 50 per cent. of their local staff, these railway employees kept the life-line of our national existence going under the most adverse and difficult conditions.

At the same time, as one who is in close touch with thousands of railway workers I have to say that there is, or has been, and continues to be very considerable deterioration in the working of the railways. Quite frankly, I cannot accept the statement of the Honourable Minister that this deterioration has definitely been checked. We have been giving figures purporting to show that the deterioration in the working of the administration has been checked. Figures have their value, but statistics can also be both deceptive and dangerous. I base my conclusion that the railway administration is continuing to deteriorate on firsthand information, and further on personal observation. Within the last two or three months I visited twenty-two main railway centres. And from this personal observation and firsthand information from railway workers, I am convinced that there is a continuing deterioration in the railway administration. I am prepared, Sir, to make ample allowances. As a friend and champion of the railwaymen, I have always done so. I also appreciate the enormity of the problems confronting the Ministry of Railways—problems equalled in their magnitude and complexity. I realise that the railways faced an unprecedented and sudden strain during the last great war. As a result of that strain they had to employ large numbers of entirely inexperienced people—people with no previous association with the railways—people who brought to the railway administration no traditions of loyalty or service—and perhaps not even of loyalty to the administration. I also appreciate that division has imposed a severe and unprecedented strain on the railways. But in spite of these allowances, I feel that there continues to be much avoidable deterioration in the running of the railways.

To my mind the crux of the whole matter is to be found in the lack of discipline among the inferior staff. All our pious hopes, all our plans and schemes and roseate pictures for building the railways and making them the asset that they should be—all these will amount to nothing unless we can restore discipline among the railway workers, restore a spirit of service, restore the traditions of loyalty and service of which the railways had reason to be proud in the past.

I feel that this is essentially the crux of the whole matter. There is no point in talking about bottlenecks or about industry and trade not being able to meet all the needs and the requirements of the country. Unless you can re-establish discipline, a sense of service among the railway workers generally your railway administration will find itself shaky and infirm. You must reinvigorate and revitalise your railway administration. But what is the railway administration doing to reinfuse that spirit of discipline? This, to my mind, is the crux of the whole problem and from my personal observation I am very sorry to say that nothing is being done. This matter must be faced up to squarely.

What do I find wherever I go. Non-descript mushroom unions, non-descript alleged leaders, persons of straw, toadied to by officialdom, toadied to even by the Central Administration. I was at one of the centres the other day and I was told by officials, Hindu officials, that these persons of straw setting themselves up are railway union leaders. If the senior officials displease them, they stand in front of the doors of the officials and use the foulest and filthiest abuse, thus spreading indiscipline and resentment against the officials. And the Railway officials dare not do anything, because they feel there is no policy, there is no purpose and no direction in the railway administration. If they take firm action they feel that they will not be supported from the Centre or by senior officials. That is the position today.

[Mr. Frank R. Anthony]

In contrast to the spirit of toadying to these unions, to people who make it their business to undermine the railways, there is an unresponsive high-handed attitude towards the individual railwayman who refuses to join a non-descript union. If a railwayman is not a member of a particular union, however legitimate his grievance might be, he gets no redress. What is the railwayman to do? Hundreds, thousands of railwaymen are approaching me and they ask me how can we join these non-descript unions, this union or that union, when their avowed purpose is to paralyse the railway administration. Yet unless we join a non-descript union and unless we subscribe to their virulent policies which we know will ultimately lead to the destruction of the railway administration, we cannot get any real justice from the railway administration. That is the crux of the whole problem. Today therefore there is toadying on the one hand to non-descript unions and non-descript leaders, and on the other hand, denying essential justice to your best workers, men who refuse to join these non-descript unions, because they realise that these unions are not serving either the workers or the men. Surely my Honourable friend realises that the majority of the railway unions in this country are merely using the organisation he treats with as a stalking horse. Surely he realises that the majority of these unions in the country are only biding their time, waiting for the railway administration to pile up their mistakes and grievances till the Administration has antagonised all their workers. Then the majority of them will call a strike and nobody and nothing will be able to stop the complete paralysis of the railway administration. Surely my Honourable friend does realise that position.

Now, what is happening? I was talking recently to senior Hindu officials. They told me "The railway administration is bending and quite frankly we do not care whether it cracks or not." When I told them "But you are serving your country", they said "We would like to serve our country but we are serving an administration which has not changed. There has been a change of colour but no change of heart. We are senior officials on the railway but the same dictatorial unresponsive high-handed policy of Sir Edward Benthall's time (when he was the Honourable Minister's predecessor) is coming down unchanged and unchecked." They say that we are asked not to keep our eye on the system of selection and that we are asked to do our job of work. They say 'we cannot do it'. We do not know what the policy of the railway administration is". In saying all this I am not making a personal attack on my Honourable friend. I have the highest regard and respect for his capacity and calibre. I also have the very highest regard for his advisers in the Railway Board but I do appeal to them. I have cried myself hoarse for six years in this House, endeavouring to get a change of heart in the railway administration and there is no sign yet, there is no change of heart. The railway worker is essentially good. But today he feels that he is not working with you, but that he is working against you.

Members of the Railway Board, your senior officials at the railway headquarters do not understand them: they do not want to understand them and one of the main reasons is this. You must have one thing or the other. Either you have a highly centralised railway administration or you completely decentralise it. But this anaemic principle of dual functioning must be done away with. What is happening? Quite often when as members of the Railway Standing Committee, we ask about a particular item or items which have been budgeted for, invariably the reply has been "We do not know. It has been given to us by the General Manager." My own opinion is that we must centralise. If we are going to make the railways more efficient, a huge concern of this kind must be increasingly centralised. We must stop this passing of the baby from the Railway Board to the General Manager. When we ask the members of the Railway

Board how a particular item was arrived at, or budgeted they say "ask the General Manager". And when I go to the General Manager and ask how this particular item arose, he says "The order has come down from the Railway Board". The system of dual functioning is largely responsible for this. I think my Honourable friend and his colleagues have not only the capacity but I hope they have the intention also really to make the railways what they should be made into. They have a golden opportunity. They have got a legacy and many traditions which have to be eradicated. The vestiges of autocracy must be eradicated. The men are waiting for a response from the Railway Minister and the Railway Board. Humanise your administration. Give the men, the men in the lower ranks, the assurance that you intend not only to do justice but to give them real justice—the assurance and the confidence that you intend to do justice. I would ask you once again to stop this toadying to non-descript unions and their non-descript leaders. If you do this, if you humanise your administration, democratise it and give the men in the lower cadres the sense and the feeling that you intend to do justice and, at the same time, you do not continue to toady or pander to the non-descript unions, I feel you will find largely the answer, which will act as an antidote to this question which has been agitating us, this question of the inefficiency of the railway administration.

Shri H. V. Kamath (C. P. and Berar: General): Sir, on a dull and gloomy day such as this, when many of us are perhaps feeling not a little inefficient it is perhaps in the fitness of things that we should proceed to discuss the inefficiency of the railway administration. It is not a pleasant task for me to resort to fault finding, especially today, when we have got our own men to man our free National Government. Time was when we used to delight in fault-finding, cavilling and often abusing the then Government, because it was a foreign government. But when we see faults and defects handed down from the old Government to the new, almost unadulterated, it is time for us to sit up and take notice.

My Honourable friend the Railway Minister yesterday said that one war was over but we are in the midst of another war. I perfectly agree that that is our present plight. I can even say that we are standing between two worlds, one dead and the other struggling to be born or perhaps powerless to be born. And at this time when we are discussing the question of nationalisation and socialisation of our industries, it is of paramount importance that we take stock of what has happened to our premier nationalised industry, the railway industry, which is entirely state-owned, state-controlled and state-managed.

This is important, Sir, because today there are attempts in certain quarters to show that state management, or rather nationalisation, is a pernicious principle. There is a pamphlet before me which seeks to show that nationalisation had better be done away with.

Mr. Chairman: The Honourable Member may as well confine himself to the subject under discussion.

Shri H. V. Kamath: We have state railways and we want that they should run efficiently and not give scope for people to say that they are running inefficiently. Here there is one Mr. Jalan saying in the course of a brochure on "Effect of Nationalization" that "a cursory glance at the figures indicates that the company-managed railways during the past had done better than the present state-managed ones." This is perhaps only the beginning of a sustained campaign to show that state-managed railways will not be as efficient as private managed ones were. Therefore we should take stock of the situation and find out why this inefficiency is there and how to remedy and counteract it. Since the war came to a close there have been conferences galore and there have been committee meetings of various types and kinds, but the result seems to have been almost nil. This has prompted some people to say that these conferences are like most other conferences. You might have come across, Sir, the definition

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of a 'conference' which is apt to the present purpose. It is said that a 'conference' is a group of men who individually can do nothing but as a group can meet and decide that nothing can be done. That, I feel has been the outcome of most conferences that have taken place upto this day and we find that inefficiency is as bad or as rampant as it was in former days. I shall not dilate on this or refer to concrete instances, because I find that my Honourable friend Mr. Goenka has given numerous facts and figures to support the motion. There are the familiar instances of no water, no light and such other things in railway compartments and no time-tables at the railway stations—at big junctions too—at any rate the latest time-tables. At one station when I asked for a time-table they said they had no time-table at all, neither old nor new. I then asked "When can I expect to get the new time-table?" It was a big junction. They said 'We do not know.' I do not know whether the railway printing press is at fault or the distributing agency is at fault or who is inefficient.

On the late running of the trains, yesterday one of my friends said that the Grand Trunk Express has become a notorious train for late running. It is proverbially late. Formerly there was the B. N. R. which used to be referred to as 'Be Never Regular'. But today I think its place has been taken by the Grand Trunk Express which was referred to some days ago as being neither Grand nor Express. I once asked a friend of mine on the railways 'Why do you have a time-table at all if you do not run trains in time?' He said 'How can you justify the late running of trains if you don't have time-tables to show the scheduled time of the trains?' That perhaps was more in jest than in earnest. The position is that even today the trains do not run in time; and the inconveniences to passengers inside the trains have not been attended to.

Then there is the question of goods traffic. There was prominently the question of coal which has been agitating our minds for a long time past, and the transport bottleneck has stood in the way. There is to take another instance, the question of *supari*—the arecanut. Huge dumps of this *supari* are lying in Bombay and for want of adequate transport the *supari* distribution has been very unsatisfactory and the *supari* merchants are facing a terrible time of their life. The crux of the matter, seems to be due to the old system of bureaucratic administration still continuing. In spite of the fact that we have got a democratic Government, a free Government, we have still got the old bureaucratic system in the machinery of administration.

What I would therefore first of all request the Honourable the Railway Minister to do is to see that all this is democratized—not merely nationalised but democratized, if not socialised. The first step is democratization of the whole machinery of administration. I will suggest to my Honourable friend the Minister how this can be done. At the Centre we have got the Standing Committee of this Legislature to assist, and to work in close co-ordination with the Government. But in the Provinces and other zones of the various Railways, even if there are such Committees, I wonder if they are functioning efficiently or effectively. The first step therefore is to set up what are called People's Committees in every big railway centre or zone or Province—I would say even district. I suppose my Honourable friend Mr. Sidhva was, or is, the President of the All India Railway Passengers' Federation. I do not know whether this has got Committees in every Province, zone or district. The first thing is to set up such Committees to work in co-operation and co-ordination with the administration of the locality.

As regards the internal working of the railway administration I would suggest that in every workshop, in every station, in every yard, there must be Labourers or Workers' Committees such as, I think, obtain in Russia at the present day, who can fearlessly and straightforwardly bring to the notice of the management complaints that they may have against the local officials. There

must be facilities and opportunities provided to these labourers and workers to ventilate their grievances on the spot and at stated hours inside the office premises.

The task of speaking about inefficiency has been simplified by my Honourable friend the Railway Minister himself in his address. He has himself referred to inefficiency in one or two places. He has stated on page 7 of his (printed) speech, "I have come across a number of cases recently where goods are despatched by traders to a particular destination and immediately on arrival there the goods are rebooked and sent on to another destination which is much nearer the original point of consignment—which means (he admits) that there is a great wastage of transport."

I would request the Railway Minister to tell us how these things are going to be faced and remedied.

At the end of the speech he has also told us: "There are blacksheep in every organisation." This statement has also facilitated our task of criticizing the efficiency of the railway administration.

In his reply to the debate yesterday the Honourable Minister told us that a great need today for the administration is a well organised statistical department. I perfectly realize that because of this there is some inefficiency in the railway administration. It was said of old time that there are three kinds of lies or three degrees of lies, that is, lies, damned lies and statistics.

I wonder whether the statistics that we have at the present day conforms to this definition of statistics and if so whether the Railway Minister will take early steps to have a full-fledged, very efficient statistical department, and not merely third degree of lies to assist him in his stupendous task.

Then, Sir, there is the question of wages to railway labour. Here in this Explanatory Memorandum which we have got, it is stated:

"As a result of the negotiations with the All-India Railwaymen's Federation, the recommendations of the Pay Commission have been liberalized in several directions. The classification of certain categories of artisans under skilled and semi-skilled remains to be settled with the Federation."

I hope this will be settled Sir, and it will also be done soon. It will be remembered that more often than not low wages are dear wages. I need not remind the Minister—he is a noted economist,—that low wages are dear wages. Moreover, I have been told that there are many categories of workers who though really skilled, are classed as unskilled and draw a lower rate of pay than other artisans. And then there is the case of gangmen working on the lines. Theirs is a responsible job because if there is any defect in their work, any inefficiency, the whole running of trains may be imperilled. But I understand that the gangmen as well as their chief are paid fabulously low wages which does not conduce to efficiency. Then there is the case of train examiners whose job too is a responsible one, and I am told that when many wagons went to Pakistan, the train examiners there certified them 'sick' so that they could not come back; and, I understand, the discontent among the railway staff has been such that some train examiners have deliberately tried to sabotage the running of trains by certifying wagons sick. I do not agree with the sweeping generalization made by Mr. Anthony to the effect that most union leaders are men of straw, and I hope he does not mean what he said. The inefficiency to my mind could be cured firstly by democratizing the administration and secondly by seeing to it that all the railway workers are adequately paid and are properly classified under correct categories, skilled and unskilled, and the day, I hope, will not be far distant when the Railway Minister will come to this House with a really efficient working of the railway administration so that we can all be proud of this first state-owned, state-controlled and state-managed industry.

Shri Ramnarayan Singh (Bihar: General): Mr. Chairman, Sir, Some 10 lakhs of our countrymen are engaged in the running of our railways. Now the question is whether the railways are being run efficiently or inefficiently. Sir, first of all we have to see what is the motive behind the people who are working there. Of these 10 lakhs of people, how many are there who have gone there to serve the country? If you analyse the situation, if anybody knows the psychological working of their minds, it will be found that the people are there to serve themselves and not the country. Now the country is free. We have to create an atmosphere in which the people will come forward for national service. Unless this is done, I do not think there is any hope of success or progress. I see the first sign of inefficiency in this very House. The Honourable Minister for Transport comes forward and makes a statement that everything is all right in the Railway Department. Is it a sign of efficiency, Sir? Is that causing efficiency or inefficiency? I think such people are responsible for inefficiency and the inefficient working of the railway administration. Sir, he says that when he hears charges of corruption or allegations against his railwaymen, he is hurt. He made this statement the day before yesterday, and yesterday he reaffirmed this statement, with the addition that he rather feels indignant. I tell him that his statement has pained many of us. I am pained. It has hurt me to hear that the Minister of Transport of my national government comes forward and makes a speech in this House which has no foundation on truth. Sir, this is not desirable. I am not an enemy of my countrymen working in the Railway Department. I am their well-wisher. I stand for their prosperity and happiness; but I must say what is wrong, and in this lies inefficiency in the running of the department. Sir, the thing is this—the Honourable Minister has gone high in the realm of wisdom when all distinctions disappear and there is only one thing. Events in the world are going on but there is nothing good, there is nothing bad and there is nothing efficient. There is no distinction. Either he has reached that stage in wisdom or, Sir, he knows nothing. I ask him, Sir, to move about among the people. I ask him to go and stay for some time in disguise among railway people, and he will learn what the people say of the Railway Department and how the railway people behave. In ancient times the Kings and ministers used to go in disguise to know how the people feel about their administration. I ask my Honourable friend Dr. John Mathai, to do this, or he may appoint a number of honest people to give him the real information. At the same time he comes forward and gives us sermon how to distinguish the many from the few and he says 'Well, there are black sheep in every organization'. Sir, John Mathai, I tell you to go and know things for yourself.

Mr. Chairman: The Honourable Member will please address the Chair.

Shri Ramnarayan Singh: Yes, Sir, I am addressing you. If he goes there, he will find no question of a few black sheep. Everywhere he will find black sheep, all black sheep.

Very few honourable exceptions of white sheep or yellow sheep will there be. This is the situation. Sir, I am not talking with pride and pleasure; I am ashamed to talk of this, that my countrymen behave like this. And he feels indignant while such charges are brought against railwaymen, and I say that I feel ashamed that the Minister of my Government, my National Government, speaks like this. He wants, by a magic wand, to wash away all the sins of the Railway people. Sir, that is not the way. The things have to be said; what is there? We must have the courage to call a spade a spade. If there is a sick man and you tell him, "No, you are all right, you have got no disease; you enjoy yourself in the manner you like, you behave in the manner you like, it will be all right." If you behave in that way the thing might go worse and the man might die. I tell the Honourable Minister that I do not hold him personally responsible; I do not hold the Railway people individually responsible for this. This is the thing prevailing in all Departments of the Government; everything has to be corrected in a different way and we, all of

us, have to work very hard to improve the society, to purify the Departments and to bring reform everywhere. Nobody is singly responsible for the present situation; but it is a great sin to wash away things so easily.

The Honourable Minister cited an example that people showed great devotion while arranging the special to carry Mahatma Gandhi's ashes. Well, Sir, that is no evidence that everything is all right. That is no evidence because for Mahatma Gandhi not only the Railway people but, with the exception of an unfortunate few, everybody was mad to show devotion. That is no evidence that everything is all right there.

The Honourable Minister said that people showed great enterprise and energy and devotion in moving the refugees during the troubled times. Well, Sir, I have a great regard for such a thing and praise them. But at the same time it is very difficult to say that they are not the people who indulge in corruption and who do not work inefficiently.

Sir, first of all we have to see everything in its true colour, we have to know things. And when we talk of things we must know them definitely. Sir, on the bank of a river once a bird called *bagula* was sitting in a very calm and quiet manner. A passer-by was going along and said, "Oh, this bird is a great devotee of God. He is sitting in this way."— "मजन कर रहा है", as my friend Mr. Kamath says. This was heard by the fish in the water. One of them said, "Well, my friend, you cannot say what this bird is about—whether he is calmly and quietly sitting in devotion to God, or in search of us." In the same way it is very difficult to say how people behave unless you work and move among them. Sir, we are national workers; we work among the people, we move among even Railway people and we know how things are going on. I ask my Honourable friend to do this, to move about among them. Here he is sitting in the Imperial Secretariat at Delhi; How will he know everything of what is going on there! As I said before, either he has reached all wisdom where all distinctions disappear, or he knows nothing of the Department.

Shri Deshbandhu Gupta (Delhi): Sir, three months back, when the Honourable the Railway Minister had presented his last Budget to this Assembly, I had occasion to bring to his notice the corruption—or call it inefficiency—which was particularly visible in respect of the wagons traffic. I had hoped then that my Honourable friend and his Department would look into the matter and at least so far as this Capital City is concerned, where it is possible for the Honourable Minister to see things for himself, to lay his finger on the point where the trouble lay and check it. I had hoped that some good result will come out. But these three months, I am sorry to confess, Sir, have made no or absolutely no difference so far as the wagons situation or the methods of the Railway staff in dealing with the public concerned.

I had occasion to bring to the notice of my Honourable friend a specific complaint about three months back. There is a general complaint in Delhi that wagons are, in the first instance, not available from Bombay to this place. People have to use all sorts of means to secure priorities and then if they succeed they cannot be sure of getting their wagons in time at Delhi. I have got instances, not one, not two, but many, and I think scores of instances can be quoted where wagons which left Bombay in the month of September have not touched Delhi so far. Not only that, there are wagons which touched Delhi but are not traceable till today. I brought a specific instance to the notice of my friend and that instance particularly related to my own concern. I wanted other people to come forward and volunteer information. They did volunteer information, but they were not willing to take the risk of exposing themselves. I thought that some specific instance has to be brought to the notice of the Ministry so that they could know how things were bungled, or how things were tackled. So I decided and brought a particular instance to the notice of the Honourable Minister. I am thankful to him, Sir, that he did take prompt action. He passed the letter on to the Chief Commissioner of Railways or to

[Shri Deshbandhu Gupta.]

the Divisional Superintendent and it did bring about a result, although it took more than two months again to bring about that result.

What was that instance, Sir? It was a typical instance and therefore I want to bring it to the notice of the House and to the notice of my Honourable friend so that he may realise that such instances are being repeated. The instance was that three wagons of newsprint were booked from Bombay in the month of October. Two of them we took delivery in the month of November and the third wagon which had touched Delhi—and probably it was in the same carriage—absconded. It happened like this. The members of the Goods staff came to my office—two of them—and demanded some money to be paid on account of the delivery of the two wagons, and this was taken exception to by my Manager. They went away grumbling, saying "All right. You will see. You cannot but pay the price." The result was, Sir, that next day when my representative went to the Railway Station to take delivery of the third wagon, the third wagon was not traceable. He had noted the number; he had seen it on the Station only the previous day. It took me four months to trace that wagon and that also with the help of the Honourable the Transport Minister. I wrote to him a letter pointing out that the wagon which had touched Delhi Railway station was not traceable and that probably it was shunted to some yard or to some other station. Ultimately, now it has been traced and on two days ago delivery has been taken and the Divisional Superintendent, in his letter to me, dated the 16th has expressed his sympathy with me in these words:—

"I am writing this to you as I strongly feel that the Railway has given a very poor account of itself in this case. You have no doubt been put to considerable inconvenience and probably loss, which I so much regret, but I can assure you that the bungling brought to light is going to do a lot of good to us."

Sir, I am thankful to the Honourable Minister and to the Department for having helped me, but it is not as if this is the only instance of its kind. I hold in my hand a list of fourteen wagons which were booked in the first week of September from Bombay and they have not yet been delivered. They contained textile machinery and my information is that some of these wagons were shunted to Bahadurgarh, a station about 20 miles from this place. They probably lay in that yard and the clerk concerned had to be tipped to give information as to where those wagons were. Where the rest of these wagons are, I do not know, and I will pass this chit on to my Honourable friend so that he can make use of it, provided the parties concerned do not become a victim to the vendetta of those who behaved in that manner. So many other instances have come to my notice. If my Honourable friend is prepared to put confidence in the public and give an assurance on the floor of the House that all instances brought to his notice of this kind will be looked into and that the parties concerned would not be put to trouble in future and that speedy action would be taken against these complaints, in that case, I volunteer my services to bring to his notice, not one, not two, but dozens of instances.

And this, Sir, is what is happening in Delhi. If it can happen in Delhi, where the Government of India is sitting and where my Honourable friend can even give personal attention, then you can imagine what must be happening in other places. Today, Sir, there is virtual newsprint famine in Delhi. You will be surprised to learn that newsprint which was sold at six annas per lb. is now selling at Rs. 1/2/0 or Rs. 1/4/0 and most of the newspapers are on the verge of closing. Some of the smaller ones may have closed or are closing tomorrow or day after. Why? Not that newsprint was not booked to Delhi. So many wagons are on the way from Bombay and they are not yet transported. Some wagons which had left Bombay five or six weeks ago have not reached Delhi. This is the position, and it is not in a spirit of criticism, but it is really in a spirit of being helpful that I want to bring these instances to the notice of my Honourable friend. If this state of affairs continues, certainly whatever

prise we may have for the good work done by the railwaymen, the public is not going to be satisfied with that. The Congress Government is going to get a bad name; it is getting a bad name; and it cannot be denied that transport continues to be the bottleneck. I have all praise for the way in which my Honourable friend and the Chief Commissioner for Railways organised the Asthi Special. It was a fine job of work they did and I complimented the Chief Commissioner of Railways on that. You were yourself, Mr. Chairman, on that train and there is no doubt they did well. But that only shows that we can put up a high standard of work if only we have the will to do it and if only there is strong supervision.

I have one definite suggestion to make to the Railway Minister, and it is this. Sir. The Railway Department should have an Intelligence Department of its own. Businessmen would not volunteer information as long as they are not satisfied that they will not have to pay a high price for that. If the Railways have an Intelligence Department of their own and if an assurance is given by my Honourable friend that any information passed on to him will be looked into and suitable action taken, then I am sure things will improve, and I would request, through you, Sir, the Honourable Railway Minister to root out corruption and inefficiency from the Delhi Railways. Delhi being the seat of the Government, it is a place where people judge the standard of efficiency and see whether there is corruption or not. Probably corruption and inefficiency are difficult to distinguish one from the other, and it may be that inefficiency is caused because of the corruption which is rampant. In any case, Sir, I would like my Honourable friend to see that at least in Delhi we are able to give a better account of ourselves. (*An Honourable Member*: Why at least Delhi?) Because here I feel that my Honourable friend is in a position to see things for himself, and I am sure if he attends to it, Delhi will set a good example and the figures that have been supplied to him about the wagons remaining in the marshalling yards—those averages—I think if he will only take the figures for the last three months of wagons which were booked from Bombay for Delhi or for Shadara or Bahadurgarh because these stations do not get through bookings to Delhi, he will find how many of them are still undelivered. He will, I am sure, be disillusioned and will know what sort of efficiency we have set for ourselves. I again wish to assure my Honourable friend, Sir, that it is not in a spirit of criticism—we are all responsible for the better running of the Government—nor is it in any spirit of apportioning blame but certainly from the point of view of our getting a bad name unless these things are set right that I am saying all this. On the efficient working of the Railways, Mr. Chairman, hinges the prosperity of the trade, commerce and everything else. Therefore, this is a thing which must be attended to without loss of time. I do not impute any motives to my Honourable friend—I have the highest regard for him—I know that whatever information is given to him, he does attend to it, but all the same these three months have made absolutely no difference so far delay is concerned; if it has made any difference at all, it is that things are worse today than they were three months ago.

With these words, Sir, I support the cut motion moved by my Honourable friend.

Mr. R. K. Sidhva (C. P. and Berar: General): It is now 1 o'clock, Sir, and time for us to adjourn.

Mr. Chairman: I know, but if the House is willing to sit for a few minutes more, we can finish this Cut Motion.

Haji Abdus Sattar Haji Ishaq Seth: Being Friday, the practice is that we adjourn at 1 o'clock.

Mr. Chairman: But it is in the hands of the House.

Prof. N. G. Ranga (Madras: General): I suggest, Sir, that the cut motion may be finished now.

Mr. Chairman: What is the opinion of the House?

Some Honourable Members: Let us proceed.

Dr. B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya (Madras General): Let us not press the matter.

Mr. Chairman: I think then we shall follow the usual practice.

The House stands adjourned till 2.30 p.m.

The Assembly then adjourned for Lunch till Half Past Two of the Clock.

The Assembly re-assembled after Lunch at Half Past Two of the Clock, Mr. Chairman (Shri K. Santhanam) in the Chair.

Shri Jaipal Singh (Bihar General): Mr. Chairman, Sir, strange as it may seem, I want to oppose this cut motion. I want to express my feelings how I have been disgusted, completely disgusted by the venom that has been poured forth, not for the first time, but, in fact, *ad-nauseam* against the Railway administration. Only a few months ago, I thought we had enough of it, but, again, I find the same things being repeated. Sir, if the people outside this House were to conduct a debate on whether we were conducting ourselves efficiently or inefficiently, I wonder which way the verdict will go. I feel and I felt last time also that we severely lack in a sense of responsibility and reality in appreciating the immense difficulties our country had to contend with, that the new Order had put problems not exactly beyond our control, but, certainly beyond our immediate control, and, if I may quote my Honourable friend, Sardar Patel, he put it very sensibly only a couple of days ago. He said: You cannot change things overnight. When my Honourable friend, Dr. Matthai, presented his last Budget, he promised that he would make serious endeavours to implement some of the thoughts that had been expressed on the floor of this Assembly. I have no doubt whatever in my own mind that he has ever since been making serious endeavours, and, in fact, wherever instances have been brought to his notice, he has taken action. My Honourable friend, Mr. Deshbandhu Gupta, himself admits that. I cannot understand why, on the one hand, he wants certain abuses to be righted and, on the other hand, he wants the Honourable Minister for Transport to give an assurance on the floor of this Assembly that, should people come forward, they will not be victimised. There is an unhealthy undertone in such a demand, that the man has not got the courage to weed out the evil and that, all the time, indirectly he is condoning these evil habits. Sir, surely we are responsible men. It is our duty to improve the morale and not ask for such an assurance. It is our duty to see that every evil, every abuse, every corrupt practice that is brought to our notice is put before the Honourable Minister for Transport or any other Minister for the matter of that. Are we going to improve the morale of the administration if, day in and day out, we abuse the administration without realising that they are up against very heavy odds? My Honourable friend, Mr. Anthony, talked of non-descript trade union leaders. I would very much like to know what he exactly means by that. The country has new masters. Now there is a smaller handful of Europeans than there was before. Now everybody is a master. Is it not the experience of most of us, Sir, that wherever you go in the provinces we see a humble Congressman dictating terms to the District Officer? How do you expect to improve the morale, if, day in and day out, we are to tell the administration the Railway administration in this particular instance—that they are inefficient and that they are corrupt? Let us be psychologists just for a change. We have our school boy experience in a school. What happens? There is always some boy or other whom the rest of the school call 'pagla'. What happens? He does become and behave like a 'pagla'. Here exactly the same thing is happening. I admit that we are not as efficient as we could be. I do not

say for one moment that there is no efficiency in the Railway or any other administration. I think there is plenty of room for improvement. But, surely, the only way to improve things is for us to be behind the administration and to see that we are not condoning inefficiency, that we are doing our own little bit by encouraging this and every other administration, by making them realize that they can do better. They need a word of cheer. I feel this very strongly indeed. Now, when I think of inefficiency, I cannot but feel the Railway administration has perhaps been too efficient and I will try to indicate why I say that.

Take the question of the Railway schools. Mr. Chairman, I do not quite know whether under this cut motion, I can talk about them, but you will put me wise if I am going astray. Sir, I have been associated with various boards of education in my own province and it has been my duty to visit some of these Railway schools. By far, they are the most efficient schools we have in our province. Now I do say that the Railway administration is too efficient. I say that they are spending far more money, much too much money as compared with the schools that are run either by the Government or by privately managed schools. Take the Dinapore High School. I think it is one of the very few schools in the country where school boys get very good refreshments and, in the middle of the day, they get a glass of milk every day. Sir, I am not saying that they should not get their glass of milk or their *jelabis* or *laddus*. That is all to the good, but, if you take the total amount that that particular school spends and compare the figure with the very best school that is run by the Government of Bihar, in this particular instance, you will find that the total figure of the Railway school is nearly three times. I cannot help feeling that I think that there is room for less 'efficiency', if I may put it.

Now, somebody has mentioned the question of accountancy. Sir, I think the Railway Administration is much too efficient about accounts and about preserving its money. There are schools which have attained a certain level whereby they qualify to get certain sums efficiency grants, from the Board of Secondary Education.

My Honourable friend, the Minister for Transport, has presented us with a surplus. I would suggest to him that the Government of Bihar is badly in need of funds, particularly in regard to expenditure on education and it would be a generous move on the part of the Railway Board to give it the amount that is due on account of efficiency to the Railway High schools.

Now, take the so called Anglo-Indian Hill schools. Well, of course, they are strictly no longer confined to Anglo-Indians only. Most of these Hill Schools, something like 50 per cent. of them are manned by other Indians also—non-Anglo-Indians. 50 per cent. of the student population of most of these European schools in the Hills is manned by children of Railway employees. My Honourable friend, Mr. Anthony, in another House, only last year, made a very strong point and that was not to diminish the grants that were paid out to these European schools. He said: "Give us ten years time." I think that is one way of assisting him and the incidence of the education of the Railway employee's children should fall on the surplus that my Honourable friend, the Minister of Transport, has produced, that is another suggestion I would like to make.

To end up with, Mr. Chairman, I do think the Railway workers do look to us for a word of cheer. Are we so blind as not to see the good work that is being done, may not be by most of them, but at least by some of them? But let us not make the whole body of them hostile; let us not make them realise that we are insensible to the genuine efforts that are being made by the Honourable Minister for Transport and his colleagues for improvement; and I repeat again that there is plenty of room for improvement in this administration and in every other administration.

Sir, I strongly oppose this cut motion.

The Honourable Dr. John Matthai: Sir, I find it a bit difficult to reply to the various speeches made because they have covered ground with which we are fairly familiar. I take it that the question of efficiency of the railways in these speeches has been examined during this discussion from two points of view. The first is the operational or the mechanical side,—the question of turn-round of wagons and other matters of the kind. I do not want to deal with that today because it is a subject which has been discussed very often in the past here. But as I listened to the discussion I felt that the most important point that Honourable Members were anxious to bring out is the condition and the quality of the personnel operating our railways. A great deal of exception in fairly strong terms has been taken to the statement that I placed before the House in my budget speech, a statement to the effect that I had faith in the great bulk of the men who are working for us on the railways. As I have said more than once, it is something which I honestly believe and I have no desire whatsoever to withdraw what I said in spite of everything that has been pointed out this morning. If I did not have faith in the men who are working the railways I should not be in a position to hope for any improvement at all.

There were two points particularly, I think, with regard to personnel which were made. One is that there is a lack of discipline and the other is that there is an increasing amount of corruption. I do not deny that there is indiscipline on the railways; I do not deny that there is corruption on the railways. But what I do deny is that indiscipline and corruption mark the great bulk of our railwaymen; I most indignantly deny that. As far as my own policy towards the staff is concerned, it is briefly this. I am anxious, and as long as I am in office I propose, to give the man on the railways what I consider a fair deal every time. I propose every time to put the completest trust in him, unless I find evidence to the contrary. Where I find evidence to the contrary I propose to punish him; but only where I find evidence to the contrary. Otherwise my policy is one of giving the man a fair deal and trusting them to the utmost.

Now there has been a great deal of talk about corruption. What we are trying to do in the matter of corruption is that there is a special police establishment working under the Home Ministry who are giving a great deal of attention to cases of corruption that arise on the railways. I have been looking at the figures of cases handled by that special police establishment in respect of railway matters; and of the total number of cases handled I find that not more than a fourth or fifth which were taken to a court of law resulted in conviction. And the reason why in the great majority of cases no conviction was secured is that it was impossible to get evidence from the people who are concerned on the other side. There can be no corruption unless there are two parties to the act of corruption; and if the other party—leaving the poor railwayman out—in the first place is an accomplice, and in the second place having been an accomplice refuses to do his duty as a citizen, who is to blame? It is all very well for Honourable Members in this House to make all these allegations against our men. We are anxious to take every possible step in order to bring people who are guilty of corruption to book. But we must have co-operation, and if that cooperation is denied it is not possible for us to go very far. Now even where cases have resulted in acquittal—and the great majority of cases which have been taken to court have resulted in acquittal—the railway administration have been prepared to take administrative disciplinary measures; there is quite a large number of cases where that has been done. We go further; we issue press notes every time whenever a conviction has been secured or whenever suitable administrative action has been taken. It does not seem to me possible to do anything more than this. Surely Honourable Members are not expecting me as Minister in charge of railways to launch a huge mass campaign of prosecution and persecution against the men who are running the railways. Give me evidence; unless you give me evidence it is impossible for me to act. Whatever evidence we can

collect through our police and through our investigation agencies we are prepared to use and to have the most severe deterrent punishment imposed on the men concerned. But without the cooperation of the public it is not possible to go very far. Let me take the point a little further. We are passing in this country at present through a very difficult stage. There has been a very considerable weakening of the sense of law resulting from the war and from the big changes that have taken place recently. You cannot expect the vast number of men employed on our railways to be exempt from the general tendencies that are working among the population. The only way in which we can meet it is by starting a campaign of propaganda. All that I can say, therefore, is that as far as the operational and the mechanical side of transport is concerned, we know what the problems are; we know in which direction a solution lies. I have indicated it both in my November speech and in my speech last week. We are determined to go along those lines in order that that side of things is improved. As far as the personnel side is concerned, whatever cases of corruption come to our notice, whatever cases of indiscipline based on real evidence are brought to our notice, we are prepared to take action. But I do appeal for more cooperation; without it nothing can be done.

Shri Ramnath Goenka: Sir, in view of the explanation given by the Honourable the Transport Minister, I beg leave to withdraw my cut motion.

Mr. Chairman: Has the Honourable Member leave of the House to withdraw his cut motion?

The cut motion was, by leave of the Assembly, withdrawn.

Passenger Fares based on Uneconomic Rates Structure

Shri B. Das (Orissa: General): Sir, I move:

"that the demand under the head RAILWAY BOARD be reduced by Rs. 100."

I have given notice of this motion to raise the issue of passenger fares being based on uneconomic rates structure. I listened to the speeches delivered by the Honourable Transport Minister just now and last evening, and I feel that as his original budget speech was characterised by sympathy towards the Railway employees and officials his last two speeches denote sympathy towards the general public. My cut motion is intended to draw attention to the fact that grave injustice has been done to the 800 or 900 million passengers who travel every year on our railways. During the November Session my Honourable friend asked the House to raise the passenger fares and whatever he asked for was conceded. He changed the telescopic rate in passenger fares to a flat rate and that flat rate was something like 80 per cent. rise in the first class, 44 per cent. in second class and 33 per cent. in the third class. All told there is a 33 per cent. appreciation in the receipts from passenger fares. I want to satisfy myself on this. From Calcutta to Delhi the first class fare before was Rs. 108 and recently it was Rs. 132-6-0. It is now Rs. 180-12-0. In 1925-26 the second class fare was Rs. 54. Last year it was Rs. 62-1-0. Today it is Rs. 90-6-0. In 1930-31 the third class fare by mail was Rs. 17/10; last year it was Rs. 19/6; now it is Rs. 30/3. So between the first class and second class there is a rise of 65 per cent. In the third class, there is a rise of 72 per cent.

Was all this necessary? And if the rate structure is correct, is there no one to plead for the hardpressed and oppressed railway passengers, that in spite of his being packed like animals as my friend Sjt. Nanda Kishore Das said yesterday, he will have to pay an all-round 33 per cent. more in fares and yet he will get no comforts?

Though I criticised last November, I thought it was time to give sufficient funds at the disposal of our Railway Minister so that he may adjust himself and create normal conditions out of the abnormal situation in which he found himself owing to the folly of the foreigners that ruled over this country. His predecessor, Sir Edward Benthall, the mighty representative of British trade and

[Shri B. Das]

industry in this country, wanted large orders to be placed in England. In 1944-45 he wanted to raise the passenger fares by 25 per cent. We opposed it in this House and Sir, with your help and co-ordination we threw out that proposal. He argued that he would leave behind a fund for the betterment in travelling for passengers.

I was examining the receipts from passenger fares. I find in 1924-25 it was Rs. 36 crores: in 1939-40 it was Rs. 28 crores: In 1942-43, before the war, it was Rs. 44 crores: in 1943-44 it was Rs. 58 crores: in 1944-45 it was Rs. 71.5 crores: in 1946-47 it was Rs. 86 crores: and in 1947-48 according to the adjustment made by my friend over separation of Pakistan, it would be Rs. 79.5 crores.

I know Pakistan is separate. But with a 33 per cent. rise in passenger fares and the flat rate throughout India, I think he has underestimated his receipts. I concede that he has mooted this in his budget speech and sympathise with him over the manifold problems that make his budget estimates so very uncertain, but why did he not take into account the facts and had a proper picture over the receipts from passenger traffic. I believe passenger traffic, if it is true that 800 million passengers travel throughout the year, would come up to the level of Rs. 95 crores. So I say that he has underestimated his receipts.

I have been looking into the income the Government has derived per passenger mile:

in 1938-39 it was 3.11 pies

in 1942-43 it was 3.84 pies.

in 1945-56 it was 4.02 pies.

I think with his 33 per cent. appreciation, he will get per passenger mile in 1948-49 about 6.1 or 6.2 pies per passenger mile. So if there is a 33 per cent. increase in the earnings, certain benefits ought to have accrued to the passengers in this budget. But the Honourable Minister never thought of the passengers. He told us that the railways are not a public utility concern and that it should function as a business concern. The railways are there, it seems, to extort the last drop of blood from the poor harassed passengers—the public.

Formerly we had season tickets and monthly return tickets, by which we were given concession rates of one and a half fares. Today there is no such concession. That means the Honourable the Railway Minister is earning more money because there is no concession. As a matter of fact similar concessions extended to the third class fares also.

What happens if the cost of living rises? According to the papers the economic adviser of the Government of India has said that it has gone up from 308 to 320. I do not know if he took into account the cost of travel in railways or in buses. I think my Honourable friend, as the great economist he is, will find that the cost of travel in the domestic budget has gone up by ten points. Therefore, I say, that such a public utility concern should look into domestic and individual economics. But how am I to think that my Honourable friend is thinking of reconstruction and a stabilized policy in our railways in India, when the passenger is going to be mulcted and charged anything. I am helpless and you are helpless. Whatever this House decides, we must pay because we have to travel: besides our propensity for travel has been growing more and more and since the last war that propensity has still further increased. Yet we have to settle down to normal life. We have to evolve a rate structure that will satisfy us and at the same time the railway administration. The railways may be an indigenous business concern but it is a public utility concern and in the past we have paid some hundreds of crores to railways from general revenues so that the railways might survive and be a public career. Painfully

I read in the memorandum about the provision of railway reserves. This was a fantastic proposal of the British Managers of our Railways who wanted money not to go to general revenues but that the money should be kept in railway reserves apart from the depreciation fund, which stands now at Rs. 90 crores. But this railway reserve fund we have many times started and many times wiped it off. I do not think it is an essential thing to be maintained and it is not correct to deprive the general revenues of its due quota which it must get. Whether general finance should get its revenues through incometax and super-tax or by the contribution that we agreed to by the Convention of

3 P. M. 1925, is a point which may be raised at a later stage in the House and not today, because a Committee is looking into this year's surplus to see how much will devolve to general revenues. I think the railways should work in spite of the heavy subsidy from general finance and the taxpayer, as a commercial concern. At the same time, because it is a monopolist concern, the Railway Minister should not think of enhancing of rates and fares without giving the due *quid pro quo* to the passengers that travel.

The Honourable Minister of Railways spoke about what is happening in other countries and as to what should be the passenger rate that is equitable to the Indian travelling public. It is no use telling us about the U.S.A. and the U.K. While our *per capita* income is less than Rs. 100, in the U.K. it is Rs. 1,200 and in the U.S.A. it is Rs. 2,500. It is no use comparing blindly the passenger fares in the U.S.A. with those in India. A public utility concern like the railways should see that they do not make profits and squander it, and they do not overpay their staff. I do not mind that their staff should get an economic standard of wages.

I was reading another document produced by another Ministry the Industrial Committee report, where it was said that labour all over India has adopted a "go slow" policy. I was surprised to hear my Honourable friend saying that all is well in the Indian railways. When the labour representatives spoke on this side I felt that they had given a certain definite undertaking to the Railway Minister that the railway employees are going to earn the money they will be paid, and not, because they are members of the socialistic and communistic fraternity. I wish it were true and production goes up!

I do hope if necessary the Railway Minister would appoint a Rates Structure Committee. Let somebody examine the passenger traffic rates structure, which should have some harmonious relation to the past practice and not the present flat rate which is telling so hard on us.

I need not go into the other points which I have noted. I have not made this speech in any spirit of carping criticism. My Honourable friend the Railway Minister came here from the Tatas which is the biggest industrial concern in India and I hope if he will descend to the humble field where we commoners tread he will find the hardship that this flat rate is causing and if he mixes with the crowd he will find the common mass thinking that the railway rates are today a heavy burden on the public. The common man is not interested in the policy of labour or wages, nor the staff to be dispensed with. They are very anxious that the Government should settle down and that particularly our national government should give them a cheap mode of transport. I do hope in spite of its not being included in the budget he will try to introduce *puja* and Christmas concessions and other concessions, so that he will start making an experiment which his predecessors practised for 25 years.

Mr. Chairman: Cut motion moved:

"That the demand under the head 'Railway Board' be reduced by Rs. 100."

Shri O. V. Alagesan (Madras: General): Sir, I would confine my remarks to only one subject, namely the increase in season ticket fares. In my opinion a grievous wrong has been done to this poor, most useful and deserving class of passengers. The House is aware that at the time of the last budget the

[Shri O. V. Alagesan]

Honourable Minister for Transport announced increase in season ticket fares. There was an increase in the ordinary fare also. Generally the season ticket fares are calculated on a certain basis in relation to the ordinary fare. So when the ordinary fare is increased the season ticket fare is automatically increased. In this case not being satisfied with the proportionate increase, maximum percentages were fixed and were announced in the House. The increases were $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., $18\frac{3}{4}$ per cent., 25 per cent., and 50 per cent. for the third, inter, second and first classes respectively. Along with that a sly distinction was introduced between the suburban and non-suburban travellers. In my opinion that made matters worse for the latter. The following statement occurs in the Explanatory Memorandum on the last Railway Budget. "There will be consequential adjustments in non-suburban season tickets and for them the monthly charge will be fixed at a uniform rate of 24 single fares." I am sure even the Honourable Minister would not have been fully aware of the significance of the change of basis of calculation which he was introducing in terms of rupees, annas and pies, when he announced the same in his Budget speech. Surely the House did not read between the lines and catch the significance of this. I shall illustrate this through a concrete example.

On the South Indian Railway formerly no distinction was made between suburban and non-suburban travel in respect of season tickets. The entire distance of 50 miles on which season ticket travel is permissible was treated alike. The figures that I shall be quoting will give the true picture as it is after the increases announced at the time of the last budget. The distance between Chingleput and Madras (a distance of 38 miles) has been treated as non-suburban. The increase in the third class season ticket is 62 per cent, both for monthly and quarterly tickets, whereas it is only $12\frac{1}{2}$ or 13 per cent. for suburban season tickets. As regards second class, the monthly season ticket used to be only Rs. 28/15 and it has been increased to Rs. 76/8 which works out at 264 per cent. increase. The quarterly season ticket which was Rs. 57/13 has been increased to Rs. 191/4, which is an increase of 335 per cent. I need not say that this wide disparity between one class of travellers and another is not at all justifiable and should be ended.

Even in the case of suburban season tickets (quarterly) the increase in second class is to the tune of 57 per cent. i.e. from Rs. 28/10 to 46/7. This was done in accordance with instructions given as follows:

"That railways who formerly issued these season tickets at a discount might continue to do so, but that in no case should the discount exceed one-sixth of the aggregate value of 3 monthly season tickets."

So even for the suburban area the increase is more than what was contemplated. It is 57 per cent. whereas the contemplated increase was only 25 per cent. The instance is not an isolated one affecting only one railway. It is a common thing. It is an all-India grievance. I therefore think the Honourable Minister will make haste to remedy this state of affairs which I hope he did not even contemplate at the time of introducing the changes. If there should be any discrimination at all I venture to say that it should be made in favour of the non-suburban season ticket holders rather than the suburban travellers; because after all who are these non-suburban season ticket holders? They came from the poor and middle classes. They are largely composed of students, petty officials, labourers, artisans and others who eke out their livelihood in a city and live in villages. They do so for two reasons. Firstly, they cannot live in the cities because it is much beyond their earning capacity. Another reason,

as everybody knows, is the housing shortage in these cities. Nobody can get houses in cities or towns. These people while performing a service to the city do not remain as a burden on the city administrations or utility services. In fact these people should be encouraged more. Instead of that they have been penalised. In my opinion it is not fair. Nobody has any objection to the increase in fares as contemplated by the percentages announced. The objection comes when an invidious distinction is introduced between one section of travellers and another. And there is such a wide disparity. I shall earnestly appeal to the Honourable Minister to remove this disparity. Representations have been made to him and he is already seized of the matter. I hope he would find it possible to make an announcement on the floor of the House today. By doing so he will be more or less righting the wrong that was inadvertently done at the time of the last Budget and will be treating all passengers alike—I mean season ticket travellers who are not a handful but who are quite a large number—and will be according them the same treatment. He will thereby be leaving them with the increases that were actually contemplated and understood by the House as such when he introduced the rates at the time of the last Budget.

The Honourable Dr. John Matthai: Sir, the problems that have been raised are fairly simple and straightforward problems. I think the question that My Honourable friend Mr. B. Das raised was briefly this. I think he was concerned primarily with the abolition of the system of telescopic rates in regard to passenger fares. That, I am afraid, was something which we did with our eyes open and I should like to explain what really was the consideration involved in it. When we decided to place proposals for increase in fares and freights we wanted to see to it that the burden involved in this increase was as low as possible as far as third class passengers were concerned in respect of their essential journeys. Therefore the basis on which we proceeded was that third class fares by ordinary trains should be kept at a rate which very nearly approximated to the average rate which prevailed on most of the principal railways in India. That is how we got this rate of four pias for the third class by ordinary trains—we took ordinary trains because people who travel relatively short distances would be travelling by ordinary trains rather than mail trains. In order to have travel by third class trains in respect of essential journeys at the lowest possible rates it became necessary, in order to meet the increase in expenses that we were up against, to find a corresponding amount of money to make up the deficiency on the third class side. We felt that the only way of doing it—and probably in the circumstances the least unsatisfactory way of doing it—was to abolish the telescopic principle for the time being. That is how the situation resulted. I am quite aware of the importance of the consideration which my Honourable friend Mr. B. Das raised, that in a country like ours with a standard of living which is very low it is of the utmost importance that we should make the cost of transport as low as possible in respect of third class passengers. I am well aware of the importance of that consideration. But unfortunately for circumstances over which we have no control it has been necessary to raise the estimate of working expenses. The cost of materials and the cost of labour have gone up owing to circumstances over which the railways have so little control. Once you are up against the fact that there is a very big increase in working expenses that increase has got to be met, and in order to make the increase as equitable as possible, for the first time last year we decided to introduce the principle of gradation in our schedule of fares. That is to say, when we proposed an increase, what used to be done before was that you introduced a flat rate of increase: we did not do that last time. For the first time we decided to introduce the principle of gradation, that is to say, we applied a higher ratio of increase to upper class passengers and a lower ratio increase to the lowest

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class passengers. I believe it is the first time that we introduced that principle into our railway rates structure, and I would with very great respect suggest to Mr. B. Das that a certain amount of credit might be given to the administration for having introduced that.

The other question which my friend Mr. Alagesan raised has been present to my mind. I quite understand the problem that worries him. That is to say, if you take the proportion of increase in respect of suburban season tickets and of non-suburban season tickets the proportion of increase has been considerably greater in respect of non-suburban season tickets. But after all when you reduce it to the actual quantum of money involved, the non-suburban season ticket holder today, under the present increases, is only charged twelve return tickets for a month's season ticket. To my mind it appears that if our expenses are lower, or if we are up against competition from other forms of transport, it might be necessary for us later on to reconsider it. But that is a different problem. For the time being, if you simply but it at that, what we are charging the non-suburban season ticket holder is twelve return tickets for a whole month's journey which might mean not merely one return journey everyday but sometimes more than that. On merits it cannot be considered excessive. But I know what is troubling my friend Mr. Alagesan. The problem on the South Indian Railway is a somewhat different problem. On that Railway I believe the suburban season ticket rates had been in force before 1st January 1948. The whole question there, I think, is bound up with their scheme for increasing the area served by the electrified railways, and their contention is that if the electrification system is going to be extended beyond the present point, the cost would be such that the suburban season ticket fares that we charge now would not cover their expenses. Now that question has been present to my mind, and all that I can say at this stage, and I hope my Honourable friend will be satisfied with that, is that I have decided to take up that question with the South Indian Railway and see whether it would not be possible to provide some kind of relief for people who are getting their concession rate now and who are denied that rate under the present system. That I think is as far as I can carry the matter. I am not in a position at present to make any announcement regarding variations of the non-suburban season ticket rates that we have just now introduced.

Mr. Chairman: Does Mr. Das want to press his motion?

Shri B. Das: No.

Mr. Speaker: Has the Honourable Member leave of the House to withdraw his cut motion?

The cut motion was, by leave of the Assembly, withdrawn.

Grievances of Third Class Passengers

Mr. R. K. Sidhva: Sir, I move:

"That the demand under the head 'Railway Board' be reduced by Rs. 100."

Sir, on this vital subject, if I have to criticize the railway administration, I hope the Honourable Minister will forgive me and take my criticism in the best spirit and as made with the best of intentions. Sir, it is not today that the grievances of the third class passengers are being presented to the Honourable Minister by this Honourable House, but during the British regime the third class travelling was intentionally made by that administration intolerable. I would go further and state that third class travelling is a vulnerable hell. That is the legacy that the British Government has left to our own Indian Ministers. I am anxious to see these grievances removed, and I am also desirous to say that the time has come when the Government must show that

they are alive to the situation and that the Government intends seriously to remove the grievances of these third class passengers. An impression has to be created in the public mind of the third class passengers. The Honourable Minister said that for the removal of overcrowding and many other things, production is the greatest factor. I agree with him; and he has in his speech mentioned certain targets, and those targets related to long-term policy. I appreciate that. But what about the short term immediate policy? Where is this target? I want to know what target has been fixed for the existing coaching staff to be put into perfect running order? Has the Honourable Minister told his administration 'I want to see the existing coaches put in proper position within three months'? He must issue such an order, and loyal as his officers are, I am perfectly sure they will put them in order. We have been hearing a lot about the coaches which are lying with the military authorities. For the last two years I have been hearing from the visitors' gallery the Honourable Minister saying that by June 1947, all these coaches will be returned to the administration. Then in this session we asked him as to when these are going to be brought back and handed over to us. Sir, from June 1947, up to the present moment, all these coaches have not come back to us. Cannot he tell his officers 'I want one of you to go to Assam or any other front and find out where these coaches are, and bring them back within three months'? Again with the present coaches, there are no window catches, there are no lavatory fittings, there are no doors in some coaches; the panes of the windows are broken. Can these not be attended to immediately? Cannot he fix a target in regard to these things? Cannot he tell his Commissioner 'Mr. Railway Commissioner, I want these things done within three months', and I am sure the Railway Commissioner will obey his order. This is the kind of thing people today want and that will really be a people's government. We want to create an impression in the people's mind I am not expected to see "Silver Arrow" train which was recently exhibited all over the country—to be put on the lines immediately. Heaven knows when we shall see such improvements. I am not talking of amenities. I am talking of the bare necessities of the toiling persons who are travelling today. Their lot is worse than that of the cattle. Cattle are provided with wagons, a certain amount of space, and are numbered. But these third class passengers, leaving aside their overcrowding, are seen sitting on windows, standing on foot-boards, and sitting on the roofs of carriages. Their lot is much worse than that of cattle, and nothing has been done from that point of view with the existing staff. By all means have the long term policy. We all know that the Honourable Minister has not got a magic lantern or a magic rod or a magic wand by which he can immediately do it. What has his administration done during the last one year they have been in existence,—certainly six months as free India and for six months the Honourable Minister was there as a Minister in the Interim Cabinet. I want to know what the Government has done. There are so many necessary things which are not there in the third class carriages, and in some of the higher class carriages also. Bulbs even are not being fitted in the third class compartments. No satisfactory answer was ever given. It was often stated that the passengers were stealing. That was the answer the bureaucrats were giving to me and this very answer our officers are repeating to the Honourable Minister. I am sorry to say that he is repeating this very answer on the floor of this House. Those bulbs are of no use to the public. They are of special quality which can be used only in railway compartments, and it is their own people who steal. I am making one other suggestion. Let there be one compartment attached with about a couple of dozen fitters and workmen, and let them travel in the trains and see that these minor repairs are attended to immediately. They should carry a few bulbs with them, to fit into compartments where there are none if the catches are not there, they should be put up in their places; if the doors are not locking

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they should be repaired, otherwise people are exposed to danger. In the women's compartments specially, all these things should be attended to and they are not secure as things stand at present. Let these workmen work on the travelling trains. Give them more salaries, I do not mind it. But this solution must be put into operation, and I am sure if there is a will, there are many ways of doing a thing. After all in this huge railway administration, do you mean to say they cannot find a way Sir, for the short-term policy? If we are going to wait really for the long-term policy, then you will not create an impression upon the travelling public.

The Honourable Minister for Railways wished that there should be co-operation from our side. Let me assure him we are out to co-operate with him. I can tell him that just as he today is responsible, we are also responsible. But the co-operation should be reciprocal. Let me give two instances to him. I was travelling last month only from Bombay (Victoria Terminus) to Nagpur to attend the Railway Advisory Committee meeting in a first class compartment through the kindness of the railway who gave me a pass free. A member is entitled to that privilege for attending meetings. Sir, just five minutes before the departure of the train I saw a passenger at my door loitering and as I know such ticketless passengers, just at the time of starting, jump into compartment. I asked him, "Friend, where are you going?", he said, "I am going to Nasik, will you kindly allow me?". I said, "Kindly show me your ticket, whether you are travelling first class", he said, "But I will get down at Kalyan, it is only next station". I said, "Let me see the ticket; by all means you can come in, but I would like to see the ticket". Sir, the man quietly went away. On the station platform there was a Ticket Inspector in a black uniform. I went and told him, "Will you kindly see this man? I presume he is travelling without a ticket". Sir, he gave no countenance. I went in search of the Stationmaster—there was nobody. I brought this to the notice of the Advisory Committee at Nagpur, and the Chairman told me. "I am very glad that you have brought it to my notice. But what can I investigate? What can I do? There are many black-coated Inspectors. Whom should I ask?" Sir, the time at my disposal before the train started was two minutes and I had no person, not even the Stationmaster, available that I could get his name down and report it. This is the position.

Sir, the Honourable Minister was talking about traffic guides. I am very glad in his speech he said he wanted the social-service type of men. I saw one in Nagpur Station with the badge "Traffic Guide". He was quietly walking on the platform from one end to the other. When I saw third-class passengers running from one end to the other, searching for accommodation I saw this man was not helpful. That is the point I am driving at. The outlook of the staff has not changed. If he has given the certificate that the Indians are able to do the job, I am in entire agreement with him. He is telling us today, but we have been advocating the same from the public platforms during the British regime while advocating for the Indianization of the services. I was one who must have preached from hundreds of platforms that the British administration was an impediment, that our Indians have talent, they have enthusiasm, that they are persevering and that they are a match for them if given chance to take charge. I am glad today that in every department, right down from the Commissioner to the General Manager, barring some exceptions they are all Indians and they are very able to do the work. To that extent I am joining with my Honourable friend in his certificate or his congratulations, but if he says that his administration has changed its outlook, I am sorry I cannot agree; that is exactly what I want the Administration to do. I do feel, Sir, that just as you have got training schools for training the linesmen, the signalmen, the drivers and the con-

ductors, in order that the type of service may be changed there must be a school where three months' training should be given to these people.

I was also stating about the bare necessities of third-class passengers. Take the case of booking offices. For third-class passengers their booking offices are sometimes half a furlong or one furlong from the main platform and the main offices. They have to come a number of hours before time and fall in queue, wait there for tickets. I know when a passenger runs for a ticket, the staff at the booking office is intentionally not prompt in issuing the ticket because when the passenger gives a note of Rs. 10 and the fare is Rs. 9-1, the man has to pocket about twelve annas. The passenger is in a hurry to get the ticket, he does not see what is written on the ticket—particularly so with our unfortunate illiterate third-class passengers—he has to run from the booking office to catch the train. And for these third-class passengers only five minutes before the departure of the train is the gate opened. For the first and second class passengers the whole day the gate is open. Are the third-class passengers not men? But this mentality is strange.

In the British regime they have erected stations wherever there are Cantonments with luxurious conveniences. I will not take the Honourable House to far-off stations; take the East Punjab. There is the Jullundur Cantt. Station and the Jullundur City Station; the Meerut Cantt. Station and the Meerut City Station; the Ambala Cantt. Station and the Ambala City Station; Ferozepore Cantt. and Ferozepore City Stations. See the marked difference between the Cantonment Station and the City Station. The Cantt. Station is provided with shelters for passengers. In the City Station there is no shelter, there is no proper waiting room, whereas the number of passengers travelling from the City Station is ten times more than that from the Cantonment Station. This was done only with the object of giving facilities to the European community, the upper class community. If you take the population of these Cantonment Stations, you will find it is very small. And at these stations generally the trains are stopped for ten or fifteen minutes and at the City Station only for five minutes.

An Honourable Member: What about Delhi?

Mr. R. K. Sidhva: Again, you see the third-class booking offices there in Delhi also, and see the booking offices of the upper classes, and see the number of platforms. One booking office is at one end and the other at the other end.

Sir, the whole machinery has to be changed. The Honourable Minister should make out a plan and put in an immediate proposal to galvanize the spirit of your men—that dynamic spirit force I want among the men and until it comes nothing can be done. Sir, Railway servants are my friends; I have worked in their unions—both of the clerical staff and of the working staff—and I know they are my friends. I have worked with them for a number of years and they were always listening to me whenever their interests were concerned. Now for the interest of the public the time has come when they must change their viewpoint and see that they must help their Government. My Honourable friend has been good enough to give them a full-fledged certificate. I do not mind it, Sir, but I am not going to give them the full-fledged certificate to the extent of the absence of the changed outlook, which I want infused in them. That is the main point I am driving at.

I am not speaking simply for the purpose of speaking. I can mention a number of grievances here, but my difficulty is that I have a limited time at my disposal and I cannot do justice to all the points. But if you give me only one minute, Sir, I shall mention one point and complete. I appeal to the Honourable Minister that from one of the replies to the questions that I asked, which question is being asked in every Session here, and when it is repeated, he must realise that there is something very wrong. We are not

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here merely for the purpose of speaking and bringing matters to the notice of the Honourable Minister. He must realise that yesterday fifty per cent. of the members, while discussing the general administration, spoke on the grievances of the travelling public. My Honourable friend gave two minutes to this matter, took 18 minutes on the question of statistics and operating ratio—I am very glad he is a master of that, he is an economist and he ably put it,—he took 5 minutes for wagons, and only half a minute for the public grievances. That is the only thing I want to impress on him. Just as he is an enthusiastic economist he must be equally enthusiastic about the third-class passengers' grievances.

Mr. Chairman: Cut motion moved:

"That the demand under the head 'Railway Board', be reduced by Rs. 100."

Shri Khandubhai K. Desai (Bombay: General): Sir, I would like to place before the House some observations regarding the difficulties under which the third class passengers are suffering. Of course, my Honourable friend, Mr. Sidhva, has placed before the House certain grievances with the sentiments and emotions that he is capable of. There is no question of denying the fact that the third-class passengers, who are as a matter of fact the best paymasters of the Railways, are treated with scant courtesy by the officials. But I must also admit that during the last five or six months, after independence has come, a certain change in the attitude of the railway officials is noticeable. Only that the change, according to me, is not very rapid, and if the Honourable Railway Minister and our sympathetic Railway Commissioner would take it into their heads to make efforts to change this attitude and outlook on the part of these officials, I do not think there will be any difficulty whatsoever. As a matter of fact, from my observations on the railway stations, the railway officials who had been accustomed to treat the lower class passengers indifferently during the last generation or two are now anxious to change their attitude and if a little push is given, there is bound to be vast improvement.

I have one constructive suggestion, Sir, to make to my Honourable friend, the Railway Minister. That suggestion is this. The time has now come when the Railway Department must straightaway, without any loss of time, alter their policy and abolish at least the first-class accommodation on the Railways. If the first-class accommodation is removed, the attention and the time that the railway officials had given or are accustomed to give to the first-class passengers would be directed towards the convenience of the third-class passengers. Along with the removal of first-class accommodation, there will be lot of space also available on the railway station platforms which could be made use of for the third class passengers. We find, Sir, that there are First-Class Railway Waiting Rooms, First-Class Railway Refreshment Rooms, and for ought I know most of these rooms are utilised by railway officials for gossiping. We know as a matter of fact, particularly during the last three months, most of these First-Class Waiting Rooms have been empty and in this respect if I place before the Railway Minister certain facts he may find them useful.

Sir, the change which I have suggested of abolishing the first-class accommodation is one which should be done in a couple of weeks' time on all the Railways. I tell you the reason, Sir. There is one train which is daily running between Ahmedabad and Bombay Central, called Gujarat Mail. Now the Gujarat Mail has accommodation for 450 third-class passengers, 84 second-class passengers and 16 first-class passengers. The 450 third-class passengers bring in today a revenue of about Rs. 3,400; the 84 second-class passengers bring in a revenue of, say, about Rs. 2,100; and the 16 first-class passengers bring in a revenue of about Rs. 750 to 800. Of course, I assume that both

the first-class and the second-class coaches are all occupied. But from my observations during the last two months, I find that on an average only 3 to 4 passengers travel by first-class while the remaining 12 berths are empty and the result is that the Railway is losing revenue to that extent. On the other side, we see the spectacle of the third-class passengers dying to get accommodation. Now, Sir, where is the need for running these first-class coaches, which in my opinion had been provided in this country by our railways in order to satisfy the snobbery of foreigners who did not want to travel with Indians? There is certainly no need of this snobbery now and there should, in my opinion, be only two types of accommodation to begin with, namely, a Lower Class and an Upper Class, the Lower Class approximating to the present Inter-Class and the Upper Class approximating to the present Second-Class. If the first-class is abolished on the abovementioned train, these 16 berths will be able to accommodate 150 third-class passengers by making slight conversions, taking into consideration the present load, and yield an income of about Rs. 1,250 as against the problematic revenue of Rs. 750. If this is true of a particular train which I have observed, I am sure it may be more or less true of other trains also that are working on the B. B. & C. I. Railway and I think it will also be true of such trains on all Railways. This is a question, Sir, which I think requires the close and immediate attention of the Railway Authorities.

Then, Sir, my Honourable friend Mr. Sidhva in his characteristic style . .

Shri H. V. Kamath: 'Inimitable style'!

Shri Khandubhai K. Desai: . . . in his characteristic style said that as far as booking offices are concerned.....(*Interruption*) it is bound to be inevitable, as my Honourable friend Mr. Kamath says, but its inevitability under the present circumstances arises from the fact. . .

Shri H. V. Kamath: On a point of correction, Sir. I said 'inimitable' and not 'inevitable'.

Shri Khandubhai K. Desai: I thought he said that the present state of affairs was inevitable and was going to say that, that was probably due to the energy and time of the railway personnel, being wasted in looking to first-class passengers who alone enjoy their indulgence.

Sir, if the personnel employed now on first-class passengers is requisitioned to serve the third-class passengers and if the Railway Board make the higher officials realise that the first-class passengers, or, for that matter, even the second-class passengers are not their masters but their real masters are the third-class passengers who run into crores, especially with the coming into being shortly of adult franchise under the democracy that we are evolving, then, Sir, everything will be well. It is the common people who are going to vote all of them on the adult franchise and they are the real masters, and the duty of the railway officials, as it is the duty of the servant, is to serve very satisfactorily their real masters.

Shri Biswanath Das (Orissa General): Mr. Chairman, Sir, it is a fiction of democracy that a motion of this nature should be construed as a censure motion. Sir, far from being a censure motion, need I appeal to the Minister and tell him that this is a motion to lay before him our experiences of the Railway Administration so that he might utilise them to the best advantage of the Government. Sir, let it be clearly understood and realised that from the day that he entered office, our National Cabinet, his honour and respect are ours and our grievances are his. It would, therefore, be unfortunate for anyone to construe this as a motion of censure.

Sir, I do realise the difficulties of the Honourable Minister; his difficulties are enormous because of the legacies left for the National Government by its predecessor. But at the same time I want him to feel that all that glitters is not gold. Sir, while we appreciate the compliment that he has paid to the

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officials in charge of the Railway Administration, we want the officials in their turn to realise and feel that their responsibility is to see that the popular grievances are redressed and the greatest public utility service that we have in this country is being utilised in such a way as to make out an attractive case for the nationalisation of the other public utility concerns in this country. It is with this object in view that we are tempted to offer our observations and I hope that they will be taken in the spirit in which they are offered.

Sir, my friends have stated all about the difficulties of the third class passengers. Their difficulties are numerous. My Honourable friend the Minister in charge of the Department—fortunately for him he had a brilliant career—does not travel in third class. It is therefore impossible for him to realise the difficulties and grievances of third class passengers. So far as I am concerned,—except on occasions when I travel to attend the meetings of the Constituent Assembly, or come on official work—I generally travel by the third class. So, when I enumerate the grievances of the third class passengers, I only speak from my own personal experience. The Honourable Minister's predecessor in office Mr. Asaf Ali in presenting his budget for 1946-47, gave certain promises—seatings which make room for greater privacy; provision of knee-room which will give greater standard of comfort, provision of adequate water supply in the compartments and lavatories; improvement of lighting arrangements; more accommodation for third class passengers, etc. I would ask him, and through him, his officials, to see which of these items have been realised in practice? Need I say, Sir, that the latrines—I would not call them lavatories, because they are not worth that name, I do not even know what expression to use—are unusable. The compartments are stinky; the latrines are stinky; lights you don't have at all, and even if it is there, it is dim. Imagine the difficulties of a family travelling a long distance in such a third class compartment. These grievances need consideration.

The Honourable Minister's Department had instituted a betterment fund in 1946-47. The purpose of the fund had been described in the budget speech as to make "travel faster, safer and more comfortable." I would ask the Minister in Charge of the Department or any of his officials who today running the machinery of the Railway Administration to see for themselves privately (because if they go in their official capacity they will be received with garlands) any of these third class compartments; they will see that they are not places for any decent person to sit and much less to travel long distances. I know sweepers have been provided. But what is the use? Unless you pay no sweeper comes to sweep your compartment. The result boil down to this. (*An Honourable Member*: "Sweepers are meant for First and Second class passengers") I know that the first and Second Class passengers get it done, but the poor third class passengers cannot afford to pay. Under these circumstances I would appeal to my Honourable friend to see that something is done to redeem the promises made by his predecessor.

Sir, I am very much pained to see from an analysis how the betterment fund has been utilised for the last two years. Let me give the Honourable Members of this House an idea of the betterment fund. In 1946, the Betterment Fund appropriated 2/3rd for the amenities of the staff and 1/3rd for the amenities of the passengers. In the Betterment Fund allocations later, a higher proportion was allocated for the amenities of the passengers. Again allocation* for the staff includes such items as hospital accommodation, water-supply and the like and that for passengers provides for such items as construction of over-bridges, covered platforms, water-supply, etc. I would appeal to my Honourable friend to plead with his officials; I do not want to be hard with them, because they are of us and we are of them; I want

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them to realize that their responsibility and ours is one. Sir, National Government is meaningless, our independence is meaningless unless our friends run the administration on the basis that their interests and ours are one. In this view of the question, I want to plead with him and through him to his higher officials to run the Department with changed mentality and outlook. I wish that the Betterment Fund really becomes a betterment fund for the betterment of the passengers. Why on earth should you have so many funds and give scope for mis-spending monies and utilising in the way the officials liked.

Sir, you go to moffussil stations. You do not have even a waiting room in very many moffussil small stations. It is my unfortunate experience to see throughout Orissa in small stations you do not have a waiting room; you do not have water conveniences; you do not have latrine conveniences; and you do not have anything to call a convenience. Is the administration worth the name if things go on in the way that has been going on? I appeal and plead with my Honourable friend and through him the officials to see that all is not well if you make Delhi glitter like gold or if you make Calcutta glitter like gold. We want the benefits to be extended to moffussil places and to far off places, so that the people who really need help can get it.

Sir, having stated so far about the Betterment Fund, let me come to another question which is more painful, namely the fares. Let me state in this House that people in moffussil do not like to travel unnecessarily unless they are compelled to do so. Generally, they have to travel long distances because of migration of labour from district to district and from province to province. But, the fares that have been increased are very high.

Mr. Chairman: This point has already been debated. I think the Honourable Member need not refer to that point.

Shri Biswanath Das: Quite right, but while speaking of the third class passenger that is one of the main and important grievance which has to be brought to the notice of the Assembly and the Honourable Minister. Sir, originally one anna was increased and now 5-1/3 annas and this means at one stretch they get an increase of 6-1/3 annas. Having stated so far about it, let me state that vested interests have unfortunately been created in the Railways. Why? It is because that certain things have gone on unheeded for a long time. Let me illustrate my point. While travelling long distances or while coming from a long distant moffussil to a railway station in these days especially when trains do not keep to time, people have to depend on railway refreshment stalls and hotels. These hotels have been leased out not with the idea and outlook of providing conveniences and good staff to people for whom they are intended, but as a source of income to the Railways. This offers a lot of scope for the intermediaries to exploit the passengers besides the heavy fares that have been imposed on railway passengers. It has been my ill luck or good luck to travel in these railways very often and to undergo these hardships. In the Railways standard prices have been fixed, but you do not get good price or good stuff. Not only do you not get proper things, they are also not properly weighed. The prices are far heavier at the railway stations than what you would get otherwise in ordinary stalls. It is time when you should have a number of contractors instead of giving all the contracts in a railway to one contractor, and thus make it convenient for him and for the officials in charge to exploit the passengers. It has been experienced in the B. N. and E. I. Railways that this is so. Sir, you go to any station in moffussil areas. You find at least in B. N. Railway things are awfully rotten, things are prepared in the worst of possible. I feel, Sir, vested interests have been created even in refreshment stalls and stalls for other eatables. I strongly feel that the present system of giving contract should be done away with and a proper outlook be created in this regard so that the Railway stalls will really be useful and serviceable to the country folk.

श्री राम सहाय : सभापति महोदय, अभी आपके सामने तीसरे दर्जे के मुसाफिरो की तकलीफ के बारे में बताया गया है। मैं आपसे एक ऐसे हिस्से के बारे में निवेदन करना चाहता हूँ जहाँ पर कि ग्रामीण जनता के उपयोग में आने वाली सिर्फ दो रेलें एक आने व एक जाने को चलती हैं और वहाँ पर कोई सड़कें बगैरा भी नहीं हैं। जी० आई० पी० लाइन में ऐसी हालत है कि वहाँ लोगों को ट्रेन में जगह न मिलने पर २५ मील और ३० मील तक पैदल चलना पड़ता है। लडाईं के पहले वहाँ जो गाड़ी चलती थी वह बन्द हो गई जिससे लोगों को काफी कष्ट उठाना पड़ता है। अब वहाँ एक पैसेंजर गाड़ी और एक पारसल एक्सप्रेस चलती है। पारसल एक्सप्रेस में तो तीसरे दर्जे के मुसाफिर को सफर करना बन्द कर दिया है और पैसेंजर ट्रेन में इतना रश रहता है कि लोगों को बैठने की जगह नहीं मिलती है। यह हिन्दुस्तानियों का दुर्भाग्य है कि उनको तकलीफ उठाने की आदत हो गई है, लेकिन उनका कार्य पूरा न हो तो यह सबसे बड़ी मुसीबत है। इसलिये मैं हाउस के सामने यह अर्ज करना चाहता हूँ कि तीसरे दर्जे के मुसाफिरो के लिये बैठने के लिये ट्रेन में जगह मिलने का तो कम से कम इन्तजाम हो।

अभी खन्डू भाई ने आपके सामने यह सुझाव रक्खा कि चार क्लासेज की जगह हमें दो क्लासेज रखने चाहिये। मैं हाउस से यह निवेदन करना चाहता हूँ कि यहाँ जितने लोग भी बैठे हैं उनमें से बहुत से आमतौर पर तीसरे दर्जे में सफर करने पर गर्व करते रहे हैं। फिर कोई वजह नहीं है कि हम इन चारों दर्जों को रक्खें। मैं अर्ज करना चाहता हूँ कि एक ही दर्जा रक्खा जाय और उन लोगों के लिये जिनको रातों दिन का लम्बा सफर करना हो उनको रात को सोने की व्यवस्था की जाये ताकि वे आराम कर सकें। बजाय इसके कि फर्स्ट क्लास, सेकन्ड क्लास, थर्ड क्लास, रक्खा जाय यह मुनासिब नहीं है। जब तक हम इस तरह की चीज नहीं सोचेंगे तब तक हम तीसरे दर्जे के मुसाफिरो को आराम नहीं पहुँचा सकते हैं। हमको यह सोचना चाहिये कि हर मुसाफर को आराम से बैठने के लिये ट्रेन में जगह मिल जाय। इसी तरह से जी० आई० पी० में जो पारसल एक्सप्रेस गाड़ी चलती है अगर उसमें दो तीन डिब्बे तीसरे दर्जे के लगा दिये जाय तो इससे काफी तकलीफ दूर हो सकती है और जो पैसेंजर गाड़ी बन्द है अगर उनको भी चला दिया जाय तो जनता को काफी सहूलियत हो जायगी जब तक हम पूरी व्यवस्था नहीं कर सकते तब तक के लिये तो कम से कम एक ही क्लास रक्खी जाय।

इसमें शुबा नहीं है कि तीसरे दर्जे के मुसाफिरो से ही आमदनी होती है और जैसा कि खन्डू भाई ने अभी कहा है कि उनके ही वोट से हम यहाँ आये हैं और उनकी ही राय से हमारी डेमोक्रेटिक गवर्नमेंट को चलना है तो मैं नहीं समझता कि उनकी तकलीफों को हम क्यों नजरअन्दाज नहीं करते हैं। तीसरे दर्जे के बुकिंग आफिस आमतौर पर शहरों के अन्दर नहीं हैं हमको इस बात की भी कोशिश

करनी चाहिये कि तीसरे दर्जे के मुसाफिरों को आसानी से टिकट मिल जाय इसलिये बड़े बड़े शहरों में सिटी में ही बुकिंग आफिस खोले जायें मैं समझता हूँ कि हमारा रेल का सरपलस बजट है तो हमको जरूर तीसरे दर्जे के मुसाफिरों को सुविधा देनी चाहिये और बड़ी २ जगह बुकिंग आफिस सिटी में खोल दिये जायें जिससे आसानी से टिकट मिल जायें ।

क्योंकि बहुत सारी बातें हाउस के सामने कही जा चुकी हैं इसलिये मैं इतनी ही बात कहकर खत्म करता हूँ ।

(English translation of the above speech)

Shri Ram Sahai (Gwalior State): Sir, the difficulties of third class passengers have just been detailed before the House. I want to say something about a place where only two train services are available to the villagers, one for outward journey and the other for inward journey. There are no roads in this territory. The state of affairs on the G.I.P. Railway is such that failing to get accommodation on the trains, people have to traverse twenty to thirty miles of distances on foot. The pre-war train service was suspended. This has put people to great difficulty. A passenger train and a parcel Express run there now. The Parcel Express does not carry third class passengers and the passenger train is too overcrowded to let people entrain. It is a misfortune of the Indians that they have become accustomed to difficulties; but it is worst of all that their work remains undone. I would, therefore, appeal to the House to see that arrangements should be made to provide third class passengers with at least seating accommodation in trains.

Just now Shri Khandubhai proposed that we should have two classes instead of four. I would state before the House that many of us present here have been usually taking pride in travelling in third class; there is then no reason why we should continue these four classes. I would submit that there should be only one class; and rules may be framed for passengers who have to travel day and night so that they may be able to take rest and sleep at night. It is not proper to have first class, second class and third class in its place. So long as we do not think along this line we will not be able to provide amenities to third class passengers. We should devise means to provide every passenger with a comfortable seat in the train. Similarly, if a few third class bogies are attached to the G.I.P. Railway Parcel Express running over this section, a great deal of trouble can be avoided and if the train service which is still suspended is resumed the public will get sufficient relief. So long as we do not frame such rules we should have only one class.

There is no doubt that third class passengers are the main source of our income. Shri Khandubhai has stated that we have come here on the votes of these people and that our democratic Government has to be guided by their views. I cannot understand why should we ignore their difficulties. Generally there are no third class booking offices in cities. We should also try to see that third class passengers are enabled to purchase tickets easily, for this we should open city booking offices in big places. I think, when we have a surplus railway budget, we must provide amenities to third class passengers and at big places we should open city booking offices so that passengers can purchase tickets conveniently.

Enough has already been said here. I would, therefore, content myself with saying this much.

Shri Kishori Mohan Tripathi (Eastern States Group-II): Sir, in view of the fact that a number of speakers have preceded me and brought to notice many grievances of third class passengers I need not say very much. The

[Shri Kishori Mohan Tripathi.]

only thing to which I wish to draw the attention of the Honourable Railway Minister and the management is that if they believe that the railways are institutions of social service the first point that should engage attention is about service to third class passengers. Any amount of service rendered by the railways to First and Second class passengers does not in fact constitute any real social service so long as the railways do not look to their real paymasters, as has been rightly stressed by Mr. Desai. When the railways earn—and for the matter of that the State earns—a huge revenue from the third class passengers it is only our duty to see that the railways offer their best social service to the third class passengers. We have in past years held out promises to improve the lot of these passengers in many ways but it is regrettable that nothing has yet been done in fact and in practice. Promises made here do not bring anything to these people; they wait to see how in fact and in reality their condition improves. I would therefore urge on the Honourable Minister to bring in this changed outlook in the railway management, outlook of service to the common man. That is the only point and the vital point towards which this House would like to draw his attention.

I will then draw the Honourable Member's attention to the behaviour of railway officials towards these third class passengers. I have marked, having myself travelled in third class compartments, how officials, particularly ticket collectors and ticket checkers, treat them as nothing better than chattels or beasts and in an inhuman fashion. Although after the 15th August last a change is visible the change is too slow to be appreciated, and it must move rapidly. We must believe in the fact that our paymasters are the third class passengers. Every member of the railway management has to bear that in mind and accordingly do his duty towards them. I happened once to travel from Kharagpur to Cuttack and I particularly selected a third class compartment; and to my surprise and awe I found that it had no light at all throughout the journey. I got down at Balasore and spoke to a railway official on the platform about this want of light in that compartment. But to my surprise—because I happened to be travelling in the third class—no notice was taken of what I said. In fact we have been neglecting, and the bureaucracy which is still attached to us is still neglecting, in a great measure the vital fact that these third class passengers are our masters. Not only are they our masters in the matter of railways but they are the real masters of the State and as such the entire State should give them every possible attention.

Then I would urge upon the Honourable Minister that out of the surplus that he hopes to make in the current budget he should see that very little is contributed to the general revenues of the State and that most of it is utilised to bring relief to the much oppressed third class passengers. I do not know what the real difficulties are in achieving this; but I hope that other Ministries like the Honourable Finance Minister etc., will appreciate such an approach from the Honourable Railway Minister, and the entire surplus will be used to redress the grievances of these third class passengers.

Sir, I think I have nothing more to add and I once again want to bring home to the Honourable Minister and through him to his entire machinery that if the railways have to function as an instrument of service to society it is not the First and Second class passengers who should engage their attention but the third class passengers who are the real masters of the land.

The Honourable Dr. John Matthai: Sir, I will be brief in replying to this. It is not, as Mr. Sidhwa apparently suspects, that the length of time that I devote to the discussion of a subject indicates my appreciation of its importance. I am going to be brief on this occasion because I find myself almost entirely in agreement with everything that has been said; and as far as amenities for third class passengers are concerned, I have said more than once

in this House that I will see to it that the suggestions which have been made in the course of today's debate are not merely taken up for consideration but are implemented. The three points that need attention in regard to this question of amenities of third-class passengers is the question of over-crowding; then the question of cleanliness of third-class compartments; and thirdly the question of proper lighting. Of course the House will appreciate that we have our difficulties in regard to these matters. But consistently with these difficulties, there will be no lack of attention on the part of railway administrations to see that the suggestions are carried out.

Prof. N. G. Ranga: Would Government consider the advisability of submitting a sort of report upon the action they take in regard to these various suggestions about the improvement of the travel conditions of third class passengers at every budget session? Nothing has so far been done.

The Honourable Dr. John Matthai: I do not know in what form my Honourable friend wants the report, because I will tell the House what is the point that worries me. The obvious way in which a statement will be made to the House is the amount of expenditure that has been incurred from time to time and the particular headings under which the expenditure has been incurred. I am prepared to do that. But whether the Honourable Member has something more than in view. I do not know. If my view is correct, we should be prepared to do that.

My Honourable friend, Mr. Khandubhai Desai raised the question of abolishing the first class. We have already accepted that in principle and there also I find myself almost entirely in sympathy with him. I put it not merely on the ground of its sentimental value. It also has certain definite economic advantages from the railway point of view.

Mr. B. Das in addition to emphasizing all these points, had something to say about the betterment fund. I agree with him that the purpose for which the betterment funds has been used are purposes which are somewhat at variance with the real intention for which it was started. As far as I am concerned, I agree with him that we must now get back to the position that the primary claim on the betterment fund is the improvement in the position of third class passengers. That I think covers all the points.

Shri Biswanath Das: I have also stated something about the second class and third class railway stations on the B. N. R. Would he compare them with the E.I.R.?

The Honourable Dr. John Matthai: It is a question of remodelling of stations? As far as that is concerned, it is not a matter in regard to which one could produce any immediate results because it depends upon a number of factors. But the question of the general remodelling of stations, whenever it is taken up, the particular point the mover raised will receive my sympathetic consideration.

Shri Biswanath Das: Cannot you add amenities?

Mr. Chairman: The Honourable Member must not proceed any further.

Does Mr. Sidhva wish to pursue this motion?

Mr. R. K. Sidhva: I have heard the Honourable Minister's reply and I am glad.....

Mr. Chairman: No speeches please!

Mr. R. K. Sidhva: I think the Mover has a right to reply?

Some Honourable Members: No, no.

Mr. R. K. Sidhva: May I ask one question for information?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Chairman: The Honourable Member will indicate whether he wishes to withdraw the motion or not.

Mr. R. K. Sidhva: Yes, I will withdraw.

Mr. Chairman: Has the Honourable Member leave of the House to withdraw his cut motion?

The cut motion was, by leave of the Assembly, withdrawn.

Reorganisation of Railways

Pandit Mukut Bihari Lal Bhargava (Ajmer Merwara): Sir, I move:

“That the demand under the head ‘Railway Board’ be reduced by Rs. 100.”

The object of my motion is not in the least to censure the Government but only to concentrate the attention of the Government on a very important and vital question regarding our railway system.

Now, Sir, so far as the railway system is concerned, it is the only industry which had been completely nationalised. It is State-owned, it is State-controlled and it is State-managed. Consequently, upon the future of this industry depends to a great extent the question of the benefit or otherwise of nationalization.

So far as the history of railway administration in India is concerned, it has had a very checkered history. The first railway lines that came into existence was in the year 1849. They were the East Indian and the Great Indian Peninsula Railways. After that a number of companies sprung up in India. They were all incorporated—most of them—outside India in England. But gradually the State has taken over all these companies and the question is whether these different lines, the G.I.P., the E.I.R., the B.B. and C.I. and a number of other lines should be continued to run as they have been running or there should be a change, and a change of a fundamental character in the running of this nationalized industry. My respectful submission is that this very important question has not at all been considered in its right perspective. The reason has been that so far it was the foreigners who had been at the helm of affairs of this unfortunate country. But fortunately now we have a national Government. Soon after its advent it had to confront a number of unsurmountable difficulties. Therefore, there was reason why the matter could not receive the proper attention. But it is high time that when we from year to year discuss the railway budget, we should divert our attention and bring this nationalized industry on a sound financial basis. If you compare, Sir, the railway system here with railway systems in some of the most advanced countries of the world, we find that there is a vital difference between our system and the systems of the great advanced countries in other parts of the world. Compare for instance our railway system with the railway lines in England or in the United States of America? But these are the two countries where the railways are owned by private companies and they are not State-owned as it is in India. But there are other countries like Germany and Italy where the railways are State-owned as they are in India. But if we look at the financial aspect of the question of railways in India, we find that they stand in great contrast to countries like England and America on the one hand where the railways are owned by private companies but are controlled to a very great extent by the State: or with the railway systems in Italy and Germany where they are completely State-owned. Every company or railway, whether it be in the U.S.A. or England and even the State-owned railways in Italy and Germany are liable to pay to the State the same taxes that an ordinary company does. This system has not been adopted at all in India. In the past there were reasons for it, because the railway companies were all owned by foreigners and a foreign government was running the administration of the country in the interest of the foreigners. But even when the State assumed control of railways in India no attention was paid to this aspect of the case.

There is absolutely no reason why our railway system should not be organised on a sound financial basis and even if the State is the owner the railways should be run on sound commercial lines. Even in the Constitution Act, Section 154 of the Government of India contemplated that the federal authority will run the system on sound business lines. One of the most important questions concerning the running of an industry by the State on sound business lines is that it should not be placed on a higher footing than other private companies and if other companies are liable to pay central taxes, there is absolutely no reason why the railway system in India should not be liable to pay the same taxes as other private concerns. If we take the analogy of Germany or Italy, where the railways belong to the State and are controlled and managed by the State the taxes that are payable form part of the operational working expenses of any railway system. Here it is not so. Here only if there is a surplus in the railway budget a portion of it goes to the general revenue.

Mr. Chairman: I think the subject is reorganisation. The Honourable Member will please resume his seat. I think he should confine himself to the subject of reorganisation. I do not think the subject he is talking about comes under the scope of this cut motion.

Pandit Mukut Bihari Lal Bhargava: While I have to bow to your ruling, Sir, I must point out that economising and bringing the railways on to a sound system does fall within the purview of reorganisation. Leaving that aside, the other point I want to make out is that there is absolutely no justification that there should be a number of lines and a multiplicity of administrations managing a number of lines. When there is one central authority there is absolutely no justification that there should be a separate administration for the G.I.P., B.B. and C.I., E.I.R., and a number of other railway lines. My submission is that steps should be taken by the railway administration to fuse all these different lines into one centralised administration just as it is in Germany. This is all the more necessary because of the partition, where our strategic position required the reorganisation of the entire railway system. After all in times of war or emergency we must have a very efficient and well administered railway system to maintain the communication lines between the different parts of the country. Therefore these lines should be centralised under one administration: it means both efficiency and also economy. There are necessarily in the higher cadre services a number of superior officers who are very highly paid and their number will be reduced, if the multiplicity of administrations goes. My submission therefore is that early steps should be taken in the interest of efficiency, as also in the interest of economy to centralise the entire railway administration and to bring all the lines under one centralised administration. This will not be difficult.

We have also to see, in view of the changed circumstances and the partition of the country, what strategic lines from different railway lines should be selected and brought under a centralised administration for purposes of defence. This can also be done, only if the separate railway administrations are abolished and a centralised administration is instituted.

Similarly we have also to see how the workshops are to be located so as to satisfy the demand for repairs of engines, wagons and other rolling stock of all lines. This can also be done if there is one centralised administration. At present workshops are not located in such a way as to satisfy the demand from every part of the country on an equal footing. Some are at a great distance and that necessarily tells upon the efficiency.

Similarly we have to see that in the reorganisation scheme our railway become self-sufficient in every possible way, in the way of producing every necessary material from locomotives down to spare parts in our own workshops. These workshops should not be located at one place but in different parts of the country in order that the necessary materials may be supplied expeditiously.

[Pandit Mukut Bihari Lal Bhargava]

The locomotive-manufacturing industry in India is still in its infancy. At present it is the Ajmer workshop that is producing engines in a very small number. It is proposed that the locomotive manufacturing workshop which was to be located at Kanchrapara is to be located at a different place. I would submit that in view of the changed circumstances in the country and in view of the fact that the scheme for the manufacture of locomotives has not proceeded beyond a very initial stage, would the Honourable Minister for Railways reconsider the position and taking into consideration the changed circumstances in the country not concentrate this key industry at one particular spot but create a number of workshops in different parts of the country, so that they may be able to feed all railway lines in time. Particularly in times of emergency it is essential that these workshops should remain located in various parts of the country. The Ajmer workshop has got the experience and it is the only workshop that has been producing locomotives in India. There is absolutely no reason why it should not be improved and expanded so as to produce a very large number of locomotives especially because skilled and experienced labour is available there in sufficient number. Because another big locomotive manufacturing industry is started by Government in another place, that is no reason why this workshop should be neglected. Therefore in the reorganisation of the railways my submission is that all these lines should be merged and the administration should be centralised and the workshop, both for repairs and manufacture of spare parts and locomotives, should be distributed at suitable places in all parts of the country. My submission is therefore that the cut motion should be accepted.

Mr. Chairman: Cut motion moved:

"That the demand under the head 'Railway Board' be reduced by Rs. 100."

Prof. N. G. Ranga: Mr. Chairman, Sir, this is not a new subject. For some years we have been discussing this and sometime ago there was a committee which was appointed, I think, by Government themselves to suggest ways and means for the reorganisation of various railways and I remember that the previous Railway Member gave us an assurance that steps would be taken to bring about amalgamation, at least as a starting point between the M. and S.M. and the S.I. Railways. I do not know why no action has so far been taken in that direction. It has been contended in favour of this amalgamation of some of these railways that such a step would lead to greater efficiency, economy in administration and also better service to the general travelling public as well as the commercial interests. But somehow or other this amalgamation has been put off not only between those two railways but also between the B.B. and C.I. and G.I.P. and various other railways similarly situated.

Secondly, if only one were to look at it from a layman's point of view one is likely to come to the conclusion or draw the inference that there would be no need for two special high commands for two railways whose head offices are situated in the same city, say, Calcutta or Madras or Bombay. Of course the Honourable Minister might know more about it than we could. Only this morning the point of clearing offices was raised at question time and my Honourable friend the Minister in charge of this was, I think, rather very particular that the decision that had already been reached should not be upset.

The Honourable Dr. John Matthai: That question was not with reference to clearing offices. It was a question of the amalgamation of audit and accounts.

Prof. N. G. Ranga: I am coming to that also. In regard to clearing offices also we want the question to be re-examined.

Coming to audit and accounts, there also an amalgamation has been suggested, but the Government does not seem to be very much in favour of it. We would like to know why. We were not given any explanation this morning

beyond being told that the Government had already come to the conclusion, after having considered the report of some committee with which they were not in agreement. Beyond that we did not get any more information.

Then, Sir, there is the question of the workshops. Each railway seems to have been developing its own workshops. There has been an impression that an economy could be effected in the number as well as in the size and working of these workshops if there were amalgamation between a number of these railways.

Similar hopes have been entertained by people who have pleaded for reorganisation in regard to loco sheds. We are also assured that we can have a better administration if there were to be zonalisation of the high command and regionalisation of the local control of these railways. I am not quite so sure whether these suggestions are really tenable. I would like the Honourable Minister to examine these things because we are all laymen and it is very easy for us to entertain any suggestion that may be made by anybody or that we come across, but at the same time we might not know whether that particular suggestion is really feasible or not.

Then there is the question of the gauges and railway rates. In regard to the gauges it strikes one that if there were to be one particular gauge all over the country, it would certainly conduce to economy, better working, quicker service and cheaper rates. In view of the fact that almost all the important railways have already come under the control of the State, I would like to know the practical difficulty that Government finds in bringing about uniformity in the matter of this railway gauge also.

Similarly, in regard to the railway rates, if we are to work out the telescopic rates I am sure it will be easier for the Government to have the same gauges and also this amalgamation.

Lastly, if Government were to implement their own policy of charging lower rates for raw materials, both agricultural and industrial, and higher rates for consumer goods and manufactured goods, amalgamation of these railways and their reorganisation would certainly be helpful.

These are some of the points that have been suggested to us as being conducive to economy. I think it is high time that Government should either appoint an expert committee or should depute one of their own members of the Railway Board to study this problem in the light of the present circumstances and then come back with their suggestions not so much to the House as to the Railway Finance Committee of which you yourself, Sir, are a distinguished member—and then explain to them the various steps they have proposed to take and the reasons therefor. I hope the House realizes that this is not a topic on which one could afford to be dogmatic or sure of the utility of one's own suggestion. It applies also to the Honourable Minister as well as his Department. But it is well worth the while of the Department itself and the Honourable Minister to consider these suggestions and to make the necessary enquiries at an early date.

The Honourable Dr. John Matthai: Sir, three main lines on which the reorganisation should be made have been suggested. The first is that Railways should be run on more commercial lines. What apparently the mover meant by it, as far as I could gather from his remarks, is that the railways should be run by a semi-independent public corporation like the statutory Federal authority contemplated in the Government of India Act of 1935. That raises a question of policy, Sir, on which you will appreciate it is quite impossible for me to make any sort of announcement today.

The next respect in which reorganisation has been suggested is that the existing railways should be regrouped. That in principle is something which

[Dr. John Matthai]

we have accepted. As I have, I think, already told the House, there is an officer now on special duty examining the basis on which the railways concerned with the partition could be regrouped—the E.I., O.T. and E.P. Railways. I am expecting this Report very shortly, and I hope to be able, after due consultation, to come to some conclusions on that.

As regards the advantages of amalgamation which Prof. Ranga mentioned, I am in agreement with him. It does result in a reduction of the overhead expenses and would also lead to various administrative and operational conveniences.

As regards the question of regrouping the Madras and Southern Mahratta Railway and the South Indian Railway, although we have come to no decision on that point, my intention at present—I am speaking quite provisionally—is that when we have come to a decision about regrouping of the railways which is now being investigated, is to take up the question with regard to the M. and S.M. Railway and the S.I. Railway, and I hope to do that at a fairly early date.

Then Prof. Ranga raised the question of gauges, which is the third main point raised in the course of the debate. There are undoubtedly advantages if we can get a uniform gauge started in the country, but that advantage has got to be balanced against the very serious disadvantage of incurring the heavy financial expenditure involved in the changing of the gauges over a very large part of the Indian railway system. The question that we are faced with is, considering the very urgent demands in respect of capital expenditure which we have got to meet, do we want to incur the huge initial expenditure involved in the readjustment of our gauges, or would you reserve the funds available for railways for other and more urgent purposes? That really is the issue with which we are faced. Personally I am inclined to take the view that for the present it is better that we reserve such funds as are available to us for much more urgent purposes.

Prof. Ranga asked me why Government decided against the amalgamation of audit and accounts. We decided against it because all the expert committees which have gone into this question have been unanimously against amalgamation. The obvious reason is this. In an ordinary industrial concern you have a Chief Accountant who is part of the organisation of the concern, but when you want an Audit of the accounts you go to an outside agency. That is the principle which has been followed in regard to railways and I think in principle it must be accepted as sound. Since Government in taking this decision have simply followed the decisions arrived at by a long string of authorities—very highly competent authorities—I think the House will appreciate that Government have by no means taken any rash or precipitate decision.

Pandit Mukut Bihari Lal Bhargava: I beg leave of the House to withdraw the cut motion.

Mr. Chairman: Has the Honourable Member leave of the House to withdraw his cut motion?

The cut motion was, by leave of the Assembly, withdrawn.

The Assembly then adjourned to a Quarter to Eleven of the Clock on Monday the 23rd February 1948.