



**RAILWAY CONVENTION COMMITTEE
(2014)**

**MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS
(RAILWAY BOARD)**

**Facilities Given by Indian Railways
to Differently Abled Persons
(Divyangjan)**

(SIXTEENTH LOK SABHA)



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI**

December, 2017/Agrahayana 1939 (Saka)

SEVENTEENTH REPORT
RAILWAY CONVENTION COMMITTEE
(2014)

(SIXTEENTH LOK SABHA)

MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS
(RAILWAY BOARD)

FACILITIES GIVEN BY INDIAN RAILWAYS TO
DIFFERENTLY ABLED PERSONS
(DIVYANGJAN)

Presented to Lok Sabha on 20.12.2017
Laid in Rajya Sabha on 20.12.2017



LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI

December, 2017/Agrahayana, 1939 (Saka)

Price: ₹ 40.00

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Published under Rule 382 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha (Fifteenth Edition) and printed by the Manager, Government of India Press, Minto Road, New Delhi-110 002.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
COMPOSITION OF THE RAILWAY CONVENTION COMMITTEE (2014)	(iii)
INTRODUCTION	(v)

PART I

REPORT

I. Introductory	1
II. The Term 'Disability'	1
III. Concessions in Fares and Amount Foregone	2
IV. Reservation of Berths and Allotment of Lower Berths	4
V. Short Term & Long Term Facilities	5
VI. Provision of Wheel Chairs, Battery Operated Vehicles, Lifts & Escalators etc.	7
VII. Reservation in Recruitment	10
VIII. Training	10
IX. Fund Allocation and Utilisation	11

PART II

Observations/Recommendations

APPENDICES

I. Minutes of the Thirty Fifth sitting of the Railway Convention Committee (2014) held on 29th June, 2017	19
II. Minutes of the Forty Second sitting of the Railway Convention Committee (2014) held on 7th December, 2017	21

COMPOSITION OF THE RAILWAY CONVENTION COMMITTEE
(2014)

PRESENT

Shri Bhartruhari Mahtab — *Chairperson*

MEMBERS

Lok Sabha

2. Shri Abhishek Banerjee
3. Shri Sanganna Amarappa Karadi
4. Shri K. Ashok Kumar
5. Shri Kamalbhan Singh Marabi
6. Vacant*
7. Vacant**
8. Shri Janak Ram
9. Shri Rahul Ramesh Shewale
10. Shri Bharat Singh
11. Shri Liladharbhai Khodaji Vaghela
12. Shri K.C. Venugopal

Rajya Sabha

13. Vacant***
14. Shri T.K. Rangarajan
15. Shri Prem Chand Gupta
16. Shri Abdul Wahab
17. Smt. Vandana Chavan
18. Shri Ranvijay Singh Judev

SECRETARIAT

1. Smt. Kavita Prasad — *Joint Secretary*
2. Shri M.K. Madhusudhan — *Director*
3. Shri D.R. Mohanty — *Additional Director*

*Vacancy occurred *w.e.f.* 05th July, 2016 *vice* Shrimati Anupriya Patel was appointed MoS.

**Vacancy occurred *w.e.f.* 14th December, 2017 *vice* Shri Nana Patole resigned from Lok Sabha.

***Vacancy occurred *w.e.f.* 18th August, 2017 *vice* Shri Derek O' Brien retired from Rajya Sabha.

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairperson, Railway Convention Committee (2014), having been authorized by the Committee, present this Seventeenth Report on 'Facilities given by Indian Railways to Differently Abled Persons (Divyangjan).

2. The Committee obtained background material and written information from the Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) in connection with the examination of the subject. The Committee also took oral evidence of the representatives of the Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) on 29th June, 2017. The Committee express their thanks to the representatives of the Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) for appearing before the Committee and also for furnishing requisite oral and written information on the subject, as desired by the Committee.

3. The Committee considered and adopted this Report at their sitting held on 07th December, 2017. The Minutes of the sitting of the Committee are appended to the Report.

4. For facility of reference and convenience, the Observations/Recommendations of the Committee have been printed in bold letters in the Report.

NEW DELHI;
15 December, 2017

24 Agrahayana, 1939 (Saka)

BHARTRUHARI MAHTAB,
Chairperson,
Railway Convention Committee.

PART I

REPORT

I. Introductory

The Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full participation) Act, 1995 was promulgated by the Government of India to ensure equal opportunities to persons with disabilities and their full participation in nation building. The implementation of the provisions of the Act requires a multi-sectoral collaborative approach of all the Ministries of the Central/State Governments including the Ministry of Railways.

2. Indian Railways, being the largest employer and considered as the Life Line of India, have a greater responsibility in providing better opportunities and comfort to the Differently Abled Persons/Divyangs in both trains and stations. Facilities provided by the Indian Railways to the differently-abled persons include concessions in fares, reservation of berths, earmarking lower berths, provision of wheel chairs, battery operated vehicles, lifts & escalators, Braille signages etc.

3. With a view to assessing the endeavours of Indian Railways in providing the requisite facilities to the differently Abled Persons/Divyangs, the Committee took up the subject for examination and report. In the process, the Committee obtained preliminary material and written reply from the Ministry besides taking their oral evidence. The Committee also undertook On-the-spot Study Visits to various Zonal Railways to obtain feedbacks at the field level. Based on the written and oral depositions of the Ministry and the inputs gathered during the Study Visits, the Committee have examined the subject in detail as enumerated in the succeeding paragraphs.

II. The term 'Disability'

4. Observing that in the Annual Report & Accounts (2015-16) of the Indian Railways there is a Chapter titled "Facilities to Persons with Disabilities", the Committee desired to know whether it would not be appropriate to replace the nomenclature 'Persons with Disabilities' with 'Differently Abled Persons' or 'Divyangs' as done by other Ministries/Departments/Entities. In reply, the Ministry submitted as under:—

“At present, concession is given to only 4 categories of Physically handicapped passengers *i.e.* (1) Orthopedically handicapped/paraplegic persons, who cannot travel without escort (2) Mentally retarded persons who cannot travel without an escort (3) completely blind persons (4) Deaf & dumb persons (both afflictions together in same person).

The word Physically handicapped has been used in the concession forms.

The word Divyangs/Differently-abled persons can be used. However the concession shall be restricted only to the above categories of passengers.

Instructions have already been issued to Zonal Railways on 16.02.2017 for replacement of the term 'physically handicapped persons' with 'Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan)' in Indian Railways. The term 'Divyangjan' is also being used in Hindi language."

5. When the Committee desired to have the views of the then Chairman, Railway Board, he submitted in evidence as follows:—

"...As regards the instructions for changing the nomenclature of divyangs and persons with disabilities, these instructions were issued by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment and they have all been circulated to different Railways on 16th February, 2017. So, this will be followed uniformly now".

III. Concessions in fares and amount foregone

6. The Committee were informed that the following concessions in rail fare were being given to different categories of physically challenged persons:—

Sl.No.	Category of Persons	Percentage of concession
1.	Orthopedically challenged/Paraplegic persons who cannot travel without escort—for any purpose. However, can book ticket with or without escort.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 75% in 2nd, SL, 1st Class, 3AC, AC chair car • 50% in 1AC and 2AC • 25% in 3AC & AC chair car of Rajdhani/Shatabdi trains • 50% in MST & QST
2.	Mentally retarded persons who cannot travel without escort—for any purpose. However, can book ticket with or without escort.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One escort is also eligible for same element of concession
3.	Blind persons travelling alone or with an escort—for any purpose.	
4.	Deaf & Dumb persons (both afflictions together in the same person) travelling alone or with an escort—for any purpose.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50% in 2nd, SL and 1st Class • 50% in MST & QST • One escort is also eligible for same element of concession.

7. Asked to state the mechanism put in place for availing the concessions, the Ministry responded as under:—

"The procedure for availing concession is (a) Concession tickets are issued directly from Stations on production of copy of prescribed certificate from Govt. Doctor, (b) For Blind persons, certificates issued by RMPs and certain Institutions working for Blind persons (listed in Coaching Tariff) also are accepted. Concessions are granted directly at stations on production of a photocopy of the certificate. The Original certificate will have to be produced for inspection at the time of purchase of concessional ticket and during journey, if demanded. E-tickets are also issued on the basis of Unique ID issued by Indian railways to eligible disabled personal for concession in fare. Concession is admissible in the basic fares of Mail/Express/Rajdhani/Shtabdi group of trains. All other charges like reservation fee, supplementary charges etc. are to be paid in full."

8. Regarding online booking facility, the Ministry stated as under:—

"... With a view to facilitate physically challenged persons to avail concessional tickets online, concessional ticket booking facility, including online concessional ticket booking facility for the physically challenged persons using Photo identity card issued by the Railways has been introduced."

9. Referring to a newspaper Article, the Committee asked whether it was a fact that in most cases physically challenged persons themselves had to go to the Reservation Counters to avail concessional tickets. In response, the Ministry stated as under:—

"Railways already provide the facility to book railway tickets through a messenger/any other person provided that the requisite formalities of the requisition form are fulfilled."

10. The Committee then enquired whether only two tickets could be reserved online in a train for the differently abled persons implying thereby that once those two tickets were booked, the other physically challenged persons had to be physically present at the Reservation Counters for ticket booking. In reply, the Ministry submitted as under:—

"The persons with disability while booking reserved tickets online can access quota of four berths in Sleeper class and two berths in 3AC meant for persons with disability for booking accommodation for themselves and their escort. However, on one ID they can book only two berths (one for themselves and one for escort) at a time. This quota can be booked by them through computerized Passenger Reservation System (PRS) as well as through internet on first come first served basis. Thereafter, general accommodation can be booked by persons with disability like other normal passengers. No condition regarding presence of person with disability at the normal reservation counter for booking of ticket has been imposed. However, the benefit of special reservation counter earmarked for persons with disability can be taken by the person with disability only."

11. The Committee then asked whether the reservation quota earmarked for differently-abled persons were adequate to cater to their needs. In response, the Ministry deposed as under:—

"An analysis of existing reservation quota earmarked for persons with disability has revealed that during financial year 2016-17, out of 1383197 berths earmarked for them, only 778975 berths were used *i.e.* to the extent of 56.32%. Hence the existing arrangements are considered adequate."

12. The Committee enquired about the approximate amount of money foregone in a Financial Year due to the concessions in fares given to the Divyangs. In reply, the Ministry stated as follows:—

"The revenue foregone due to concession being given to Physically challenged persons during 2015-16 is approximately 107 crore. At present, the

revenue foregone is not reimbursed by anyone and the same is borne by Railways. However recently a letter has been sent to Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment for reimbursement of the same."

IV. Reservation of Berths and Allotment of Lower Berths

13. As regards reservation of berths and allotment of lower berths in favour of the Divyangs, the Committee were apprised as under:—

"A reservation quota of two berths in 3AC and four berths in Sleeper Class has been earmarked in all trains running on non-suburban sections for passengers with disability, performing their journey on concessional ticket. The person accompanying the persons with disability as escort is also allotted the berth out of this quota. The lower berths are meant for persons with disabilities and the middle berth is meant for the escort."

14. The Committee then queried about the mechanism put in place for automatic allotment of lower berths for the differently-abled passengers. In response the Ministry submitted as under:—

"Instructions have also been issued that in the tickets issued through Computerized Passenger Reservation System, to the extent feasible, one lower berth should be allotted to the persons with disability and the person accompanying the persons with disability as escort should be allotted middle/upper berths near the persons with disability subject to availability of accommodation."

15. The Committee were further apprised as follows:—

"Instructions have been issued that in all Mail/Express Trains, the SLRD coaches (having 4 berths, 2 lower for persons with disability and two upper for their escorts) should be treated as unreserved coaches earmarked for exclusive use of persons with disability. In case of Garib Rath Express Trains which are fully reserved trains, these coaches are treated as reserved for booking by persons with disability travelling on the prescribed persons with disability certificate on payment of full fare of 3 AC class of Garib Rath Express on first come first served basis."

16. In response to a specific query regarding allotment of lower berths to those Divyangs who had been allotted either middle or upper berths till the departure of the train, the Ministry responded as under:—

"After departure of the train, if there are vacant lower berths available in the train and if any person with disability booked on the concessional ticket, who has been allotted upper/middle berth, approaches for allotment of vacant lower berths, the Conductor/Train Ticket Examiner (TTE) has been authorized to allot the vacant lower berth to them making necessary entries in the Chart."

17. When asked to state the measures taken for allotment of seats to Divyangs closer to doors and washrooms, the Ministry stated that instructions has been issued to the Zonal Railways that berths for persons with disability should be earmarked in the first or last bay close to the doors and washrooms.

18. On the need of increasing the allotment of lower berths in favour of the differently-abled passengers, the then Chairman, Railway Board submitted in evidence:—

"We, to the extent possible, ensure that lower berths are allocated and in case somehow it has not been possible, the TTEs have instructions that whatever vacant berths are there, they should accommodate the divyangs. Presently, we have earmarked four berths. Effectively, the two lower berths are for divyangs and the upper two will become available for their escorts. On the need for increasing it, we will further examine it and see whatever is possible can be done."

19. Asked to state the monitoring mechanism evolved to ensure first priority to the Divyangs in the allotment of lower berths, the Ministry submitted as under:—

"The provision for allotment of lower berths/berths out of quota for persons with disability is done by the computerised Passenger Reservation System (PRS) itself without any manual intervention subject to availability of berths at the time of booking."

V. Short Term & Long Term Facilities

20. Regarding the Action Plan for provision of various facilities for the Divyangjan, the Ministry apprised as under:—

"Consequent upon 'The Persons with Disabilities (Equal opportunities/ Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995' having come into existence and in order to provide better accessibility to passengers with disabilities, it has been planned to provide facilities for Divyangjan in two phases *i.e.* Short Term and Long Term Facilities."

21. Asked to specify the short term facilities extended to the Divyangjan, the Ministry submitted as follows:—

"As per extant instructions, Short term facilities, consisting of following 7 items are to be provided at all stations:

- (i) Standard ramp for barrier free entry.
- (ii) At least one toilet (on the ground floor).
- (iii) At least one drinking water tap suitable for use by Divyangjan.
- (iv) Signages of appropriate visibility.
- (v) Non-slippery walk-way from parking lot to station building.
- (vi) Earmarking at least two parking lots.
- (vii) 'May I help you' Booth.

Provision of short term facilities is contemplated at all stations over Indian Railway starting with A1, A & B category stations, and to be extended to stations

falling in other categories. There are 709 stations falling in 'A-1', 'A' & 'B' categories on Indian Railways, out of which 645 stations have been provided with all short-term facilities."

22. The Committee then asked about the number of stations where the above cited seven short term facilities were already available as on 30.6.2017. In reply, the Ministry furnished the following data:—

Sl.No.	Short Term Facility for Divyangjan	Approximate number of stations, where facility is available
1.	Standard ramp for barrier free entry	2075
2.	At least one drinking water tap suitable for use by	1690
3.	At least one toilet (on the ground floor)	1655
4.	Signages of appropriate visibility	1335
5.	Non-slippery walk-way from parking lot to station	1295
6.	Earmarking at least two parking lots	1195
7.	May I help you booth	1015

23. As regards the long term facilities, the Committee were informed that such facilities viz. engraving on platform edges and inter-platform transfer were proposed to be taken up progressively beginning with A-1, A and B category stations.

24. Asked to state the number of Stations where the above said two long term facilities had already been provided, the Ministry stated that as on 30.6.2017, engraving on edges of platform and inter-platform transfer had already been provided at 1725 and 1175 Stations respectively. The Ministry further submitted that the Zonal Railways had been directed to provide the facilities at the balance Railway Stations at the earliest.

25. On the provision of inter-platform transfer, the then Chairman, Railways Board submitted in evidence:—

"One thing that we are working on, we are still not able to complete it, is the inter-platform transfer for these persons. At most of the stations it is only at the end. They are trolley parks basically for carrying the luggage and the same is used for wheelchairs also. Basically this can be done only by lifts and all that. So, we are working on that and we have already provided lifts at a lot of stations. Ultimately all A1, A and B category stations will have to be provided with this facility so that people are able to move from one platform to another."

VI. Provision of Wheel Chairs, Battery operated vehicles, lifts & Escalators etc.

26. Regarding Divyangjan friendly coaches in trains, the Committee were apprised as under:—

"In order to provide additional facilities for Divyangjan citizens in train coaches, Indian Railways has developed designs of coaches having a compartment for the Divyangjan as well as additional features in the lavatories. Some of these features are wider entrance door for wheel chair borne passengers, wider berths, wider compartments, space for parking of wheel chair, larger lavatory and lavatory doors, additional grab rails on the side walls of toilets for support, wash basin and mirror at a lower height, etc. almost all the Mail Express trains (except special type of trains like Rajdhani, Shatabdi, Jan Shatabdi, AC Special, Duronto and Mail Express trains running with LHB (Linke Hofmann Busch coaches), including Garib Rath trains, have been provided with a specially designed Divyangjan friendly cabin in at least one Divyangjan friendly coach for the benefit of the Divyangjan passengers."

27. The Committee desired to be apprised of the number of Stations where Wheel Chair and Battery Operated Vehicle facilities had been provided for the benefit of the physically challenged persons. In response, the Ministry deposed as under:—

"Instructions already exist with Zonal Railways for provision of Wheel Chairs at railway stations. This facility is provided, duly escorted by licensed porters (on payment of portage charges) as per present practice. Further, Zonal Railways have also been advised to provide one wheelchair per platform and in case of island platforms one wheelchair per two platforms at all 'A-1' and 'A' category stations. The above instructions are being complied with by Zonal Railways."

28. Regarding provision of Battery operator cars, the Ministry submitted as under:—

"80 Battery Operated Cars have already been provided at 54 major railway stations. Further, instructions have also been issued to Zonal Railways to invite Expression of Interest for providing the facility of Battery Operated Car service on payment basis initially at all 'A-1' category stations keeping in view the financial sustainability of the service. This facility can be availed by passengers on 'first come first served' basis, however, preference shall be given to Sr. Citizens, physically challenged, pregnant women and medically sick passengers."

29. Asked to furnish further details of the mechanism put in place for availing the wheelchair and Battery operated car facilities as also the 'Yatri Mitra Sewa', the Ministry *inter-alia* apprised as follows:—

"Zonal Railways have been authorized to introduce Battery Operated Vehicles (BOVs) at major railway stations for Divyangjan, elderly and ailing passengers on 'first come first served' basis through sponsorship from

individuals, NGOs, Trusts, Charitable institutions, Corporate and PSUs/ Corporate Houses under their Corporate Social Responsibility free of charge to passenger or to the Railway. Further, instructions have also been issued to Zonal Railways to invite Expression of Interest for providing the facility of Battery Operated Car service on payment basis initially at all A1 category stations keeping in view the financial sustainability of the service.

Further, Yatri Mitra Sewa has also been introduced at major Railway stations for enabling passengers to book wheelchairs services cum porter services free of cost through NGOs, Charitable trust, PSUs etc. under CSR and responsibility of providing this facility has been entrusted with IRCTC. In case of lack of response from NGOs, Charitable trust, PSUs etc., this service may be arranged on payment basis through a service provider or on its own.

Passengers can book e-wheelchairs on line through IRCTC portal www.irctc.co.in. The facility is presently available at 22 stations *i.e.* Ahmedabad, Agra Cantt., Vadodara, Varanasi, Bhusawal, Vijayawada, Kanpur Central, Mumbai CST, Mumbai Central, Howrah, Indore, Jhansi, Jaipur, Lucknow Jn., Lucknow, New Delhi, Nagpur, Pathankot Cantt., Pune, Bengaluru City, Secunderabad and Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra."

30. In response to a specific query, the Ministry stated that provision of wheel chairs was mandatory and would be provided at all categories of Stations except 'F' category stations (Halt Stations).

31. In evidence, the Committee pointed out that there were no facilities of ramps on many Foot Over Bridges (FOBs) making it impossible for the movement of wheelchairs and asked whether right at the commencement of the construction of FOBs, ramps could be built on there. In reply, the then Chairman, Railway Board deposed:—

"That can be done for new FOBs. Instructions are already there."

32. As regards the provision of Lifts and Escalators, the Ministry submitted as under:—

"In order to facilitate easy movement of elderly, sick and Divyangjan passengers and for smooth access to platforms of major Railway stations and for ease of movement, as per the existing guidelines, escalators/elevators are provided at 'A1' category and escalators at 'A' category, 'C' category stations and stations of tourist importance progressively, based on Techno Commercial Feasibility & availability of fund. Provision of lifts and escalators at stations is a continuous process and is done as per need and priority of work.

Accordingly, Indian Railways plan to provide about 770 no. of escalators and about 620 no. of lifts, out of which so far, about 394 no. of escalators and about 219 no. of lifts have been installed across Indian Railways. Further, a work for provision of lifts/escalators at 500 additional stations is under approval."

33. Referring to the discussions held with various Zonal Railways during the field visits wherein the Committee's attention was drawn to the shortage of expert contractors in building FOBs despite availability of adequate funds, the Committee asked whether more contractors could be roped in. In reply, the then Chairman, Railway Board deposed:—

"Sir, they are basically attached to the FOBs and working in a station area. Suppose a new FOB is required to be done, a girder has to be launched across a working line where general civil contractor may not have that expertise. So, the point made by hon. Member is accepted and we will try to have or develop more contractors for doing this job. But presently, there may be some limitations on this account."

34. Regarding assistance to the visually impaired passengers, the Ministry submitted as under:—

"For the assistance of the visually impaired travellers, Integrated Braille Signages, *i.e.* signages superimposed with Braille scripts, are being provided in the newly manufactured coaches. Further, retro fitment of the same in existing coaches has also been taken up in a phased manner."

35. Asked to state the number of coaches where retro fitment of Braille signages had already been done, the Ministry responded that retro fitment of Braille signages in 13,515 coaches under the Rolling Stock Programme (RSP) had been sanctioned by the Railway Board and the work was being carried out in a progressive manner.

36. The Committee then desired to know about disabled friendly washrooms in the coaches. In reply, the Ministry deposed as under:—

"Indian Railways have manufactured about 3700 SLRD/SRD coaches which have provision for disabled-friendly washrooms having larger space, broader doors apart from having washbasin and mirror at a lower height among the various disabled-friendly features. As per the present approvals only SLRD/SRD coaches are to be provided with such features."

37. Asked to specify the number/category of trains where SLRD/SRD coaches had already been attached, the Ministry responded as under:—

"Almost all the Mail express trains [except special type of trains like Rajdhani, Shatabdi, Jan Shatabdi, AC Special Duronto and Mail Express trains running with LHB (Linke Hofmann Busch) coaches], including Garib Rath trains, have been provided with a specially designed disabled friendly cabin in at least one coach (SLRD-Second class cum luggage cum Guard van with disabled friendly facilities) for differently abled passengers."

38. The Committee then queried about the action plan for attaching more SLRD/SRD coaches and provision of disabled friendly washrooms in other coaches. In reply, the Ministry submitted as follows:—

"It is endeavoured to have at least one such coach in each Mail/Express train having ICF type coaches. For LHB coaches, coach layouts having a suitably designed compartment for the disabled/wheel chair borne passengers are under different stages of development."

39. The then Chairman, Railway Board supplemented in evidence as under:—

"..... in SLRD coach, there are special toilets but in other coaches, the problem is there that the level of toilets and the level of floor is slightly different which causes some inconvenience. But in new design, maybe, we are able to take care of these things."

VII. Reservation in Recruitment

40. As regards reservation of posts in favour of differently abled persons and the recruitment process thereto, the Ministry apprised as under:—

"3% of the vacancies in case of direct recruitment from open market to non-gazetted posts are reserved for persons with disabilities (PwDs) of which 1% each are to be reserved for persons suffering from blindness or low vision, hearing impairment and locomotors disability or cerebral palsy in the posts identified for each disabled person suffering from not less than 40% of relevant disability are eligible for such reservation. Ministry of Railways follows the guidelines of Department of Personnel & Training in such matters. Indian Railways are making their best efforts to fill up the vacancies reserved against physically handicapped quota. In compliance of the PwD Act, 1995, Ministry of Railways has identified posts in Group 'A' Organized Services to be filled through Direct recruitment in Indian Railway Service of Engineers (IRSE), Indian Railway Stores Service (IRSS), Indian Railway Service of Electrical Engineers (IRSEE), Indian Railway Service of Signal Engineers (IRSSE), Indian Railway Service of Mechanical Engineers (IRSME), Indian Railway Traffic Service (IRTS), Indian Railway Personnel Service (IRPS), Indian Railway Accounts Service (IRAS) and Indian Railway Medical Service (IRMS). Direct Recruitment for these services is conducted by UPSC through Engineering Services Examination, Civil Services Examination & Combined Medical Services Examination."

41. Asked to state whether special recruitment drives were conducted to fill up the vacant posts reserved/earmarked for the Divyangs, the then Chairman, Railway Board deposed in evidence:—

"From time to time, we carry out special recruitment drives for such physically challenged persons and two years back, we had done a special drive. For further recruitment, we will ensure that whatever is the reservation provided is taken care of. Similarly, on catering stalls or kiosks, two per cent quota is there on catering stalls."

VIII. Training

42. The Committee asked about the action taken by the Railway Board to sensitize and impart training to the Railway Personnel including the RPF to render all possible assistance to the physically and mentally challenged persons in the Stations and Coaches. In reply, the Ministry deposed as under:—

"Frontline staff are given training in Soft Skills in Training Institutes. This training includes sensitization of staff for dealing with persons with the special

needs. The training programmes are monitored periodically at the level of Zonal Training Institutes.”

IX. Fund Allocation and Utilisation

43. As regards earmarking a specific amount of Budgetary Allocation for the purpose of creation of facilities in favour of the differently abled persons and utilisation thereof by various Zonal Railways, the Ministry deposed as under:—

“Separate annual budgetary allocations for the creation of facilities in favour of the differently-abled persons are not maintained. The expenditure on works for the creation of facilities in favour of the differently-abled persons is generally funded under Plan Head—'Passenger Amenities'. Zone-wise details of funds allocated/spent under budgetary sources, under Plan-head 'Passenger Amenities' during the last two years *i.e.* 2015-16 and 2016-17 and the current year are as under:

Zonal Railway	(Rs. in Crore)					
	2015-16		2016-17		2017-18	
	Allo- cation (RE)	Exp.	Allo- cation (RE)	Exp.	Allo- cation (BE)	Exp. (upto June, 2017)
Central	85.10	78.74	73.93	74.07	94.95	35.97
Eastern	67.72	62.98	51.85	48.41	62.24	13.05
East Central	82.53	63.75	52.78	65.76	50.25	23.53
East Coast	59.66	57.46	47.78	56.42	44.56	22.70
Northern	128.80	109.33	78.15	94.93	186.18	43.14
North Central	81.46	52.62	56.87	60.34	69.17	15.01
North Eastern	55.00	71.94	107.69	109.84	62.92	35.81
Northeast Frontier	53.17	54.09	50.75	45.81	48.99	5.02
North Western	60.31	66.07	53.42	55.59	49.41	31.80
Southern	107.77	95.91	61.18	70.68	73.96	31.35
South Central	101.65	94.82	64.41	68.56	67.77	17.83
South Eastern	72.12	65.60	47.46	60.08	47.10	24.50
South East Central	48.71	31.38	29.55	31.49	31.28	6.99
South Western	69.61	60.22	42.63	41.93	39.59	18.87
Western	52.21	49.61	48.73	47.96	117.13	12.59
West Central	71.31	63.50	45.29	43.78	42.44	15.05
Metro, Kolkata	3.99	3.19	5.44	5.58	12.95	0.44
Total	1200.11	1081.21	917.91	981.24	1100.90	353.65

44. The Ministry further stated as follows:—

"The facilities for Persons with Disabilities are provided under Plan Head 'Passenger Amenities'. With a view to provide the above mentioned facilities expeditiously, the allocation under this Plan Head has been increased from Rs. 917.82 Cr. in 2016-17 to Rs. 1100.90 Cr. in 2017-18. Zonal Railways have also been asked to provide the facilities in a targeted manner."

PART II

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Committee note that there is a Chapter titled 'Facilities to Persons with Disabilities' in the Annual Report & Accounts (2015-16) of the Indian Railways. The nomenclature used in the Annual Report is reportedly based on the 'The Persons with Disability (PWD) Act, 1995' promulgated by the Government of India to ensure equal opportunities to persons with disability, protection of their rights and their full participation in nation building. The Ministry have contended that the words 'Physically Handicapped' have been used in the concession forms, as at present concessions are given to only four categories of physically handicapped passengers. However, instructions have already been issued to the Zonal Railway on 16th February, 2017 to replace the term 'Physically Handicapped Persons' with 'Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan)'. Since the Ministry have agreed that the term 'Persons with Disabilities' can be further replaced with 'Differently Abled Persons', the Committee impress upon the Railway Board to start using the nomenclature 'Differently Abled Persons (Divyangjan)' in all their documents and communications including the concession forms, as is being practised in many other fora. The Committee further recommend that the extant provision of concessions given to only four categories of disabled passengers *viz.* Orthopedically handicapped, Mentally Retarded, Completely Blind and Deaf & Dumb (both afflictions together) persons be reviewed so as to explore the feasibility of extending concessions to more Differently Abled Persons/Divyangjan, commensurate with the avowed objectives of the PWD Act, 1995.

2. The Committee note that concessions in fares ranging from 25 per cent to 75 per cent are given to four types of Divyangjan, as mentioned above, along with one escort. Various procedures, including online booking facility, have been prescribed to book concessional tickets. Moreover, Indian Railways provide the facility to book concessional tickets for the Divyangjan through a messenger or any other person provided that the requisite formalities of the requisition form are fulfilled. The Committee are, however, concerned to find that though no condition regarding presence of Divyangjan for booking ticket at normal Reservation Counters has been imposed, the benefit of special Reservation Counter earmarked for the Divyangjan can be taken by themselves only, implying thereby that the Divyangjan have to be physically present at the special Reservation Counters to book tickets. The Committee disapprove of such a practice and recommend that immediate requisite measures be taken by the Railways to extend the facility of booking tickets for the Divyangjan at the earmarked special Reservation counters through their authorized person on production of supporting documents so as to spare the Divyangjan the ordeal of being physically present at such counters. However, while doing so the Railways have to take all precautionary measures to ensure that such facility is not misused by non-eligible persons.

3. The Committee observe that during the year 2015-16, the revenue foregone due to concessions in rail fares given to the Differently Abled persons was to the tune of approximately Rs. 107 Crore. Recently, the Railway Board have written to the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment for getting the amount reimbursed. The Committee are of the considered opinion that of all the welfare measures taken by the Indian Railways, as a part of their social obligations, concessions in rail fares and other facilities given to Divyangjan are most laudable and should be continued unabated, the amount of revenue foregone thereon in a particular Financial Year notwithstanding. Further, as the implementation of the provision of the PWD Act, 1995 requires a multi-sectoral collaborative approach by all the Ministries/ Departments, the Committee desire the Railway Board to take up the matter at the appropriate fora so as to get either reimbursement from the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment or more budgetary allocations from the Ministry of Finance to enable them to continue extending concessions in railfare to the Divyangjan.

4. The Committee note that a reservation quota of two berths in 3AC and four berths in Sleeper Class has been earmarked in all trains running on non-suburban sections for differently Abled passengers performing journey on concessional ticket. An escort accompanying the Divyangjan is also allotted a berth out of this quota. The lower berths are meant for Divyangjan and the middle berths are for the escorts. The Committee also note that instructions have been issued that in the tickets issued through Computerized Passenger Reservation System, to the extent feasible, one lower berth should be allotted to the Divyangjan, subject to availability of accommodation. The Committee are not inclined to accept the riders like 'to the extent feasible' and 'subject to availability' in the Ministry's endeavour towards reserving lower berths for the Differently Abled persons. They are of the firm view that without any alibi, top most priority should be accorded to the Divyangjan in the allotment of lower berths and under no circumstances they are made to perform journeys on middle or upper berths. The Committee impress upon the Railway Board to issue requisite instructions to that effect for compliance by the Zonal/Divisional Railways.

5. Another peculiar system prevalent in Indian Railways is that the Conductor/ Train Ticket examiner (TTE), if approached, has been authorized to allot vacant lower berths to Divyangjan after the departure of the train. The Committee find no sustainable reason for non-allotment of lower berths to the Divyangjan till the departure of the train and leaving them at the mercy of the TTE. It is for the same precise flaw in the system that instances of Divyangjan sleeping on the floor of the train are coming to the fore. The Committee, therefore, urge the Railway Board to usher in a systemic improvement wherein the Divyangjan are invariably allotted lower berths right at the time of preparation of reservation chart so as to spare them the ignominy of approaching TTE in the running train.

6. An analysis made by the Railway Board of the existing reservation quota earmarked for the Divyangjan has revealed that during the Financial Year 2016-17, out of the 13,83,197 berths earmarked for them, only 7,78,975 berths i.e. 56.32 per cent were used. Hence, the Ministry have contended that the existing arrangements are considered adequate. The Committee desire that a similar analysis be made to

find out the number of lower berths used by the Divyangjan in a particular year to gauge the adequacy and based on the findings measures be taken to streamline the allotment of lower berths in favour of the Divyangjan so as to ensure that all the them perform journey on lower berths.

7. In order to provide better accessibility to the Divyangjan, the Railways are providing Short Term and Long Term facilities. Seven facilities like standard ramp for barrier free entry, at least one toilet on the ground floor, at least one drinking water tap, signages of appropriate visibility, non-slippery walkway from parking lot to the Station building, earmarking at least two parking lots and 'May I Help you' booth constitute the Short term facilities. The Committee find that as on 30th June, 2007, the above said seven facilities have already been provided at 2075, 1655, 1690, 1335, 1295, 1195 and 1015 stations respectively. The Committee desire that such basic facilities to provide better accessibility to the Divyangjan be extended to all the Stations gradually and within a definite frame.

8. As a part of the Long Term facilities, engraving on edges of platform and inter-platform transfer have already been provided at 1725 and 1175 stations respectively as on 30th June, 2017. The Zonal Railways have been instructed by the Railway Board to provide the above said Long term facilities at the remaining Railway Stations at the earliest. The Committee recommend that the Railway Board should periodically monitor the progress of the gradual provision of both Short term and Long term facilities at all the Stations for the benefit of Divyangjan. The Committee further exhort the Ministry to impress upon the Zonal/Divisional Railways to conduct surprise inspections at the Stations so as to ensure that the facilities already put in place at various Stations are actually functional and truly extended to the Divyangjan.

9. The Committee note that some additional facilities like provision of Wheelchairs, Battery operated cars, Lifts & Escalators, Divyangjan friendly SLRD/SRD coaches etc. are being provided by the Indian Railways. The Committee have been informed that provision of Wheelchairs to the Divyangjan at all category of Stations except 'F' category Stations (Halt Stations) has been made mandatory. The Railways have introduced Yatri Mitra Sewa at major Railway Stations for enabling Divyangjan to book Wheel Chairs and porter services free of cost through NGOs, Charitable Trusts, PSUs etc. under Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and in case of lack of response from these organizations, Wheel Chairs Service can be arranged on payment basis. Further, the facility of booking e-wheelchairs on line through IRCTC portal is presently available at 22 Stations. As provision of Wheelchairs for the Divyangjan is mandatory in all but one category of Stations, the Committee impress upon the Railways to make concerted and urgent efforts to ensure wheelchair facility at all such mandated Stations. The Committee further desire that Railways should encourage NGOs/Charitable Trusts, PSUs etc. with a view to getting adequate response from them for provision of Wheel chair facility through CSR so that the Divyangs can avail the facility free of cost.

10. The Committee's attention has been drawn to the fact that there has been no facility of ramps on many Foot Over Bridges (FOBs) making it impossible for movement of Wheelchairs. The Ministry have clarified that instructions have already been

issued to build ramps on the new FOBs. The Committee desire that in the ongoing and new FOBs, ramps be built without fail so that the purpose of providing Wheel Chairs to the Divyangjan is well served. The Committee also call upon the Railways to make efforts and ensure smooth movement of Wheelchairs on the existing/already constructed FOBs too.

11. Non-availability of expert Contractors in building Foot Over Bridges (FOBs) has adversely affected the construction of such Bridges, despite availability of requisite funds, as informed to the Committee during their field visits. However, the then Chairman, Railway Board has assured the Committee that the Railways would make efforts to have more expert contractors for the purpose. In view of the significance of the FOBs in facilitating ease of movement of the passengers including Divyangjan, the Committee recommend that urgent measures be taken by the Railway Board to find out and engage more expert Contractors so as to ensure building safe and Divyangjan friendly FOBs across Railway Stations, as per the targeted time line.

12. The Committee also recommend that the facility of booking e-wheelchairs through the IRCTC Portal which is at present available only at 22 Stations be extended to all the major Stations. The Railway Board should also explore the feasibility of putting in place a dedicated helpline number for the Divyangjan so that any Divyangjan travelling without an escort be extended the requisite help including the facility of Wheel Chair and porter service upon his/her reaching the Station after informing the Station Master concerned.

13. The Committee note that Zonal Railways have been authorised to introduce Battery Operated Vehicles (BOVs) at major Railway Stations for the Divyangjan, Senior Citizens, Pregnant Women and Medically Sick passengers on first-come-first served basis, free of charge through sponsorship from Individuals, Charitable Institutions, NGOs, Corporate Houses etc. Further, instructions have been issued to the Zonal Railways to invite Expression Of Interest (EOI) for providing the facility of Battery Operated car service on payment basis initially at all A-1 Category Stations keeping in view the financial sustainability of the service. So far, 80 Battery Operated Cars have been provided at 54 major Railway Stations. While taking note of the endeavour of the Railways towards provision of Battery Operated Vehicles for certain categories of passengers including the Divyangjan, the Committee would however like the Railway Board to explore the feasibility of earmarking a specific amount out of the Budgetary allocations for procurement of Battery Operated Cars and Wheelchairs so that they do not remain dependant on the Sponsors and such facilities are made available at more Railway Stations.

14. The Committee note that the Indian Railways plan to provide about 770 escalators and 620 lifts out of which so far about 394 escalators and 219 lifts have already been provided in order to facilitate easy movement of elderly, sick and Divyangjan passengers. Further, provision of escalators/lifts at 500 additional Stations is under approval. The Ministry have submitted that provision of lifts and escalators at Stations is a continuous process and is done as per need and priority. The Committee are of the firm opinion that lifts and escalators are indispensable for smooth inter-platform transfer and ease of movement of Divyangjan apart from Senior Citizens,

pregnant women, medically sick etc. passengers. They, therefore, urge the Railway Board to accord priority and issue directions to the Zonal Railways to provide the remaining 376 escalators and 401 lifts across the Indian Railways in an appreciably progressive manner besides speeding up the approval of provision of lifts/escalators at 500 additional Stations.

15. The Committee observe that for the assistance of the visually impaired passengers, integrated Braille Signages *i.e.* Signages superimposed with Braille scripts are being provided in the newly manufactured Coaches. As regards retro fitment of Braille Signages in the existing coaches, the Ministry have submitted that retro fitment of such Signages in 13,515 existing coaches under the Rolling Stock Programme (RSP) has been sanctioned by the Railway Board and the work is being carried out in a progressive manner. The Committee desire that besides ensuring provision of Braille Signages in all the newly manufactured Coaches, the Railway Board should expedite retro fitment of such Signages in the existing 13,515 Coaches in a time bound manner so that gradually retro fitment of the Signages are provided in all the existing Coaches for the convenience and benefit of the visually impaired travellers.

16. The Committee note that the Indian Railways have already manufactured about 3700 SLRD/SRD (Second Class Luggage Rake for Disabled) Coaches which have a suitably designed compartment and toilet adapted to the needs of Divyangjan and Wheel Chair borne passengers. Such coaches have been provided in almost all the Garib Rath and Mail Express trains, except special type of trains like Rajdhani, Shatabdi, Duronto etc. and Mail Express trains running with LHB (Linke Hofmann Busch) Coaches. The Ministry have submitted that they are endeavouring to have at least one SLRD/SRD coach in each Mail Express Train having Integrated Coach Factory (ICF) type coaches. As regards attachment of SLRD/SRD compartment in LHB type Coaches, Coach layouts having a suitably designed compartment for the Divyangjan are reportedly under different stages of development. As SLRD/SRD Coaches provide for wider entrance doors and berths and larger lavatories amongst other differently abled friendly amenities, the Committee impress upon the Railways to display a sense of urgency in the provision of at least one SLRD/SRD compartment in all types of Coaches and trains for convenience of the Divyangjan.

17. The Committee appreciate that three percent of the vacancies in direct recruitment from Open Market to non-Gazetted posts are reserved for various categories of Divyangjan. Further, in compliance with the PWD Act, 1995, the Ministry have identified posts in Group 'A' category to be filled through direct recruitment. The Ministry have submitted that Indian Railways are making their best efforts including conducting Special Recruitment Drives to fill up the vacancies reserved against the Divyangjan quota. The Committee desire the Ministry to intensify their efforts to fill up the vacancies in both Gazetted and non-Gazetted posts reserved for the Divyangjan so as to ensure equal opportunities to them and their full participation in nation building, as enunciated in the PWD Act, 1995. The Committee further recommend that the prescribed two percent quota in the allotment of catering stalls/kiosks in favour of the Divyangjan be strictly adhered to so as to enable them to earn their livelihood in a dignified manner.

18. The Committee note that the frontline staff of the Indian Railways are given training in soft skills which include sensitisation of staff for dealing with persons with special needs and such training programmes are monitored periodically at the level of Zonal Training Institutes. While taking note of the efforts made by the Railways in imparting training to their staff for extending assistance to the people in special needs, the Committee desire that the Railways should set an example in voluntarily attending to the needs of the Divyangjan both at the Stations and in the Coaches.

19. The Committee are concerned to find that separate Annual Budgetary Allocations for the creation of facilities in favour of the Divyangjan are not made and such facilities are generally funded under the Plan Head 'Passenger Amenities'. As regards fund allocated and utilised for passenger amenities, the Committee note that during the year 2015-16 an amount of Rs. 1200.11 crore was allocated whereas the actual expenditure was Rs. 1081.21 crore i.e. a shortfall of around Rs. 119 crore respectively. However, during the year 2016-17 the allocation and utilisation were Rs. 917.91 crore and Rs. 981.24 crore. During the year 2017-18 against an allocation Rs. 1100.90 crore, the actual utilisation upto 30th June, 2017, was Rs. 353.65 crore. The Committee exhort the Ministry to impress upon the Zonal Railways to make concerted efforts for optimal utilisation of the allocations made during 2017-18 towards passenger amenities. The Committee also desire that a sub Head 'Amenities for Divyangjan' be created under the main Head 'Passenger Amenities' so as to enable the Railways to assess the actual utilisation of the allocations made for creating facilities for the Divyangjan and resort to remedial/corrective action, wherever warranted.

NEW DELHI:
15 December, 2017
24 Agrahayana, 1939 (Saka)

BHARTRUHARI MAHTAB
Chairperson,
Railway Convention Committee

APPENDIX I

RAILWAY CONVENTION COMMITTEE (2014)

MINUTES OF THE THIRTY FIFTH SITTING OF THE COMMITTEE

The Committee sat on Thursday, the 29th June, 2017 from 1500 hrs. to 1600 hrs. in Committee Room-G074, Parliament Library Building, New Delhi.

PRESENT

Shri Bhartruhari Mahtab — *Chairperson*

MEMBERS

Lok Sabha

2. Shri Sanganna Amarappa Karadi
3. Shri K. Ashok Kumar
4. Shri Rahul Ramesh Shewale
5. Shri Bharat Singh

Rajya Sabha

6. Shri Abdul Wahab
7. Shri Vandana Chavan
8. Shri Ranvijay Singh Judev

SECRETARIAT

1. Shri M.K. Madhusudhan — *Director*
2. Shri D.R. Mohanty — *Additional Director*

WITNESSES

Representatives of the Ministry of Railways (Railway Board)

1. Shri A.K. Mital — **Chairman, Railway Board**
2. Mohd. Jamshed — **Member (Traffic)**
3. Shri Aditya Kumar Mittal — **Member (Engineering)**
4. Shri Rajiv Dutt Sharma — **Addl. Member (Commercial)**
5. Shri Rajiv Chaudhary — **Adviser (Stn. Dev. Engg.)**

2. At the outset, the Chairperson welcomed the Members and the representatives of the Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) to the sitting of the Committee, convened

to have oral evidence on the subject "Facilities given by Indian Railways to Passengers with Disabilities". Impressing upon the witnesses to keep the proceedings of the Committee "Confidential", the Chairperson asked the Chairman, Railway Board, to give an overview of the special facilities provided by the Indian Railways to differently-abled passengers in terms of reservation of lower berths in trains, various concessions in fares, wheel chair and battery operated transport facilities provided in stations, standard ramps with railing for barrier free entry in stations, provision of disabled friendly toilets in coaches and stations, monitoring mechanism evolved to ensure provision of facilities to the Divyangs etc.

3. Accordingly, the Chairman, Railway Board, briefed the Committee on various aspects of the subject matter highlighting *inter-alia* the facilities provided to physically challenged people *i.e.* concessions in rail fare, escort facilities, SLRD coaches of wide entrances with modified toilets, separate counters at 54 A1 category stations, battery operated vehicles, standard ramp with barrier free entry, earmarking of parking lots for such persons, proper signages, toilets on ground floor etc. The representatives of the Railway Board also responded to various queries raised by the Members on the subject matter. The Chairperson asked the Chairman, Railway Board, to furnish written replies to those queries, which remained unanswered, within a period of 15 to 20 days. The Chairman, Railway Board, assured to comply.

4. The Chairperson thanked the witnesses for appearing before the Committee and for furnishing the available information that the Committee desired in connection with the examination of the subject.

The witnesses then withdrew.

A verbatim copy of the proceedings has been kept on record.

The Committee then adjourned.

APPENDIX II

RAILWAY CONVENTION COMMITTEE (2014)

MINUTES OF THE FORTY SECOND SITTING OF THE COMMITTEE

The Committee sat on Thursday, the 07th December, 2017, from 1500 hrs. to 1700 hrs. in Committee Room No. 139, Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi.

PRESENT

Shri Bhartruhari Mahtab — *Chairperson*

MEMBERS

Lok Sabha

2. Shri K. Ashok Kumar
3. Shri Nana Patole
4. Shri Janak Ram
5. Shri Rahul Ramesh Shewale
6. Shri Bharat Singh

Rajya Sabha

7. Shri T. K. Rangarajan
8. Shri Prem Chand Gupta
9. Shri Abdul Wahab
10. Shri Ranvijay Singh Judev

SECRETARIAT

- | | | |
|---------------------------|---|----------------------------|
| 1. Smt. Kavita Prasad | — | <i>Joint Secretary</i> |
| 2. Shri M. K. Madhusudhan | — | <i>Director</i> |
| 3. Shri D. R. Mohanty | — | <i>Additional Director</i> |

WITNESSES

Representatives of the Ministry of Railways (Railway Board)

- | | | |
|---------------------------|---|----------------------------------|
| 1. Shri Ashwani Lohani | — | Chairman, Railway Board |
| 2. Mohd. Jamshed | — | Member (Traffic) |
| 3. Shri Rajiv Dutt Sharma | — | Addl. Member (Commercial) |
| 4. Shri M.P. Mall | — | CMD/IRCTC |

2. At the outset, the Chairperson welcomed the Members to the sitting of the Committee which was convened to consider and adopt three Draft Reports on the subjects: (i) Facilities given by the Indian Railways to Differently Abled Persons (Divyangjan); (ii) Action Taken by the Government on the Ninth Report (Sixteenth Lok Sabha) on 'Consultancy, Engineering and Project Management Services by RITES'; and (iii) Action Taken by Government on the Tenth Report (Sixteenth Lok Sabha) on 'Scrap Disposal System in India Railways'. The Committee was also to have a briefing by the Railway Board on the subject 'Customer Interface of Indian Railways'. Giving an overview of the important Recommendations contained in the Draft Reports, the Chairperson solicited the views/suggestions of the Members.

3. The Committee then took up for consideration of the said Draft Reports and adopted them after some discussions.

4. The Chairperson thanked the Members for their valuable suggestions and active participation in the deliberations of the Committee.

5. The Committee, then, authorized the Chairperson to finalize the Original Report in the light of consequential changes that might arise out of factual verification of the Draft Report and present the same along with the Action Taken Reports to both the Houses.

The Committee then adjourned for tea.

6. The Committee re-assembled after tea break and the representatives of the Ministry of Railways (Railway Board) were then called in.

The witnesses then withdrew.

A verbatim copy of the proceedings has been kept on record.

The Committee then adjourned.

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