

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY DEBATES

WEDNESDAY, 27th FEBRUARY, 1929.

Vol. I—No. 20

OFFICIAL REPORT



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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Wednesday, 27th February, 1929.

The Assembly met in the Assembly Chamber of the Council House at Eleven of the Clock, Mr. President in the Chair.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

REMOVAL OF CATTLE KEPT IN OUTHouses IN OFFICERS' BUNGALOWS IN NEW DELHI.

830. ***Pandit Hirday Nath Kunzru:** (a) Are Government aware that the following notice of the New Delhi Municipal Committee, signed by its Health Officer, Major J. R. D. Webb, was served on a number of *gwalas* living in the outhouses of Gazetted Officers' bungalows in New Delhi:

"It has been reported that you are housing cows in the compound of —, and keep the place in a most insanitary condition. Notice is hereby given you under section 115 of the Punjab Municipal Act, 1911, to remove cattle within 4 days from date, failing which legal proceedings will be taken against you."

(b) Are Government aware that section 115 of the Punjab Municipal Act, 1911, does not empower any Municipal Committee to remove cattle from any premises?

Mr. G. S. Bajpai: With your permission, Sir, I shall deal with Questions 830 and 831 together. Inquiries have been made, and the result will be communicated to the Honourable Member as soon as possible.

Pandit Hirday Nath Kunzru: May I know whether the answer will be given in this House?

Mr. G. S. Bajpai: I shall place a copy of the information on the table of the House, if that is what the Honourable Member wishes.

Pandit Hirday Nath Kunzru: May I ask whether the Honourable Member is aware that a number of *gwalas* have already been prosecuted and fined under the Punjab Municipal Act of 1911?

Mr. G. S. Bajpai: I happen to know that my own *gwalas* has been prosecuted.

Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh: Then, I am sure something will be done in the matter. (Laughter.)

REMOVAL OF CATTLE KEPT IN OUTHouses IN OFFICERS' BUNGALOWS IN NEW DELHI.

†831. ***Pandit Hirday Nath Kunzru:** (a) Are Government aware that some of the residents of the bungalows wrote to the Health Officer saying that the *gwalas* were keeping cows for supplying milk to them, and that

† For answer to this question, see answer to question No. 830.

they were prepared to comply with the sanitary conditions laid down by the Health Officer?

(b) Are Government aware that, without replying to any such representations, the Municipal Committee have hauled up the *gwalas* before the First Class Magistrate, New Delhi, who also happens to be the Secretary of the New Delhi Municipal Committee, to answer a charge which has not been specified and which has been described as "115 8/11"?

(c) Is it not a fact that the same *gwalas* have been keeping cows in the outhouses and bungalows for the last 8 or 9 years without any objection on the part of the Municipality?

(d) Has the health of New Delhi residents deteriorated on account of this practice?

(e) Are Government aware that the residents have to depend on these *gwalas* for pure and fresh milk?

(f) What action do Government propose to take to stop the harassment of the occupiers of bungalows and the *gwalas* by the Municipal Committee?

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS OF THE INDIAN CIVIL SERVICE TO A NEW CADRE OF INCOME-TAX COMMISSIONERS.

832. *Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh: (a) Will Government be pleased to state how many members of the Indian Civil Service will be taken in the proposed new All-India cadre of Income-tax Commissioners?

(b) Is it a fact that a new cadre of Income-tax Commissioners is going to be formed from this year, and that members of the Indian Civil Service will be taken in it permanently?

(c) Is it a fact that, when a separate cadre of the Income-tax Department was formed in 1922, it was decided by the Secretary of State for India, that the posts of Income-tax Commissioners were to be filled up from among the officers of the Department, and not by Indian Civil Service members, permanently? If so, what steps have been taken by Government to give effect to that decision; and with what result?

(d) Is it a fact that only in Bombay Presidency, and in the Central Provinces, officers have been taken from the Income-tax Department as Commissioners of Income-tax?

The Honourable Sir George Schuster: (a) The matter is still under discussion, and the Government of India are unable to give a precise reply.

(b) Yes.

(c) and (d). When a separate Income-tax Department was created in the several provinces, in the years 1920 to 1923, it was recognised that for some years, at all events, it would be necessary that members of the Indian Civil Service should be appointed to be Commissioners of Income-tax, but it was expected that, eventually, officers of the Department would be found fit for promotion to these posts. Whenever a vacancy occurs, the selection of an officer to fill it is considered in all its aspects. At the present moment, two Commissionerships out of eight are held substantively by officers of the Income-tax Department who were promoted to these posts, while another officer belonging to the Department is also acting as Commissioner.

SHORT NOTICE QUESTION AND ANSWER.

COMPLAINTS OF COAL MINE OWNERS REGARDING INADEQUATE SUPPLY OF WAGONS.

Sir Puroshotamdas Thakurdas: Sir, with your permission, I propose to put the following question, of which the Honourable the Commerce Member has accepted short notice:—

- (a) Are Government aware of the recent complaints of coal-mine owners regarding the inadequate supply of wagons?
- (b) Are Government aware that the position is so acute that industries, dependent on coal for their factories, apprehend to stop shortly, if wagon supply to coal-fields is not substantially improved immediately?
- (c) Will Government put on the table a statement showing the number of wagons supplied to the coal-fields during December 1928 and January 1929, and similar figures for 12 months earlier?
- (d) Will Government make a statement regarding the present acute position, giving reasons for the same, and indicating the prospects of adequate wagon supply during the next three to four months?

The Honourable Sir George Rainy: (a) Yes.

(b) Government are aware that there is anxiety about the coal supply in various places. I will deal with the point more fully in my answer to clause (d).

(c) A statement is laid on the table showing the number of wagons loaded with coal by the East Indian and Bengal Nagpur Railways during the period mentioned. In order that the figures may be as nearly up to date as possible, I have given additional figures up to the 16th February.

(d) The root cause of our present difficulties is to be found in the scarcity conditions prevailing in the United Provinces, as a result of the partial failure of the wheat crop last Spring, and the scantiness of the monsoon rainfall. One result has been to create an entirely abnormal traffic situation on the East Indian Railway. Instead of the traffic in agricultural produce moving downwards towards Calcutta, it is moving upwards from Calcutta towards the areas in which scarcity prevails. Normally, the wagons which bring down grain and seeds from the United Provinces, and coal from the coalfields to Calcutta, should return up-country, loaded either with manufactured goods imported at Calcutta, or with coal from the coalfields, the upwards and downwards traffic being fairly well balanced, but the downwards traffic on the whole predominating, so that a certain number of empties have to be worked upwards at any rate as far as the coalfields. This year the downwards traffic is much smaller, while, at the same time, large quantities of wheat imported from Australia have to be moved upwards from Calcutta. The scarcity conditions have at the same time brought about another abnormal movement of traffic, large quantities of fodder having to be moved into the United Provinces from the south-west. These two abnormal movements of traffic together resulted, earlier in the month, in a state of extreme congestion on that section of the main East Indian line which lies between Allahabad and Tundla, and a consequent lock up of wagons and locomotives. I am glad to say that things are already a good deal better in this respect, and that traffic is moving more freely on this section of the line.

I should like to give some figures to illustrate the abnormality of the traffic with which the railways have had to deal. The imports of wheat into Calcutta in December and January were 143,000 tons, whereas no wheat at all was imported in the corresponding period of 1927-28. From the 1st December to the 2nd February, 52,000 tons of wheat were despatched from Calcutta, and large quantities still remained to be removed. The import traffic in rice and sugar was also heavier, 31,000 tons of rice being despatched up-country, as compared with less than 6,000 tons in 1927-28. We have it on the authority of the Chairman of the Port Commissioners that he had never before experienced such traffic as is now being handled.

The position, then, is that the East Indian Railway has to cope with a traffic in agricultural produce larger than is usual at this time of the year, and moving in the opposite direction to that in which it ordinarily moves. One result is that the proportion of empty running to full running has seriously increased, and we are getting far less work out of our wagon stock. Another result is that, owing to the congestion above Allahabad on the main East Indian line, and also to the empty traffic moving down to the docks, it takes much longer for the wagons to circulate and return to the coalfields for re-loading. It is in this way that the difficulties of the coal trade have arisen. More wagons than usual are required for the agricultural produce, and we are unable to get the usual proportion of full running to the total wagon haulage.

The position as regards coal undoubtedly gives cause for anxiety, and I fear, must continue to do so for some time to come, but the Government of India have no reason to think that the difficulties cannot be grappled with successfully. The officers of the East Indian and the Bengal Nagpur Railways are naturally in the closest touch with the situation in Calcutta and the demand for coal for the jute mills and the bunker trade of the port. The only other centre, where difficulties appear to have been acute, is Ahmedabad, and to meet its needs special arrangements have been made. We have also received information of possible shortages at Jukchi in the Central Provinces, Lucknow and Rae Bareilly, but in these cases it did not appear that the danger was imminent. The Government of India fully recognise the extreme importance of moving coal to meet the urgent demands of industries, and will take every step, which is possible, to bring about this result.

Since the difficult period began, the following action has already been taken under the direction of the Railway Board. The other State-managed railways have been instructed, if necessary, to reduce their ordinary loading by 20 per cent., in order to set free wagons for coal. The Chief Mining Engineer is keeping down his indents for wagons for loco. coal as far as possible, in order to set free wagons for public coal. 500 wagons have already been transferred from the North Western Railway to the East Indian Railway, and another 500 can also be set free in a few days' time. Similar action is being taken on the Great Indian Peninsula Railway. The Director of Wagon Interchange, who is the officer in closest touch with the needs of the railways, has been given complete authority as regards the interchange of wagons for a period of ten days. In addition, in order to relieve the congestion on the Allahabad-Tundla section of the East Indian Railway, coal for Ahmedabad has been diverted by routes other than those which pass through the congested sections. Finally, in order to make sure that the action of the various railways concerned, namely,

the East Indian Railway, the Bengal Nagpur Railway and the Eastern Bengal Railway is fully co-ordinated, Mr. Sheridan, Member of the Railway Board, has proceeded to Calcutta, and arrives there this morning. He has full authority to take such measures as may be necessary, and will report fully to the Government of India. With your permission, Sir, it would be my wish to make a further statement on Monday, when we have had a full report from Mr. Sheridan.

Statement showing Wagons Loaded on the East Indian and Bengal Nagpur Railways with Coal and coke for Public and Loco. use since 1st December, 1928.

Week ending—			Public.	Loco.	Total.
8th December	B. N.	1928	5,944	1,000	6,944
		1927	6,291	987	7,278
	E. I.	1928	11,335	1,533	12,868
		1927	12,217	1,518	13,730
15th December	B. N.	1928	5,910	851	6,761
		1927	6,433	925	7,358
	E. I.	1928	11,526	1,816	13,342
		1927	12,412	1,566	13,978
22nd December	B. N.	1928	5,596	829	6,425
		1927	6,657	944	7,601
	E. I.	1928	11,909	2,009	13,918
		1927	13,169	1,313	14,482
29th December	B. N.	1928	5,105	844	5,949
		1927	6,455	926	7,381
	E. I.	1928	12,792	2,231	15,023
		1927	13,630	1,471	15,101
5th January	B. N.	1929	5,407	1,080	6,487
		1928	6,304	823	7,127
	E. I.	1929	13,006	2,247	15,253
		1928	13,269	1,394	14,663
12th January	B. N.	1929	5,582	1,021	6,603
		1928	6,269	842	7,111
	E. I.	1929	13,146	1,934	15,080
		1928	12,976	1,567	14,543

			Public.	Loco.	Total.
Week ending—					
19th January	B. N.	{ 1929	5,270	1,023	6,293
		{ 1928	5,640	914	6,554
	E. I.	{ 1929	10,708	1,396	12,104
		{ 1928	10,958	1,480	12,438
26th January	B. N.	{ 1929	7,022	1,056	8,078
		{ 1928	6,034	959	6,993
	E. I.	{ 1929	13,876	1,491	15,367
		{ 1928	13,205	1,917	15,122
2nd February	B. N.	{ 1929	6,751	1,001	7,752
		{ 1928	6,584	1,010	7,594
	E. I.	{ 1929	12,746	1,640	14,386
		{ 1928	12,884	2,540	15,424
Total (December and January).	B. N.	{ 1928-29	52,587	8,705	61,292
		{ 1927-28	56,667	8,330	64,997
	E. I.	{ 1928-29	111,044	16,297	127,341
		{ 1927-28	114,720	14,761	129,481
Grand Total (December and January).		{ 1928-29	163,631	25,002	188,633
		{ 1927-28	171,387	23,091	194,478
Week ending—					
9th February	B. N.	{ 1929	6,384	1,146	7,530
		{ 1928	6,957	1,120	8,077
	E. I.	{ 1929	12,444	1,924	14,368
		{ 1928	13,709	2,810	16,519
16th February	B. N.	{ 1929	5,788	1,012	6,800
		{ 1928	6,662	1,159	7,821
	E. I.	{ 1929	11,486	1,550	13,036
		{ 1928	13,509	2,609	16,118
Total to latest date 16th February, 1929.	B. N.	{ 1929	64,769	10,863	75,622
		{ 1928	70,286	10,609	80,895
	E. I.	{ 1929	134,974	19,771	154,745
		{ 1928	141,938	20,180	162,118
(Grand Total both railways combined) to latest date 16th February, 1929.		{ 1928-29	199,743	30,634	230,367
		{ 1927-28	212,224	30,789	243,013

Mr. K. C. Neogy: Is the Honourable Member in a position to describe the system of distribution of wagons, as between colliery proprietors, which has been resorted to in order to meet the situation?

The Honourable Sir George Rainy: I understand, Sir, that since the middle of January, I believe from the 11th, the percentage system of allotment has been reintroduced. I understand it is the same system which was in force prior to 1923 or 1924.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: Is the Honourable Member aware, Sir, that this new system has been resorted to without previous warning to the trade?

The Honourable Sir George Rainy: I could not answer that off-hand, Sir.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: Is the Honourable Member aware that, as a result of the introduction of the "rake system", only the favoured few are benefited, and there is an undue concentration of the buyers' custom to select collieries?

The Honourable Sir George Rainy: I am not aware of that fact; but quite clearly it is a matter which I shall be prepared to inquire into, if that is the Honourable Member's desire.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: Is the Honourable Member aware that there are already signs to show that the old complaint of bribery and corruption is likely to be repeated in this connection?

The Honourable Sir George Rainy: Sir, this is one of the very serious features whenever there is a shortage of wagons for coal, as for everything else, and these symptoms of bribery and corruption are very apt to appear very soon. I fully appreciate the seriousness of that, and that is one of the reasons why the Government of India take a serious view of this matter, and are anxious to do everything they can to rectify the position at the earliest date.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: What precautions has the Honourable Member taken to see that these charges are incapable of being repeated on the present occasion?

The Honourable Sir George Rainy: I am afraid, Sir, I do not quite follow the Honourable Member's question. To remove temptations seems to me to be the only way in which we can really remove the evil.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: I believe the Honourable Member has perused the observations made by the Acworth Committee on this particular point, in which they refer elaborately to the corruption that prevails on the railways in regard to this matter, and urge that deterrent measures should be taken by the Government.

The Honourable Sir George Rainy: The recommendations of the Acworth Committee are not within my recollection, Sir, at the moment, but I am indebted to the Honourable Member for drawing my attention to them.

Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas: May I take it, Sir, that you will allow supplementary questions to be put when the Honourable Member makes his statement next Monday?

Mr. President: If I allow the Honourable Member to make a statement.

Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas: Yes, Sir, if you allow the statement to be made.

Mr. President: Then I will allow the Honourable Member to put supplementary questions.

Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas: Then, I shall thank the Honourable Member for Commerce. . . .

Mr. President: Is that a supplementary question?

Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas: I only wish to thank the Honourable Member, Sir, for the statement he has made today at such short notice.

UNSTARRED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

NUMBER OF CASES INSTITUTED BY THE RAILWAY DEPARTMENT UNDER SECTION 110 OF THE INDIAN RAILWAYS ACT, 1890.

260. Sardar Gulab Singh: Will Government be pleased to lay on the table a statement showing the number of cases instituted by the Railway Department under section 110 of the Indian Railways Act, 1890 (IX of 1890), on the various main lines since 1890 up to this time, or for any lesser period available on all or any particular line?

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons: The Railway Board have no record of any such cases having been instituted.

PROVISION OF NON-SMOKING COMPARTMENTS ON RAILWAYS.

261. Sardar Gulab Singh: (a) Will Government be pleased to state what amount has been spent on the notices put up in the railway compartments regarding the prohibition of smoking, during the last 5 years?

(b) Will Government be pleased to state if there are separate non-smoking carriages provided on any railway?

(c) If not, do Government propose to make such arrangements or have separate compartments reserved for non-smokers?

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons: (a) So far as Government are aware, no money has been spent on such notices.

(b) I believe not.

(c) No.

STATEMENT OF BUSINESS.

The Honourable Mr. J. Grewar (Leader of the House): With your permission, Sir, I desire to make a statement regarding the probable course of Government business during the week beginning March the 4th. As Members have already been informed, His Excellency the Governor General has allotted Monday the 4th and Tuesday the 5th for the general discussion of the Budget, and he has also allotted Thursday the 7th

on the first day for the discussion of Demands for Grants. The business for Wednesday the 6th will be as follows:

Motions will be made for leave to introduce (i) a Bill further to amend the Indian Tariff Act, 1894; (ii) the Transfer of Property (Amendment) Bill; and (iii) the Transfer of Property (Amendment) Supplementary Bill. The two last-mentioned Bills were originally introduced in this House in September, 1927, and were circulated by executive order for opinion. They subsequently lapsed under the Standing Orders, owing to the somewhat extended period which it was necessary to allow for the receipt and consideration of the opinions received. Copies of these three Bills will be made available in the Notice Office from the 1st March, and we propose also to circulate copies to Members on the same date. If the motion for leave to introduce the Bill further to amend the Indian Tariff Act, 1894, is passed, the Honourable Member in charge will proceed, at the same sitting, to make a motion that the Bill be taken into consideration, and, if that motion is successful, he will then move that the Bill be passed.

Motions will be made to refer to Select Committee the Bill for the amendment of the Transfer of Property Act, and the Transfer of Property (Amendment) Supplementary Bill. A motion will be made to re-circulate the Bill to amend the Indian Income-Tax Act, in connection with which the Report by the Select Committee was laid on the table of this House yesterday. Lastly, a motion will be made that the Workmen's Compensation (Amendment) Bill, as reported by the Select Committee, be taken into consideration, and if that motion is adopted, a further motion will be made that the Bill be passed.

Any business remaining over from the business set down for Wednesday will be taken on Friday the 8th. There will be no sitting on Saturday the 9th.

THE RAILWAY BUDGET—LIST OF DEMANDS—concl'd.

SECOND STAGE—concl'd.

Expenditure from Revenue—concl'd.

DEMAND NO. 1—RAILWAY BOARD—concl'd.

Mr. President: The House will now resume further consideration of the following motion moved by the Honourable Sir George Rainy:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 12,61,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1930, in respect of 'Railway Board'."

Administration and Control of the Bengal Nagpur Railway.

Mr. B. Das (Orissa Division: Non-Muhammadan): Sir, I beg to move the motion standing in my name:

"That the Demand under the head 'Railway Board' be reduced by Rs. 1,001."

Sir, I have given notice of this motion for the purpose of discussing the administration and control of the Bengal Nagpur Railway.

Mr. President: Item No. 16?

Mr. B. Das: Yes, Sir. I have always thought that the company-managed railways also are controlled by the Government of India. But being familiar with the discussions in the Public Accounts Committee, I find that the Government of India have no control over the company-managed railways. I thought there was British *raj* in India; but I find that the company *raj* is still prevailing and that the British *raj* has no control over the company *raj*. Sir, when I speak of the company-managed railways, I have particularly in mind the railway—the Bengal Nagpur Railway—which works in that part of the country—Orissa—from which I come. I am not going to say anything about other company-managed railways, but I believe what I will say about the Bengal Nagpur Railway will also apply equally to the other systems of company-managed railways in India. Sir, this Bengal Nagpur Railway has a working capital of about 68 crores, of which I find only about 4 crores have been subscribed in England, and the whole administration and control of this railway have been handed over to a private body, a British Syndicate in England, and the Government of India have apparently no control in any shape over this Bengal Nagpur Railway. Such Honourable Members of this House as are familiar with last year's Public Accounts Committee Report will remember the discussion on this subject, contained in pages 61 to 68. In the course of the discussion, a point arose as to the working expenses on the various railways; and it was then found out that the Bengal Nagpur Railway spent in 1925-26, '85 per train mile while in 1926-27, only '23 was spent as cost of replacements and renewals. The State-managed railways spent on an average, '51, while the other company-managed railways spent '56, and the North Western Railway even spent '81 per train mile. It then struck me that these company-managed railways were not spending a proper amount on replacements and renewals, nor were they putting sufficient money into the depreciation fund, etc., so that they could get a larger share of the surplus dividend which they are allowed under their agreement. Some of them have to remain in India for a certain number of years till their agreements expire. For instance this Bengal Nagpur Railway will be in India up to 1951, so it does not matter to them if the permanent way is bad and the rolling stock is not properly maintained to its full complement so long as they can show a larger income whereby they can enjoy an extra share of the surplus dividend. When I put that question, my Honourable friend Mr. Parsons replied:

"Mr. Das's question is an extremely pertinent one. It arises as a matter of fact in certain of the individual instances quoted in this Report which we are considering. We are taking up the question with the Company. Our power in this connection is necessarily restricted by the terms of the contract."

That, Sir, made me curious and I looked into the agreements and contracts and I found there was something very wrong with the terms of the contract. In regard to the administration of companies in India under the Companies' Act I find the Managing Agents of a company can be dispensed with by a majority of the votes of the shareholders; but where the Government of India, and through the Government of India, the people of India, happen to be the majority of shareholders, these companies, and the British Syndicates controlling them can do whatever they like with the huge income. They may not spend any money on proper railway equipment, on efficient administration or on the maintenance of the permanent way and rolling stock, which if done, would lower their share of profit. They may

not give effect to the policy of Indianisation, which has been discussed on various occasions on the floor of this House; and in spite of our sanctioning the Lee concessions to these company-managed railways my Honourable friend the Railway Member has not yet been able to compel these company-managed railways to recruit Indians annually to the extent of 75 per cent. And, Sir, I understood from the reply of Mr. Parsons that they cannot compel these company-managed railways to fulfil such obligations. Surely, Sir, there is something wrong. Unless the traditions of the East India Company still hold, how can these companies overrule the Government of India, and do anything they like? Sir, when we were discussing the Appropriation Accounts of the Railways for 1926-27, we found a series of blunders committed by this Bengal Nagpur Railway, and they were of a very serious and grave character. Money had been mismanaged, money had been wasted under different heads, certain heads in the accounts were shown as fictitious, payments were not supported by regular entries, etc., etc. Sir, there were 40 or 50 charges like that, and my Honourable friend Mr. Parsons made a statement before the Public Accounts Committee:

"I might make my general statement now. We have received certain replies from the Agent of the Bengal Nagpur Railway which are under examination. Though many of the cases are in themselves serious, it is the cumulative effect of all of them which is the most serious thing of all, and we propose to take special action with regard to it. I should therefore if the Committee agree, prefer not at the moment to be examined on the detailed instances."

Sir, if the House is to accept the position that the Government of India have no control over the Bengal Nagpur Railway, then the matter is very serious. For a certain number of years we guaranteed dividends to these railways which are company-managed and instead of efficient management, we find profiteering and exploitation when the company can pay its way. The controlling syndicate looks more to its own profit than to the interest of the majority of shareholders.

In this year of 1929, we find there is gross mismanagement on this Railway and it will continue so up to 1951 unless the Government of India and their legal advisers find out certain ways and means whereby the actions of this Railway can be controlled. If we cannot exercise any control through the Railway Board on the Bengal Nagpur Railway, the Railway will go on merrily in its own sweet way of extravagance and waste. It won't develop communication in the territories over which it runs. I particularly refer to Orissa through which the Bengal Nagpur Railway goes. This railway has done very little to develop communications in Orissa territory. They are not bound to, nor can the Government enforce on them the development of communications in my province. I think Government can exercise sufficient control over the Bengal Nagpur Railway. There are certain sections of this Railway which originally belonged to the State, and which have been handed over to the Bengal Nagpur Railway, for management. As a plenary action these sections of the Railway can be taken away from them and managed by the State once again. With regard to enforcement on the Bengal Nagpur Railway, a definite system of management and control in uniformity with State railways and other Company-managed railways, I would ask the Honourable the Railway Member to consult the best legal advisers and try to enforce on the Bengal Nagpur Railway efficient control so that the Bengal Nagpur Railway authorities cannot override the interests of the people of India who are the owners of that Railway and do whatever they like with the funds of the Company.

Pandit Nrikantha Das (Orissa Division: Non-Muhammadan): I would like to make one suggestion, Sir. The Bengal Nagpur Railway is a railway which runs almost more than half its distance in Oriya-speaking country; but it was not a company which began in an Oriya-speaking land. Therefore in course of time in its service some vested interests have been created, and few Oriyas are in its service. There have been representations very often to put in Oriyas in the Bengal Nagpur Railway for the convenience of the public, as well as for the convenience of the administration of the railway service. But although there have been many circulars—and very pious circulars to that effect, that is, to recruit Oriyas into the service, as is well-known, on company-managed railways—here I cannot vouch for the other railways—there is rank corruption and inequitable discrimination in various matters connected with recruiting for service, and hence no practical effect has yet been given to those circulars which were elicited in response to various public demands and representations. I would therefore draw the attention of the Honourable Member to this fact in this particular connection.

Sardar Gulab Singh (West Punjab: Sikh): Sir, I stand to support the motion moved by my Honourable friend Mr. B. Das and I want to reveal to the House the manner in which Indianisation and education of Indians is carried on on the North Western Railway. I understand the Agent of the North Western Railway recruited five traffic pupils in December, 1926. These pupils, of whom four are graduates and the fifth had received training on an English railway

Mr. President: Order, order! There is another cut in the name of Pandit Hirday Nath Kunzru, cut No. 25, which will raise the question of the education of children of railway employees and railway schools. The remarks of the Honourable Member will be quite relevant then.

Sardar Gulab Singh: Does it not come, Sir, under "new services in railways"?

Mr. President: We are now dealing with an old subject.

Mr. N. C. Kelkar (Bombay Central Division: Non-Muhammadan Bural): Sir, I just want to raise one small point—it may be out of idle curiosity—about the administration and the control of this Railway. It is about fencing. It is almost an innocent point I am raising: I am not charging anybody with corruption or anything of that kind. This is a railway with a mileage of about 8,500 and one particular feature mentioned about this in the history of this railway is that it has not been fenced on either side. When I travel by the Great Indian Peninsula Railway I find that there is fencing on both sides of the railway line throughout. I have never travelled over the Great Indian Peninsula Railway at any place where there was no fencing. Here is a railway which is not obliged or compelled by Government to put up a fencing on either side of the line. On my side of the province there is another railway—company-managed—the Barsi Light Railway, which does not put up a fence on either side of the line. I want to know from the Honourable Member if he could tell me what are really the principles governing the obligation to put up fencing along the line. I take it, Sir, that there is some purpose in this obligation, namely, to put up fencing along the line, in order to prevent accidents and cattle straying on the line and getting killed and so on. How is it then that one

railway line is exempted from this obligation whereas the obligation is imposed on other railways? I shall feel grateful if the Honourable Member will throw some light upon this point.

Diwan Chaman Lall (West Punjab: Non-Muhammadian): Sir, I rise to support my friend Mr. B. Das in regard to this cut that he has moved. I think that the matters mentioned by him in his speech deserve the very careful attention of the Honourable Member for Commerce. It has been suggested that the control over the Bengal Nagpur Railway—and in fact control over all company-managed railways—is not efficient; that it is not being exercised in a proper manner, and that the policy with regard to control over company-managed railways has to be laid down very carefully and with due regard to the interests of the taxpayer. Now, in regard to the Bengal Nagpur Railway, cases have been brought to light, which are to be found in the Report of the Appropriation Accounts of Railways for 1926-27. The Honourable Mover referred to pages 33, 34, 36 and so forth.

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons (Financial Commissioner, Railways): Is this the main volume? Vol. I or vol. II?

Diwan Chaman Lall: The Report of the Accountant General, Railways; there is no volume I or volume II?

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons: The Report of the Accountant General?

Diwan Chaman Lall: Yes, the Appropriation Accounts of Railways in India, 1926-27. At page 33 there are instances mentioned; and I daresay they are merely typical instances of what is going on on the Bengal Nagpur Railway, where respectable firms like Andrew Yule and Co. put in claims which are found afterwards to have been in excess of what the requirements of the case merit. I will take one instance to be found on page 36. A contract was entered into with Messrs. Andrew Yule & Co. for the supply of 16 tons of this oil during 1924-25 at Rs. 10-0-6 per cwt. The supply for 1925-26 was contracted for with Messrs. Heilgers & Co. at Rs. 9-12-0 per cwt. The contract with Messrs. Andrew Yule and Co. was that the railway could take 25 per cent. less or more than the quantity contracted for. On the 27th March, 1925, an order was placed with this firm against which a supply of about 149 tons and 17 cwt. was received on the 30th April, 1925, and paid for at Rs. 10-0-6 per cwt. Considering that the contract for 1925-26 was at a lower rate and the fact that the suppliers were required to comply with all requirements within seven days of the receipt of the order, it was apparently not in the financial interests of the Railway to place the order just four days before the expiry of the previous contract and pay for the material at a higher rate, particularly when it was apparently not required before the end of April when the delivery was accepted. Obviously there is some sort of jobbery going on in this Railway in connection with this, and, as I said, respectable firms like Messrs. Andrew Yule are involved in transactions of a very shady nature in regard to this matter. There are other instances also mentioned; but the main point is this: what is the policy in regard to the control of company-managed railways exercised by the Government of India? What is the policy of the Honourable Commerce Member in regard to these company-owned and company-managed railways? What sort of control is being exercised? Would it

[**Diwan Chaman Lall.**]

not be advisable to strengthen and stiffen the control exercised over company-managed railways? I do not know how long the contract runs, and what are the lease terms. I have not been able to get a copy of the original contract as to when it expires.

Mr. N. C. Kelkar: 1950.

Diwan Chaman Lall: And I have not been able to look at the terms to find out whether there is any provision in the terms of the contract whereby Government could take over Railway even before the expiry of the actual term.

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons: There is none, Sir.

Diwan Chaman Lall: I take it as the Honourable Member's reading of the contract, that we cannot do so; but surely in view of the vast interests of the State involved in this particular company-managed railway, we ought to be able to get to some sort of arrangement whereby we can exercise stricter control over the management of that particular railway.

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons: Sir, may I first deal with the interesting point raised by my Honourable friend, Mr. Kelkar? He asked me to let him know what were the principles on which lines were fenced in this country. I hope he will not think that the Railway Board is entirely unprincipled if I say that I do not believe there are any principles governing this matter.

Mr. N. C. Kelkar: I wanted to know how one line was differentiated from another in this matter. I did not suppose that there was no purpose behind the fact of this obligation. I did say there was some purpose, and I did not take it for granted that the Board was unprincipled, but I wanted the reason for the differentiation.

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons: I am sure that Mr. Kelkar would never think us really unprincipled. The position is, I think, this. There is no general principle. If the Railway Board were convinced that fencing was necessary for safety purposes on any particular section of any line, they could, under their statutory powers, enforce fencing on that section. But they are not convinced that that is so. In fact, I believe three or four years ago we made an inquiry to see where accidents mostly occurred—on unfenced or fenced portions of the line—and I believe I am right in saying that accidents were considerably more frequent on fenced portions of the line than on unfenced.

Mr. N. C. Kelkar: Why not scrap the fencing on other lines then?

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons: The reason is really quite simple. Very often there is good grazing by the side of a railway line.

Mr. M. S. Aney (Berar Representative): May I just intervene for a minute, Sir? Will the Honourable Member kindly produce the result of that inquiry for the information of members here—the inquiry that was held by Government?

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons: I will see if I can get papers to lay on the table, or at any rate ask my successor to do so. It is really quite easy to explain.

On a great many railway lines, as we all can see when we travel, there is quite good grazing along the side of the line. If you fence in that section of the line, it does not mean that the owners of cattle will not try to use that grazing; they will break down the fence as soon as they find a spot where they can do so without anybody detecting them; their cattle get in to graze; a train comes along and the cattle get frightened; they fail to find the exit, run on to the line, and there is an accident. It does not follow therefore that fencing is in itself necessary or even desirable for safety purposes. On the other hand you may have sections of the line where it is desirable. Probably anywhere near a big town fencing is desirable.

I cannot agree with my Honourable friend, Mr. B. Das or with my Honourable friend, Mr. Chaman Lall, that there is no control by Government over company-managed railways, particularly over the Bengal Nagpur Railway. The position there is that our powers of control—and they are really very large—are determined by the terms of our contracts with the various railways, and to take what has been the leading instance on the Bengal Nagpur Railway, we could, under those powers, require the Railway Company to carry out renewals of the track or to renew rolling stock if those renewals could be proved to be necessary for the effectual working of the line. But there is a great difference between saying that a particular piece of relaying must be done, in order that the line may be worked effectually, or that particular rolling stock must be bought, in order to cope with traffic; and saying merely that it is desirable that a particular relaying should be undertaken, or that particular items of rolling stock should be bought. There is, in fact, quite a large area which may be said to be debatable ground, and on which a difference of opinion is perfectly reasonable. Now, I readily admit that three or four years ago, or perhaps even a little later than that, the Railway Board did not see eye to eye with the administration of the Bengal Nagpur Railway with regard to certain renewals of the nature I have mentioned. We had many conversations with them; we thought that they were going too slow. But I am glad to tell the House that they have, I think, to a very considerable extent, met our views, so that I am not now in any way disappointed with the extent to which they are carrying out what, in our opinion, if not necessary, are desirable renewals. The Honourable the Mover must not be pessimistic in these matters. The Government of India, and through them, the Railway Board, have very considerable powers of control over the working of company-managed railways on matters of real importance. They can almost invariably improve a veto on a company-managed railway doing anything which they think is highly undesirable, and they can directly or indirectly influence the management of company-managed railways in a great many matters not definitely covered by the contract. We do not actually have the very numerous difficulties with company-managed railways which sometimes questions and speeches made in this House would suggest.

I hope, Sir, that I shall not be pressed to deal with the various instances of financial irregularity, one of which was mentioned by my friend Diwan Chaman Lall as given in the Accountant General of Railways' Appropriation Accounts, and briefly commented upon in the Report of the Public Accounts Committee. The position is this. The Government audit on the Bengal Nagpur Railway was strengthened, and a good many irregularities which

[Mr. A. A. L. Parsons.]

had escaped notice were brought to the notice of the Railway Board by the Accountant General, Railways, last year. For special reasons these irregularities were mentioned in that Report instead of, in accordance with the usual practice, waiting till the time when the Railway Board had been able to make a thorough investigation of them and decide what action should be taken on them. I think I am right in saying that that explanation was given by the Auditor General to the Public Accounts Committee; if not, perhaps my Honourable friend will correct me. When I appeared before the Public Accounts Committee, we had not, therefore, got all the information necessary to come to a final conclusion on these particular matters, and I asked the Public Accounts Committee to suspend judgment on them until their next meeting when we would give a full report on the action we had taken. That suggestion, I understand, commended itself to the Committee, and these cases will come before the Committee again at their meetings next August. I actually propose, in order to make quite certain that we get the full facts in every case, that the investigation should be carried out by the Director of Finance and the Director of Civil Engineering of the Railway Board, and I am quite sure that, by the time the Public Accounts Committee next meets, we shall be in a position to lay before them a full statement on these various irregularities. That being so, I have little doubt that the House will agree with me that it is not of any particular value my going in detail into them now.

Mr. Ram Narayan Singh (Chota Nagpur Division: Non-Muhammadan): I want to know something from Mr. Parsons.

Mr. President: Does the Honourable Member wish to address the House?

Mr. Ram Narayan Singh: I want to put a question, Sir.

Mr. President: This is not question time.

Mr. Ram Narayan Singh: I want to put a question with regard to what Mr. Parsons has just said. Sir, I want to know whether the Government have got any powers, according to their terms of contract, to cancel the lease of any company-managed railways before their term expires if the management is proved unsatisfactory to Government.

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons: I did not catch the last sentence.

Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas (Indian Merchants' Chamber: Indian Commerce): If the management is proved unsatisfactory to Government.

Mr. Ram Narayan Singh: May I repeat the question, Sir?

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons: May I make another speech?

Mr. President: The only thing I would like to point out to the Honourable Member is that he is not entitled to speak from the Front Benches.

The Honourable Sir George Rainy (Member for Commerce and Railways): I must apologise for that. It was at my request and for my convenience that Mr. Parsons came and took his seat here

Mr. President: The Honourable Member should have obtained my permission.

The Honourable Sir George Rainy: Yes, Sir, I should have obtained your permission.

(Mr. Parsons then went back and occupied his original seat behind that of the Honourable the Member for Commerce and Railways.)

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons: I am not aware of any provision in the contract which would enable us to take over the company-management of the line before the date mentioned in the contract expires.

Mr. Ram Narayan Singh: Will he make inquiries and place the information before the House?

Mr. President: The question is:

"That the Demand under the head 'Railway Board' be reduced by Rs. 1,001."

The motion was negatived.

"New Services" in Railways.

Mr. B. Das: Sir, I beg to move the motion that stands against my name which reads thus:

"That the Demand under the head 'Railway Board' be reduced by Rs. 1,001."

I have given notice of this motion, Sir, in order to elicit information about the new services in our railways. Those of us who have served on the Finance Committee and other committees have an idea that a "new service" means "new instrument of service" and that each such case has to receive sanction of the Standing Finance Committees and the Assembly. In the last Public Accounts Committee we have had a very interesting discussion about the meaning and application of the term "new services" as it is understood on the railways. My Honourable friend Mr. Parsons said, at one stage, that the term "new services" means a "new type of service which has not been rendered before". We had a very long and interesting discussion, and then Sir Frederic Gauntlett, the Auditor General, observed:

"I suggest that, if you accept Mr. Parsons' general proposition, the phrase 'new service' will be of no value whatever to the Assembly."

Later on, he said:

"My point is that the definition of the term must be something much stricter than what Mr. Parsons would desire and it is for that reason that I have brought it up prominently."

I do not know what Honourable Members of the Standing Finance Committee for Railways understand by the term "new service", but from what I have understood, it means a new instrument of service, and whenever it is proposed to create one, it should be brought up before the Standing Finance Committee for Railways or the General Standing Finance Committee, and also receive the sanction of the Assembly. Towards the latter end of the discussion, my Honourable friend, Mr. Parsons, observed:

"... my fear is that if any attempt is made to tie up a big railway organisation with too definite rules, you will not succeed in running railways successfully."

I do hope that my friend, Mr. Parsons, has had time, in the meanwhile, to arrive at his own conclusions as to what a new service means, and that he will give us the view-point of the Government of India in the Railway Department as to the meaning, and implications of a "new service".

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons: Sir, I am afraid I have not arrived at any decision in the meantime, because it is not a matter in which the decision rests either with me, or with the Railway Board, or even with the Government of India in the Railway Department. The matter that Mr. Das has just brought up has been dealt with in the Report of the Public Accounts Committee in which, so far as I can see, they have not accepted the definition of a new service which was suggested by the Auditor General, and which has again now been suggested by my Honourable friend. They have stated that, what constitutes a new service should be left to be determined by a body of case law, and that no actual definition, for instance, the definition as a new instrument of service, is required. What they actually say in their Report is as follows. They refer to the fact that they were supplied by the Auditor General with a memorandum indicating the practice adopted in England in this respect. Then they say:

"The conditions there are not quite analogous to those prevailing in this country, and while we are inclined to agree in the conclusions set forth in these memoranda, we do not desire to commit ourselves definitely thereto at present. We agree with the Auditor General that, as in England, there should be no cast-iron rule, and that the application of the term to concrete cases could best be governed by the evolution of a body of case law. We recommend that, in placing cases before the Standing Finance Committees, the Government of India should state whether the expenditure is in respect of a new service; and that, if Audit holds a different view in particular cases, such cases should be brought to the notice of the Public Accounts Committee through the Appropriation Accounts."

I may add that this is not entirely an easy matter. If a particular item of expenditure is considered to be a new service, that item of expenditure requires, if not included in the budget, a supplementary vote from this House. The difficulty arises in this way, and it is not, I would add, a question of withdrawing any powers from this House. But assuming that a particular department,—and it not infrequently happens in the Railway Department,—has a large saving anticipated in some grant for the current year and wishes to take up some proposal, provision for which was not specifically included in the budget—if it puts forward a proposal for a supplementary grant for that item of expenditure and the House agrees to that grant, the House is, in effect, adding to the spending power in the year of the Department although the Department has already in its hands more money than it is likely to spend. The Government of India, I believe, did consider whether that difficulty could be got round by the presentation of a token supplementary grant; but I believe they were advised that, under the law as it stands, that is not a feasible course. Therefore, it is not entirely an easy matter to deal with; but so far as I am concerned, those are general considerations which do not affect the Railway Board. The Railway Board would naturally abide by any instructions which might be issued by the Government of India in regard to what constitutes a new service.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That the Demand under the head 'Railway Board' be reduced by Rs. 1,001."

The motion was negatived.

Representative Control over the Railway Administrations.

Mr. O. S. Ranga Iyer (Rohilkund and Kumaon Divisions: Non-Muhammadan Rural): My motion is:

"That the Demand under the head 'Railway Board' be reduced by Rs. 1,000."

(An Honourable Member: "Louder please.") This motion raises the question of how much control the Legislature exercises over the railway administration. All the control that the Legislature exercises at present is through the Local Advisory Committees, the Central Advisory Council and the Central Legislature. Sir, the Railway Department is a very important department and the number of days allotted for the discussion of the Railway Budget are not really sufficient. As a matter of fact, I believe the guillotine will fall today and we have not gone through, and we are not likely to go through, even half the number of cuts of which Honourable Members in this House have given notice. Sir, a suggestion was made last year by Mr. Joshi, who is unfortunately not able to take part, owing to his illness, in this year's proceedings—the idea was placed by him before the House, and it was a very good idea, that we should have a special session for the discussion of the Railway Budget and railway questions. If a special session is not possible, I think at least more days should be allowed for the discussion of the Railway Budget. I do not see why there should not be the same number of days allotted for the discussion of the Railway Budget as are allotted for the discussion of the General Budget. Another point which I have to place before the Honourable the Railway Member relates to the publication, in pamphlet form, of the proceedings of the Central Advisory Council. I do not know how often that Council meets, and certainly I do not know what work it has been doing. I do not believe even in the Library a copy is put in a pamphlet form recording the work of the Central Advisory Council. I believe in the Library the doings of the Local Advisory Committees are placed in a readable form, and I do not see why this should not be done in regard to the doings of the Central Advisory Council. With these few words I bring my observations to a close.

Mr. M. S. Aney (Berar Representative): The question which my Honourable friend Mr. C. S. Ranga Iyer has raised is really a very important one. At present the only arrangement which is provided to secure representative control of this House over the administration of Railways is the occasion that is afforded when the budget is presented here for us to criticise. That is one thing. The second is by means of the constitution of two committees which work with the Railway Board during the year, one the Standing Finance Committee for Railways and the other the Central Advisory Council for Railways. Besides that, there are Local Advisory Committees constituted. Now, we have got these three representative bodies, two of which are elected, one completely elected by this House and the other partially elected by this House. The Local Advisory Councils are also more or less representative. Still I feel that the representatives of the people have not succeeded in establishing such control as the magnitude of the interests involved would require. In the first place the powers of the Railway Finance Committee, as well as the powers of the Central Advisory Council, have nowhere been defined. It is more or less a matter within the discretion of the Chairman to allow a particular thing to be discussed there or not. Only certain proposition statements are placed before us, and sometimes, with the courtesy of the Chairman, we are allowed to go into the policy which those figures represent. We are only called upon to judge a particular scheme in the light of its financial aspect. That is, to a great extent, in my opinion, a handicap upon the work of that Finance Committee. So also as regards the Central Advisory Council, my friend was right in complaining that its

[Mr. M. S. Aney.]

proceedings are not available to the public. I admit that during the present régime of the Honourable Sir George Rainy certain instructions have not yet been received by us which we used to get before during the time of his predecessor. I distinctly remember, in the days when Sir Charles Innes was the Member in charge of the Department, whenever the papers were sent for the perusal of the Members of the Central Advisory Council a slip used to be sent along with them, marking them confidential. Even after the matters were discussed and certain conclusions were arrived at, still the proceedings remained confidential. They were not published. I do not see why there should be this sanctity, or rather secrecy of a confidential character about the proceedings of the Central Advisory Council.

Mr. K. C. Neogy (Dacca Division: Non-Muhammadan Rural): How often does it meet?

Mr. M. S. Aney: This year it has met twice. The Honourable Member for Railways took the warning given to him by the House and has given certain opportunities in regard to this matter to the House. Whatever may have happened in the past, the complaint about the Council not meeting at all or not meeting often does not hold good so far as the present administration is concerned. Then as regards the Local Advisory Committees, there is no principle on which the election is conducted. It is done more or less on the lines that the Agent thinks necessary in order to secure representation. The local Legislative Councils are, I understand, entitled to send a few representatives, and the rest are nominated by the Agent from certain bodies which he considers representative. This is a thing which is not governed by any regular policy. I believe it is necessary that the functions, particularly of the Standing Finance Committee for Railways and the Central Advisory Council, should be defined by Statute. The Acworth Committee, in one or two places in its Report, actually reported that the Indian Railway Act had now become out of date. It stands in need of considerable revision. During all these years that these Committees have been functioning, no attempt has been made to impose any statutory obligation on them, or to give them any statutory recognition. The time has come, in my opinion, when the Railway Board should come up with a suitable amendment of that Act and recognise the fact that the Railway Board alone is not responsible for the administration of the railways but will share that responsibility with the representatives of this House, to whom they should be responsible. That fact must receive statutory recognition. This can only be done by amending the Railway Act, and providing therein for the existence of these bodies and the functions they have got to discharge. That is a point of great importance. I did not think of dilating further on this point at this stage because I know that there is already a committee appointed by this House to revise the convention, and one of the points that will have to be seriously considered by that committee is to see that these two bodies exercise an effective and proper check upon the railway administration and that they are recognised by statute. Their functions and powers should be duly enlarged and made sufficiently strong to exercise that control. I think Mr. C. S. Ranga Iyer has brought up a very good point for the consideration of this House, and I hope we shall have a satisfactory reply from the Honourable Member in charge.

Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas: Sir, I am aware that there may be a justifiable difference of opinion on both sides of the House regarding the extent to which representative control on the railways of India can be extended at present, but I wish to utilise this opportunity for the purpose of bringing to the notice of this House the manner in which the little control which this House has at present on railway administration is being curtailed. I wish to draw the attention, of the Honourable Member in charge to information in reply to questions of great gravity not being made available to this House promptly, and the information being supplied to questions put by Honourable Members at the convenience of the Railway Board. I particularly specify the question asked by Kumar Ganganand Sinha on or about the 18th instant, marked No. 571. The question contains very serious allegations which, with your permission, Sir, I wish to read to the House:

"Will Government be pleased to state how many criminal cases have been instituted against the East Indian Railway crews during the last three years? How many of them were convicted and against how many, if any, charges of rape, kidnapping were proved."

The insinuation in this question is of such a grave character that I should have thought that, during the ten days allowed to the Department, they would have got the information by telegram and made the answer available to us on the floor of the House. For reasons which I am sure the Honourable Member in charge will be able to explain, Mr. Parsons thought it right to give the reply that the information is being collected and will be supplied to the Honourable Member. That same afternoon I wrote to Mr. Parsons and asked him if he would do me the favour of getting the information in reply to this question by telegram, and let me have a reply, as otherwise I might have to raise this subject in my remarks on the general debate. By the courtesy of the Railway Board, I got a letter last afternoon. It reached me at 6 P.M. The reply contained in this letter is as follows.

Mr. President: When did the Honourable Member write?

Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas: I wrote on the 19th February.

Mr. President: What is the date of the reply?

Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas: The reply bears no date. I have got the postal cover, which bears the date of the 26th February. (*An Honourable Member:* "That's their efficiency!")

The letter reads:

"As desired in your D. O. letter to Mr. Parsons, dated the 19th instant, the information regarding Kumar Ganganand Sinha's Question No. 571 has been obtained and is as follows:

During the last 3 years 52 criminal cases were instituted against the E. I. R. crew staff. Out of these 17 were convicted. There were 2 alleged rape cases which were not established. There were no cases of kidnapping."

I look upon this as a very serious matter, and I wish to ask the Honourable Member in charge whether he does not look upon this as a very flagrant case of great inefficiency in not attending to a serious question brought to their notice by an Honourable Member of this House. I submit for his very serious consideration that requests for information in regard to questions of so grave a nature should not be delayed.

[Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas.]

Now, Sir, the crew system, introduced on the East Indian Railway, was in the nature of an experiment. I need not tell this side of the House at least, but perhaps it may interest some Honourable Members who are supporters of the Government on the other side, that the crew system was introduced for the purpose of protecting the third class passengers. When on the Bombay, Baroda and Central India Railway Advisory Committee this question was brought up for adoption, I strongly protested against the introduction of the system and said that I thought the system might be productive of more evil than good, as far as the passengers were concerned. If, during the course of three years, there were 52 criminal cases brought against the crew employed for the protection of third class passengers, may I ask, Sir, whether any steps were taken to revise that experiment? I was rather shocked yesterday afternoon when I saw that there were two alleged rape cases included in these charges. The crew were put in railway compartments for the protection of the passengers, and, that there should be any allegations of rape against them is serious—whether the cases were established in Court or not does not interest me. It may be that owing to a technical flaw the accused may have got off, but the reply does not say that the charges were fantastic or absolutely without foundation. The Honourable the Railway Member will, however, tell us more. I do not want any Member of this House to look upon such a serious charge with the light-heartedness that at times prevails on some benches. I feel that, where questions of the nature of rape, by people who were put in railway carriages for the protection of passengers, are concerned, no Member of Government can be excused for not having taken prompt and effective action against either the man or the system.

I have in mind a similar case on another line, but I do not wish to give the name here, because I know that

Mr. President: The Honourable Member is straying away from the motion. The motion refers to representative control over the railway administration.

Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas: I was trying to give another example, but I will accept your suggestion, Sir.

I feel that, in a grave matter of this nature, information should be made available to a questioner on the floor of the House, and the excuse of the staff being hard-worked cannot hold water. I wish to ask the Honourable Member in charge whether he thinks that the delay in replying to this question was justified, and whether he does not think that he should pass very strict instructions to the Railway Board that, in every possible case where any such serious allegations are made, there should be no consideration of petty economy here or there, but that full information should be made available to this House. Incidentally, I hope the Honourable Member will be able to tell us what action the Railway Board took since the first of the criminal charges, which make up a total of 52 in three years, started against this crew system, and what effective means the Railway Board have devised for ensuring the travelling public freedom from such harassment by people who are paid by a railway to protect the travelling public.

Lieut.-Colonel H. A. J. Gidney (Nominated: Anglo-Indians): Sir, I rise to support the motion moved by my friend, Mr. Ranga Iyer, in regard to his suggestion that a separate session of the Assembly should be held to consider the Railway Budget.

I am glad to see so many Members interested this year in the Railway Budget and which is in marked contrast to last year. It shows that the House is evincing great interest in the case of railway employees. (*An Honourable Member*: "You were not here yesterday".) I am talking of last year, not of yesterday. In my opinion the time allotted by Government for the consideration of the Railway Budget is far too short. We have before us for consideration over a hundred motions, but, for reasons best known to this House, we have not gone through a quarter of them. This clearly indicates one of two things, either we have not developed our Party systems well enough expeditiously to dispose of Demands for Grants—in other words too many of us speak on the same matter and repeat ourselves and so waste time—or enough time is not allotted to us to deal with all the matters which we want to consider. It is for this reason that I support Mr. Ranga Iyer's motion that a separate session should be held for the consideration of this most important subject.

The other point on which I should like to say a few words is the Central Advisory Council for Railways. I have been a Member of this Council for a few years, and I do think that it should take up more matters for consideration than it now does. In other words—it should be made more use of. I bring to my mind a very recent matter, namely, the new Railway educational scheme that is to-day for consideration before the Government and the House. I do think that, although that matter has been formally brought up twice for consideration of the Central Advisory Council, it should have been dealt with in a more exhaustive manner than it has been, and that it should have been previously circulated to those whose interests were vitally concerned, e.g., the Anglo-Indian Associations, who voice the needs of the domiciled community. I consider the Central Advisory Council should meet more frequently somewhat on the lines of the Railway Standing Finance Committee, because there are many problems which are dealt with by the Railway Administration on which the Central Advisory Council should be consulted and given an opportunity to discuss. I do remember in the last few years that there were only three or four matters of any real importance which were brought before the Council for consideration, and I suggest for the consideration of the Railway Board, that more matters should be brought up and that the Central Advisory Council should be placed in a position to justify its existence.

Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh (Muzaffarpur cum Champaran: Non-Muhammadan): Sir, mention has been made in the course of the debate of the constitution of the Local Advisory Committees for Railways. I happen to know the constitution of one of such Committees, which sits at Muzaffarpur. The constitution of that Committee is very unrepresentative, and I shall just say one or two words to indicate to the House the nature of its constitution. It consists only of six members. The first is the Agent of Bengal and North Western Railway. The second is a

[Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh.]

representative of the Government of Bihar and Orissa, who is the Commissioner of the Tirhut Division. The third is a member of the Legislative Council to represent industries and agriculture. The fourth is a Member of the Legislative Council to represent the travelling public. The fifth is a representative of the Bihar Planters Association, which is a body composed entirely of Europeans. Of course, I mean no racial discrimination here, but the membership of that Association is rigidly confined to Europeans only. In this connection, I should only like to say that the Bihar and Orissa Chamber of Commerce, which is also a representative body, and which is directly interested in commerce and industries, finds no place there; nor does any similar institution find a place on that Advisory Committee. Besides there is no representative of the employees or workers on the constitution of that Committee. The sixth member of the Committee is the Senior Government Railway Inspector. No independent outsider can find a place on the Committee, under its rules. I would only like to mention that this Committee is a very unrepresentative one with no powers at all; and one of the Members of that Committee, who has been associated with it probably since its very inception, moved a Resolution the other day in the Bihar and Orissa Legislative Council recommending that the lease of the Bengal and North Western Railway should not be renewed, and that it should be managed by the State. This gentleman, in the course of his speech, makes the following significant admission: He says:

"We have come to the deliberate conclusion that it will not serve any useful purpose unless its powers were widened"

---"Its" means the Local Advisory Committee—

"so as to secure adequate and efficient representation on the Committee".

He goes on further and says:

"The Legislative Council sends two representatives, one representing the travelling public and the other the trade interests. But it appears to me that neither of these interests is adequately represented."

I would therefore ask the Railway Board and the Honourable the Member for Railways to constitute the Local Advisory Committees for Railways in such a manner as to secure more effective representation of the public and to widen their powers. That is all I have got to say on the amendment.

Mr. Ram Narayan Singh: Sir, for the good administration of the railways in this country, we have the Railway Board, we have got the Central Advisory Council, the Standing Railway Finance Committee, the Local Advisory Committee and several other committees. Not only this, the number of members of the Railway Board is going to be multiplied and God knows how many more multiplications are in contemplation.

An Honourable Member: Even God does not know.

Mr. Ram Narayan Singh: So far as the administration of the Department is concerned, neither the technical figures given by the Honourable Mr. Parsons, nor the sweet speeches delivered by the Honourable Sir George Rainy are going to help us in any way. Sir, it is necessary that the whole administration ought to be controlled by a representative body of the people. We see that corruption is rampant everywhere in the Department. Of course there are reasons for that. The lion's share of

the revenue is distributed among the Honourable Members of the European Group, among their brothers and cousins, and only a small share is left for the poor Indian employees. They are paid very small salaries and thus they are compelled to take bribes from poor people. Unless the administration is brought under the control of a representative body, these things will continue.

Pandit Nilakantha Das: Sir, I have got a cut on general policy.

Mr. Ram Narayan Singh: Unless the railway administration is brought under the control of a committee representing the people, there is absolutely no chance for improvement in the administration. I therefore hope that Honourable Members will take an active interest in this matter and vote in favour of this motion. I therefore strongly support the motion.

Diwan Chaman Lal: I think it would be generally conceded by the Honourable Members that there is, at the present moment, no exercise of representative control over the railways. We have our committees, but we find that, as far as the general conditions of labour and the general grievances of the public are concerned, it has become a hardy annual to repeat them on the floor of this House and get no satisfaction from the Railway Board. I submit that, if there had been some system devised by which representative control could be exercised over the railways this unsatisfactory state of things would not have arisen. Let me take one or two points in connection with this. For instance, I noticed that, although the debate in connection with these matters has gone on for several days on the floor of this House, there was but one solitary voice that was raised in connection with the question of accidents upon railways. I submit that, if there had been representative control, that would have been a very important matter in connection with the discussion of the Railway Budget. I find that accidents have gone up during the last few years and they have reached a very high level during the last year, and yet I do not find, as far as I can discover, a single word in regard to the question of accidents being mentioned in the Report of the Railway Board, except the figures that are given. Figures are given, but no regret is expressed, no policy is laid down, no method is devised whereby accidents in future are likely to be prevented.

I do know that there has been the question of automatic couplings before the Railway Board and before the International Conference at Geneva, but that has not solved the problem. My point is this, that if we had representative control, the Honourable Member would have gone out of his way to apologise for the increase of accidents. Let me draw the attention of the House to the fact that, in 1923-24, there were 2,818 killed and 8,447 injured, and in 1927-28, there were 3,070 killed and 6,265 injured. Taking the workshops and the actual railway services, there are 24 killed and 6,114 injured.

For this state of affairs, I do not find one word of regret on the part of the railway administration in the documents that have been handed over to us. Why is it that we do not find a word of regret? It is because the Honourable Member knows that there is no representative control? After we make our speeches on the floor of the House, we quietly go home and forget the whole incident. Similarly the Honourable Members of Government make their speeches and go home and forget everything

[Diwan Chaman Lall.]

that is said here by non-official Members. That is one instance where the railway administration needs improvement.

Then, take the question of labour and labour conditions, what do we find in Volume I of this Report? There is paragraph 81, on pages 64 and 65 of this Report, which relates to the life and conditions of 800,000 workers. We have got very beautifully printed pictures, which are contained in this Volume, which have no significance to the workers, no significance for the 800,000 workers who are all wanting better conditions of living and better conditions of labour. There is one paragraph, that is paragraph 81, which deals in a very cursory manner with the grievances of labour on the railways.

Mr. President: They will be remedied by the additional Member for Labour.

Diwan Chaman Lall: I am not so optimistic about the powers of the additional Labour Member. Personally I do not think that the additional Labour Member is likely to bring peace or comfort to the workers who are employed on the railways. My view of the appointment was that I thought it would concentrate public opinion on labour questions more than it has done in the past. That is all it is likely to do. If there had been representative control, I submit the Honourable Member would have gone out of his way to give more detailed information about the living conditions and the working conditions of the working classes who are employed on the railways; he would have gone further and given us a detailed survey of labour analysis on railways.

Mr. President: Why not wait till the next year? Let the fifth Member have a chance. (Laughter.)

Diwan Chaman Lall: Whatever I am saying affects the activities of the Labour Member. Let us see how he acts, let us see how he receives the criticisms on the floor of the House. I am not enamoured of this new appointment to this extent that the new Member is going to change the whole aspect of railway administration *qua* labour. I do not think he is going to do anything of the kind. All that I say is this: that if there had been representative control, you would have, just like the Rates Advisory Committee, probably set up a Labour Advisory Council also, with perhaps not one Labour Member, but a lot of Members

Mr. President: Perhaps two or three Members?

Diwan Chaman Lall: Perhaps, Sir; and a time may come when perhaps the whole lot of them may be labour men under a Socialist Government. I do submit that, under the circumstances, the Honourable Member will be well advised, even though there is no representative control at the present moment, to look into these matters from the point of view of the public and of the working classes. The one important matter which would ordinarily have been considered by the Honourable Member, if there had been representative control, is the setting up of grievances committees throughout the railway system. I can give one instance. The other day a ticket collector, working at the Rawalpindi Railway Station, was given orders that nobody should be allowed to get on to the platform without a platform ticket. A gentleman arrived, and wanted access, but did not possess a platform ticket. The ticket collector naturally objected, whereupon that gentleman complained. The reply sent by the superior

officer was that the ticket collector's duty was to prevent gentlemen from entering the platform without a platform ticket and that he was doing his duty. Whereupon, a further complaint was made to a further superior officer, and the reply received was to the effect that this ticket collector would be discharged. He was discharged for doing nothing more than his duty. And when a complaint was made to the Agent of the North Western Railway by the dismissed man, when a registered, acknowledgment due, letter of complaint was made, no reply was received, or has to this day been received, from the Agent. Such things are possible only when there is a system of bureaucratic control, an unrepresentative control; and I submit that, although at the present moment no representative control is exercised, over the railways, the Honourable Member should take such steps as may be necessary to bring about some satisfactory arrangement, whereby the grievances of the workers will be looked into, discussed and remedied, in spite of the present unsatisfactory arrangements.

Kumar Ganganand Sinha (Bhagalpur, Purnea and the Santhal Parganas: Non-Muhammadan): Sir, I rise to intervene in this debate just to urge upon the Government only one little point. My complaint is that the time allotted for the discussion of the Railway Budget is not sufficient and should be extended.

Mr. President: Do you promise to be present?

Kumar Ganganand Sinha: Yes. Sir, under the Indian Legislative Rule 47, the maximum number of days which the Governor General can allot for the purpose of the Budget is 15 days. We find that just now we have got only 12 days at our disposal for the discussion of the Budget.

Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh: But yesterday the House was at the point of adjourning for want of a quorum.

Kumar Ganganand Sinha: If the Governor General sees his way to extend the time for the discussion of these demands, he will be doing a real public service, thereby increasing the popular control over the various departments of the Government. You will see, Sir, that, although we have not gone very far during this session with regard to the demands we are just on the 17th or 18th item under the first Demand 'Railway Board'—we have discussed a number of subjects under this head. And if we are given more time, we may be enabled to pay more attention to more subjects than we have now been able to do. Before I sit down, Sir, I must express my indebtedness to my Honourable friend Sir Purshotsandas Thakurdas for bringing up an important case for the careful consideration of this House. The railway staff must be, like Cæsar's wife, above suspicion, and it should be the duty of every member of the railway administration to see that it is so.

The Honourable Sir George Rainy: Sir, under the general heading of representative control a fairly wide range of subjects has been brought to notice by the speakers in the course of the debate. Most of them, however, do not require any very prolonged reply from me.

I think the very first point brought to notice by the first speaker, and also re-echoed by the last speaker, was the insufficiency of the number of days allotted for the discussion of the Railway Budget. Well, Mr. President, there was a period last year when I began to wonder whether

[Sir George Rainy.]

the number of days allotted for the discussion of the Railway Budget was not excessive, and there were occasions when it seemed to me that the House itself as a whole was inclined to take that view. This year I have not had the same feeling, although there have been occasional moments, immediately after the lunch interval, when it seemed doubtful whether, if the time was extended, the House would be inclined to prolong the discussion. It is a perfectly fair question to raise; but we have always to remember, I think, the total period that is available in the course of the session for the discussion of all the subjects that have to be brought before the House; and if additional days were allotted—which would mean the prolongation of the session into the month of April—I wonder how many Members of the House would welcome the prospect of a further stay in Delhi? More hopeful, I think, is the idea that the Railway Budget should be discussed not during the cold weather session in Delhi but at some other time of the year, possibly in the Rains session. I understand there are technical difficulties at the moment which prevent the adoption of that suggestion. The question of removing these technical and legal difficulties I have no doubt will be considered in connection with any constitutional changes that may come under consideration.

My friend Mr. Aney raised the point that the powers of the Standing Finance Committee for Railways have never been clearly defined. The Standing Finance Committee for Railways owes its origin to the convention for the separation of railway finance, and naturally the question of its functions will come under review in the committee which has been appointed to examine the convention. I do not think it is desirable in the circumstances that I should express any view myself until I have heard what the members of that Committee have to say about it.

Then the point was raised that the proceedings of the Central Advisory Council ought to be published regularly. Personally I think that that is a quite reasonable request, and I have undertaken to bring the matter before the Central Advisory Council itself at its next meeting. The only reservation I am inclined to make is that questions might arise on which Government was anxious to obtain the advice of the Council, but would be unable to do so unless as regards that particular matter, the proceedings were confidential. However, I will not express any final opinion about that until I have asked the Central Advisory Council to consider that aspect of the case at its meeting.

My friend Mr. Aney also raised a question about the amendment of the Indian Railway Act to define the powers of the Railway Board and the powers of the Legislature and of its committees to control the executive action of the railway authorities. I imagine that the full development of that question might involve the amendment not only of the Indian Railway Act but also of an even more august Statute, namely, the Government of India Act; and I am certainly not at present prepared to express any opinion as to the modifications in that Act which might be necessary.

My Honourable friend Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh raised the question which he is naturally interested in, as he comes from the province of Bihar, about the reconstitution of the Local Advisory Committee of the Bengal and North Western Railway, so as to make it more representative of the travelling public. I was not aware that that particular advisory committee

had such a small membership, only 6 members, and I shall certainly look into the matter and see whether we cannot enlarge it and provide it with the representation he wants. In the case of some of these committees, we are in a difficulty in providing representation for particular interests because we do not want to make the committees too large, but in this case obviously we could add 2, 3 or 4 more members without making the committee unwieldy.

Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh: I may explain there are two committees, one at Gorakhpur and one at Muzaffarpur. I was referring to the one at Muzaffarpur.

The Honourable Sir George Rainy: Well, if the committees sit separately and not together, then I see no reason why the committee at Muzaffarpur, at any rate, should not include more than 6 members. As I say, I will take the matter up and see what can be done.

My Honourable friend Diwan Chaman Lall expressed the belief that, if there were more representative control, more would be said in the Railway Board's Reports about accidents on railways, and greater attention would be paid to labour grievances. I wonder if the Honourable Member, Mr. Chaman Lall, ever reflects that, if he remained present in this House to hear the replies to the charges he makes against Government, one might perhaps attach rather more importance to what he says. I draw attention to this because it is not the first occasion

Honourable Members: He is here.

The Honourable Sir George Rainy: I am sorry and I do most heartily apologise to the Honourable Member, but not seeing him in his place I thought he had left the House. But I am indebted to him for one thing, because I inadvertently yesterday failed to reply to what my Honourable friend Mr. Duraiswamy Aiyangar said on the subject of accidents. I had some notes here, but I overlooked them when I was making my reply and I did not refer to the subject. I want to say now that this is not by any means a subject to which we are indifferent—the question of accidents. I find that in the ten years between 1917-18 and 1927-28, while the number of passengers killed in railway accidents went up by 44 per cent., the passenger train mileage went up by 79 per cent. That is a point to be considered: we are running a great many more trains, and supposing there were no improvement in the factor of safety, we should get the number of accidents increasing in proportion to the train mileage. But when we find that the increase in the number of accidents is smaller in proportion than the increase in the passenger train mileage, then I think it can be said that things are not so bad as they might at first sight appear. As regards accidents to railway servants caused by the movements of railway vehicles exclusive of accidents to trains—that is, in shunting operations and so on—the number of killed in 1917-18 was 368 and in 1927-28 only 323. In that respect there has been an improvement. As regards accidents on railway trains unconnected with the movement of vehicles, unfortunately the figures for that were not compiled for 1917-18 and therefore I am unable to make a comparison. Finally as regards accidents to others—that is not to railway servants or to passengers—I find that there has been an increase in the number of accidents to trespassers. The number killed rose from 1,350 to 1,931. There again I do not know if the number of killed has not gone up as a result of the increase in traffic; and therefore there again, although

[Sir George Rainy.]

it is our duty to work, for an improvement, I do not think there is any ground for undue despondency.

As regards what the Honourable Member said about greater attention being paid to labour grievances if there were representative control, I am indebted to him for bringing to my notice the case of the ticket collector he particularly referred to and I shall look into that. But generally I cannot honestly say—of course if I were a Minister removable by the vote of the House I should be more under control,—but quite honestly, as regards this labour matter, I think the House has many opportunities, of which it takes advantage, to express its views on the subject, and that unquestionably does produce an impression on the mind of the Government of India; and the action I took, though I know it did not commend itself to Members on the other side, for the appointment of an Additional Member, was quite genuinely taken in the hope that we should be able to give greater attention to labour problems and deal with them better than we have done in the past. Therefore I am not sure that that was a particularly good example of the need for greater representative control.

Now as regards the point taken by my Honourable friend Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas about the answers to questions, I admit that discretion must be exercised. When an important question is put making serious suggestions or serious allegations, it is very desirable that the answer should be given on the floor of the House, so that Members may have an opportunity of putting supplementary questions. But I doubt if anybody who has not actually worked in the Railway Board, or with the Railway Board, has any conception of the mass and volume of the work with which the Financial Commissioner has to deal in respect of questions alone. There have been sessions in which he was responsible for the answers to more questions than all the other Government officers put together—that is, more than half the questions related to the Railway Department. Now, in these circumstances, when the work has to be done under such high pressure, you have to decide very rapidly—because you cannot dwell on any one question—whether or not you should call for information by telegram or whether it is sufficient to call for information by letter. Under these conditions mistakes must be made sometimes, but I say this, if I were Financial Commissioner, you would see a great many more mistakes than you see at present. I work in the closest consultation with Mr. Parsons about these questions, and personally I have nothing but admiration for the way he gets them through. At the same time I quite appreciate the importance of what my Honourable friend Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas said. He said that this was an important matter which ought to be fully looked into. The only criticism I would make of his speech is that I think he was a little too ready to assume that, because charges were brought, therefore the charges were likely to be true. The figures I think were—I am speaking from memory, but I think he said there were 62 cases. . . .

Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas: Fifty-two.

The Honourable Sir George Rainy: Fifty-two cases and seventeen convictions. It is possible that some of the other cases where there were no convictions—we do not know what the facts are, some of them may have been true; on the other hand we are equally entitled to assume that some

of them probably were not true. And in a good many cases I understand that cross-charges were brought from the other side, which is quite natural when you get a dispute between a ticket collector and a passenger, and the ticket collector says he has not paid his fare and the passenger says he has, and it ends in charges in a criminal court one against the other. As regards the serious matter of these two charges of rape, about which the answer said that the facts had not been established, I quite agree that, when charges of that kind are brought, it is our business to satisfy ourselves either, that if there are adequate grounds for the charge, severe action is taken, or that, if there are not adequate grounds, that the facts are fully ascertained as far as this can be done. I will certainly have that matter examined and if the information appears incomplete, ask for further information from the Agent.

There is one small point of fact in which perhaps I may correct what was said by my Honourable friend, Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas. I think I am right in saying that the crew system was primarily introduced, not for the protection of passengers but for the prevention of the prevalent practice of travelling without tickets: that was the primary object of the system. But we do want to utilise it for the protection of passengers and for giving help to passengers, and it is already largely utilised for that purpose. That being so, it is emphatically in the interests of the railway

administration that they should take every step they can to see that the members of the crews work satisfactorily and do not abuse the power which their position may sometimes give them. I am indebted to my Honourable friend for calling my attention to the matter, and as I have already said, as regards the serious allegations, I will certainly make further inquiries if our information is incomplete.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That the demand under the head 'Railway Board' be reduced by Rs. 1,000."

The Assembly divided:

AYES--39.

Abdullah Haji Kasim, Khan Bahadur
Haji.

Acharya, Mr. M. K.

Aney, Mr. M. S.

Ayyangar, Mr. M. S. Sessa.

Badi-uz-Zaman, Maulvi.

Belvi, Mr. D. V.

Birla, Mr. Ghanshyam Das.

Chaman Lall, Diwan.

Chetty, Mr. R. K. Shanmukham.

Das, Mr. B.

Das, Pandit Nilakantha.

Farookhi, Mr. Abdul Latif Saheb.

Goswami, Mr. T. C.

Gulab Singh, Sardar.

Haji, Mr. Sarabhai Nemchand.

Ismail Khan, Mr. Muhammad.

Iswar Saran, Munshi.

Jogiah, Mr. V. V.

Kelkar, Mr. N. C.

Kidwai, Mr. Rafi Ahmad.

Kunzru, Pandit Hirday Nath.

Malaviya, Pandit Madan Mohan.

Mehta, Mr. Jamnadas M.

Mitra, Mr. S. C.

Moonje, Dr. B. S.

Mukhtar Singh, Mr.

Murtuza Saheb Bahadur, Maulvi
Sayyid.

Naidu, Mr. B. P.

Neogy, Mr. K. C.

Pandya, Mr. Vidya Sagar.

Purshotamdas Thakurdas, Sir.

Ranga Iyer, Mr. C. S.

Rao, Mr. G. Sarvotham.

Roy, Mr. B. C.

Shafee, Maulvi Mohammad.

Siddiqi, Mr. Abdul Qadir.

Singh, Kumar Ranajaya.

Singh, Mr. Ram Narayan.

Sinha, Kumar Ganganand.

NOES—46.

Abdul Aziz, Khan Bahadur Mian.
 Ahmed, Mr. K.
 Alexander, Mr. William.
 Allison, Mr. F. W.
 Anwar-ul-Azim, Mr.
 Ashrafuddin Ahmed, Khan Bahadur
 Nawabzada Sayid.
 Bajpai, Mr. G. S.
 Bower, Mr. E. H. M.
 Chalmers, Mr. T. A.
 Chatterjee, the Revd. J. C.
 Coatsman, Mr. J.
 Cocke, Mr. H. G.
 Cosgrave, Mr. W. A.
 Crawford, Colonel J. D.
 Crerar, The Honourable Mr. J.
 Dakhan, Mr. W. M. P. Ghulam Kadir
 Khan.
 Dalal, Sardar Sir Bomanji.
 French, Mr. J. C.
 Ghazanfar Ali Khan, Mr.
 Gidney, Lieut.-Colonel H. A. J.
 Graham, Mr. L.
 Jowahir Singh, Sardar Bahadur Sardar.
 Keane, Mr. M.

Lall, Mr. S.
 Lamb, Mr. W. S.
 Lindsay, Sir Darcy.
 Mitra, The Honourable Sir Bhupendra
 Nath.
 Mukharji, Rai Bahadur A. K.
 Mukherjee, Mr. S. C.
 Parsons, Mr. A. A. L.
 Rainy, The Honourable Sir George.
 Rajan Bakhsh Shah, Khan Bahadur
 Makhdum Syed.
 Rao, Mr. V. Panduranga.
 Row, Mr. K. Sanjiva.
 Roy, Mr. K. C.
 Sams, Mr. H. A.
 Sassoon, Sir Victor.
 Schuster, The Honourable Sir George.
 Shillidy, Mr. J. A.
 Simpson, Sir James.
 Singh, Rai Bahadur S. N.
 Stevenson, Mr. H. L.
 Sykes, Mr. E. F.
 Webb, Mr. M.
 Yamin Khan, Mr. Muhammad.
 Young, Mr. G. M.

The motion was negatived.

Policy regarding the Purchase and Use of Steel Sleepers in Indian Railways.

Mr. M. S. Sesha Ayyangar (Madura and Ramnad cum Tinnevely: Non-Muhammadan Rural): Sir, in view of the ruling that you gave yesterday, I shall not move the motion No. 20 standing in my name, and I move:

"That the Demand under the head 'Railway Board' be reduced by Rs. 1,000."

Sir, of late I have been noticing a tendency on the part of railways in India to go in for steel and other metal sleepers in preference to wooden sleepers. This I noticed some time ago (*An Honourable Member*: "Louder please"), and I made a special study of it and came to the conclusion that the use of these steel and other metal sleepers was to the detriment of the indigenous timbers available in India for wooden sleepers. I wanted to arrest the attention of the Railway Board last year during the Railway Budget discussion, and I prominently made mention of this fact, supported by certain facts and figures; but unfortunately I could not get any satisfactory reply on this point from the Honourable Member for Railways. Since I spoke last year, I have been fortified by other expert opinions as well towards maintaining the position that I took last year. I said last year that, so far as wooden sleepers were concerned, they had satisfied the test of time, because ever since the inception of railways in this country, wooden sleepers had been very largely used and only very recently this rather unnatural craving for steel and other metal sleepers came in. So far as wooden sleepers go, I said that they had not been found wanting in the tests they had been put to all these long years; and I find recently a body of railway maintenance engineers in the United States also have come to the same conclusion. In the United States many railway maintenance engineers have declared, as an established proposition, that "the wooden cross-tie is going to stay in spite of the

attempted patents and the introduction of every imaginary form of substitute". They go further and say that "wood still stands the rockbound test of cold, hard experience". Now, that is the conclusion reached, Sir, by this expert body of railway maintenance engineers in the United States.

Next I said that it was to the advantage of the Railway Department to use all the indigenous timbers available in this country. I am told on reliable authority that, so far as the wood necessary for the purpose is concerned, it is obtainable, especially Sal wood is obtainable in very large quantities in many parts of India in the Sub-Himalayan ranges and in most of the forest areas of our Indian States, and the Honourable the Member for Railways will agree that certainly Sal was about the best variety of wood for the purpose of sleepers for railways. I also pointed out that there were other varieties of timber available, though they required slight treatment before they could be used as sleepers, so that it cannot be said that there is not enough timber material, out of which to manufacture wooden sleepers, in this country.

Next, I maintained that, so far as comfort goes, wooden sleepers give a greater degree of comfort to the passengers than the steel and other metal sleepers. This position is also confirmed by the opinion of Mr. Nelson Courtland Brown, who, in the course of a paper he recently presented at the tenth Annual Convention of the National Association of Railroad Tie-Producers at Arkansas, speaking in November last upon this matter, maintained that the superiority of the wooden tie to the steel and other metal ties consists in four points; and he mentioned prominently this point in establishing the superiority of the wooden sleepers to other types. He maintains that, in the steel and other metal sleepers, there is extreme rigidity, as compared with the resilient wooden tie, which results in the rocking of the rolling stock, and even in the shearing of the rail fastenings. Now, that is a conclusive answer to the suggestion sometimes made that steel sleepers are equally comfortable. In fact, he has established the superiority of wooden sleepers in point of comfort.

Thirdly, I maintained last year, so far as prices go, wooden sleepers compare favourably with steel and metal sleepers, and that wooden sleepers can be obtained at a cheaper price in abundance in this country, if only the Railway Administration takes some care to eliminate the intermediaries and their profits. There is also a consequential expense which would be entailed in the laying of the metal sleepers. So far as the price of laying metal sleepers is concerned, the same authority, Mr. Nelson Courtland Brown, says that much greater expense, due to weight in laying and taming of the substitute ties, particularly the metal ties would be necessary. There also the wooden sleepers compare favourably indeed with the steel sleepers.

Then I maintained that, in point of age or durability, the wooden sleepers compare quite favourably with metal and other iron sleepers, and that opinion is also confirmed by this expert who says this:

"Since 1905 the wooden has pre-eminently proved its worth both in Europe and in the United States. As time goes on and the life of properly treated ties shows from 20 to 30 years or more, the substitute question is destined to be dead for a long time—perhaps for all time, certainly until the price of the wooden tie rises above the present level."

When this is the case in the United States, here as there is a plentiful supply of timber necessary for sleepers, I think the question of the relatively low cost of wooden sleepers should certainly weigh with the

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authorities. Fifthly, I said that many substitute ties were used in the United States and the Continent of Europe, and they were found wanting; and this day I maintain that, even on the Continent, these metal sleepers are not very much in evidence. That position is also corroborated by the opinion of the expert whom I have just quoted. He maintains that:

“at least 2,500 patents have been applied for or issued for substitute ties over a period of 86 years in the United States alone. In the period from 1890 to 1905 the substitute experiments were exceedingly active. But since 1905 the wooden type has pre-eminently proved its worth, so that while various types of substitutes have been used in Europe for the past 15 years, there is no common agreement that any one has proved thoroughly satisfactory. Certainly they are not used to any large extent in any European country. Germany has probably adopted them to a larger extent than any other country, but even in Germany, wood is still the dominant source of cross-tie material.”

So that upon all the five points that I raised last year, I maintained that the wooden type compared favourably, and I stand fortified in the position I took up last year by the pronouncement of this body of expert railway engineers and also by the authority of Mr. Nelson Courtland Brown, whom I have just quoted. Now, Sir, I mention these for this purpose. If, as a matter of fact, wood is available in such large quantities for the purpose of giving us wooden sleepers, why, then, is there this persistent and inordinate, and I may perhaps add, this unnatural craving for steel sleepers? I have a shrewd suspicion that this is probably due to the fact that they are bent on importing steel sleepers from abroad, in preference to wooden sleepers which we can get here. I do not want to make any insinuation. In all lines of new construction I have been seeing with my own eyes steel sleepers being used instead of wooden sleepers, and even in the case of repairs, I have been noticing quite markedly that the wooden sleepers are supplanted by steel sleepers or other iron sleepers. If, as a matter of fact, wooden sleepers have satisfied the tests of time, and efficiency, where is the necessity for this craving suddenly developed, just now? I am not an expert myself, but I am strongly fortified by the opinions I have heard of the engineering and forestry experts in this matter. I am being confirmed day by day by the study, that I have made of this particular matter. I think therefore I am perfectly justified in making prominent mention of this fact, so that it might attract the attention of the House, the Railway Board and the Railway Administrations concerned and that they might see whether it is not expedient to go back to the wooden sleepers again and desist from importing steel sleepers. Sir, I move.

Mr. M. S. Aney: This is a question on which there has been a good deal of feeling, not only on this side of the House, but even on the part of the members of the Standing Finance Committee. Very often, whenever new schemes of railway construction are placed before us, we find that provision for steel sleepers is being made. We have not been supplied with a very satisfactory explanation as to what is the necessity for steel sleepers instead of wooden sleepers that we generally used in former days. Besides this, there are certain other points to which I wish to draw the attention of the Railway Board. At Dehra Dun we have got a special forest laboratory where officers are appointed to carry on experiments for seasoning wood and trying the test of durability of various woods for various purposes. I want to know whether the Railway Board have been supplied by these officers at Dehra Dun, who are expert officers appointed

for this purpose, with the results of the tests they have carried on on various types of Indian wood and the opinions they have expressed about their durability for this purpose. So far as my information goes, the Railway Administration, when they had the occasion of ascertaining the life of the various railway assets, came to the conclusion about these wooden sleepers that, on an average, they lasted for 15 to 20 years and they were good for the purpose, at least that they could be used for that period without any danger of their giving way under the load which they had to bear. That is therefore the average life which is conceded. We have got a special department for carrying on experiments on Indian wood, and one of the objects of creating that department is to find out for what purposes the Indian wood can be used, and how the use of that wood can be extended for all purposes for which the Government, as well as the people, require Indian wood and Indian timber. We have also made a provision for the appointment of forest officers in the railways, who are to collaborate with the officers of the Forest Department, particularly for the sake of finding out the requirements of the Indian railways in the matter of wood, and also to find out the quality of wood most suitable for purposes for which the railway has to use wood. That provision we made some time before. With these two sets of officers specially appointed for the purpose working for a considerable time, we have yet not been informed as to the result of the work they have done and as to the information they have supplied to the Railway Board. It is really an anomaly that, with the extensive forests we have in this country, and the variety of timber in which they are abundant, we should be required to import into this country, for the purpose of sleepers, foreign wooden and steel, and that the Indian wood should not be found sufficient for our purposes. The policy of the Railway Board, or to which the Railway Board stand committed, is to use Indian materials, as far as possible, for their own requirements. If it is not possible to get Indian materials, of course, they can go to other countries and import foreign material. That is the general policy to which the Railway Board stand committed. In view of this

Pandit Nilakantha Das: Do they formally stand committed?

Mr. M. S. Aney: I do not say formally. They say they stand committed and they mean to do it, and unless we hear from them something which does not satisfy us, we would not be justified in making a contrary supposition. I therefore maintain that the Railway Board stand committed to the policy of using Indian materials preferably. I find they have appointed certain officers for the sake of pooling sleepers and such other things. We do not know what these officers have done during these years. It would be a great anomaly if the Indian railways should be required to import foreign steel for the sake of their sleepers, to the exclusion of wood, in which the Indian forests abound. There is also one point which strikes me in connection with the sleeper question. Some time before—I do not know whether it was in the last Standing Finance Committee meeting or in a meeting held before that—I brought to the notice of my Honourable friend, Mr. Parsons in the Committee that, on account of certain mistakes of engineers in fitting up steel sleepers on certain sections of the Great Indian Peninsula Railway, it was found necessary to repair the permanent way, and certain expenditure was placed before us for sanctioning the reconstruction of the permanent way. I brought to his notice at that time—I have not got the Report in my hand and I cannot put my finger upon

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the particular page of the Report as also the particular section of the Railway to which I drew attention—that mistakes have been committed by the engineers of the Department, with the result that the taxpayer has now got to pay for those mistakes. It is also a point on which I would like the Honourable Member to give some explanation. To remove the suspicion which most people feel that this policy of importing steel sleepers is not solely actuated by considerations of economy, the Railway Board must satisfy us that the Indian forests have been found to contain timber which is entirely unsuitable for sleeper purposes. Unless that thing is conclusively established, there is no way for them out of the difficulty, namely, that the people have strong suspicions about this growing tendency of the Railway Board to go in every year, in larger and larger quantities, for iron sleepers. It is, I believe, suspected by some that it is one of the ways of solving what may be called the unemployment problem in another country. How far that suspicion is grounded in fact will depend upon the inquiries which the Railway Board may have made into this matter before they embarked upon this policy of going in, in larger quantities, for iron sleepers. I think it is a very important point which my Honourable friend Mr. Sessa Ayyangar has brought to the notice of the Railway Board. Last year the reply of the Government was not satisfactory. I hope this year at any rate, we shall hear some satisfactory reply from the Honourable Member in charge of Railways.

Mr. K. Ahmed (Rajshahi Division: Muhammadan Rural): How long would a wooden sleeper last?

Mr. M. S. Aney: I have made inquiries. It is from 15 to 20 years.

Mr. K. Ahmed: Compare between the two.

Mr. Vidya Sagar Pandya (Madras: Indian Commerce): Sir, I do not want to take up much time of the House in connection with this matter. The reason why I rise to speak is that the Southern Indian Chamber of Commerce in Madras had made a representation on this matter to the Government of India. When the Honourable Sir Austin Hadow was recently in Madras, we discussed the matter with him. The reasons, if I am not mistaken, which he gave were these. He felt that the test that was made on the woods for sleepers in Dehra Dun were not quite satisfactory. The other difficulty which he explained was that even the kind of wood which was available for sleepers was not available in sufficient quantity to satisfy the requirements in India. We asked him whether the steel sleepers were used in England and he told us "No". Not a single railway in England uses steel sleepers. Recently I am told that some attempt has been made to introduce steel sleepers, but he explained that the Norway and Sweden forests were very close to England, and that they could get from there a cheap supply of wooden sleepers and that they could get them cheaper than the steel sleepers. Then we suggested that we had forests in Southern India, and that some attempt should be made seriously by Government to have a testing factory like the one at Dehra Dun with a view to see how the timbers on the west coast of the Madras Presidency could be utilised for the purpose of obtaining a sufficient supply of sleepers for India. Of course it should not be run on the bad lines on which the Dehra Dun institute is now worked. Well, I am not enamoured of the wooden sleepers, unless they can be got out of the forests in India. It is no use getting wooden sleepers if they have to come from outside

India. If the Government can devise some method by which the forests in India can be utilised and some method by which we can get good wooden sleepers supplied from India, it is only then that I would support this amendment.

Pandit Nilakantha Das: Sir, this is a very important question so far as Indian Industry and economic life in India are concerned, and the question is full of complications—and I may say very shabby complications. My friends before me have pleaded for wooden sleepers. Yes, there are many forests in India, and by developing the forests, that source can sufficiently be tapped. But we find on the contrary, that, year after year, we have got wooden sleepers supplied to our railways from countries other than India. In the year 1927-28 we got Rs. 8,67,000 worth of wooden sleepers imported from outside, and in former years they were even more. I hope the tendency has been not to purchase them in Australia any longer.

Now, apart from the wooden sleepers, iron sleepers are of two kinds. One is of cast iron and the other is of steel. Steel sleepers are supplied mainly from other countries and in India some quantity from the Tata Iron and Steel works alone. The other firms that supply sleepers to the railways, supply cast iron sleepers. These cast iron sleepers consist of two plates, one tie-bar and some keys and cutters. They, that is, these cast iron sleepers, are manufactured by many private companies, and they are also manufactured in some of our own workshops, particularly at Jamalpur. If my information is correct, of late years, capital in India, as well as English capital in this country, has been so much enamoured of casting these cast iron sleepers, and has been active in this business to such an extent, that, if the Railway Board only make it a point to purchase them, they could get the entire supply of iron sleepers in India. But what are they doing? They must get their quota from abroad. I do not propose to say, from which country or from what source. That may be unpalatable, and even offensive. But the fact is that they will have their quota of metallic sleepers from outside India, and the quantity of it is enormous, and growing year by year. Just as they did in the case of the locomotive company, directly or indirectly they are giving encouragement to Indian firms with Indian capital to set up factories for casting cast iron sleepers. Then, to the dismay of those firms, the Railway Board kills them by starvation for want of orders.

Mr. B. Das: Is it not a fact that Tatas are selling pig iron at Rs. 68?

Pandit Nilakantha Das: My friend, I am coming to that. Of course there are the complications of competition. In that competition the Railway Board as such may well appear not to have any hand. I have always been telling my Honourable friends that the Honourable Member in charge of Industries and Labour has got to do much to watch and make the Railway Board see that such competition is fair and equitable. For the competition has been unfair and manipulated.

An Honourable Member: By paying more wages to the labourer?

Pandit Nilakantha Das: By seeing that there are no combines. There is the Bengal Iron and Steel Co., the Indian Iron and Steel Co., and Tatas have unfortunately joined these, and they have all formed into a combine. They produce pig iron at a very low cost; and they also supply pig iron outside India at a very low price. But when they come to sell it to manufacturers of cast iron here, they sell it to these manufacturers at a higher price

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and make that price prohibitive so far as competition goes. What is the effect? You may say that these cast iron firms get pig iron at the self-same price at which they would otherwise get it from the other side of the seas, that is, from foreign countries. It may be so. But when you order cast iron sleepers the members of the combine quote them at a much lower price, and the firms, who have got to buy pig iron, for which they have to depend on this combine or on foreign countries, cannot possibly supply cast iron sleepers. Under such conditions how can these firms supply them? How can they thrive in this unfair competition?

I will read from a memorandum of the Bihar and Orissa Chamber of Commerce, a copy of which, I suppose, has been supplied to the Honourable Member in charge. The Memorandum says:

"It is against public interest that a combine should be allowed to charge a monopoly price for an important commodity like pig iron."

Again:

"The producers are in a position to give an unfair advantage to the allied firms in the production of iron castings. A case may be cited in support of this contention. In February 1928 the Railway Board gave a contract to Messrs. Martin & Co. for the supply of cast iron sleepers at Rs. 84 per ton, *f. o. r.* Kulti. This firm could quote this price on account of having supplies of pig iron at a price substantially lower than the market price. The cost of manufacture of iron sleepers is about Rs. 20 per ton, and it is impossible for an independent producer, who has to pay Rs. 67 per ton for pig iron, to manufacture sleepers at Rs. 84 per ton. Messrs. Martin & Co. not only covered their cost at that price, but realised a handsome profit of about Rs. 20 per ton on account of their being in the family group of the producers of pig iron. The danger of creating conditions, which make it possible for some manufacturers to enjoy such differential advantages, is too obvious to need any special emphasis."

This is what is said in the memorandum of the Bihar and Orissa Chamber of Commerce. Let me remind the House that in that Province are situated many of our cast iron sleeper foundries.

Then again the Commerce and Railway Department is responsible for some little additional advantage being given to those people, and thus helping this unfair competition. We have got certain freight rates for this pig iron, and Tata's and other producers of pig iron get these concessions. They carry their pig iron at those rates to Calcutta, Patna, Cawnpore and all other places in India. If pig iron imported from other countries is carried from Calcutta to Patna or other places, the freight rate is more. Now let us see, at what price they are selling pig iron at Calcutta? At Calcutta the price is Rs. 67 per ton. This price is the same for both Indian and foreign pig iron. Carried to Patna there must be the difference of freight. If we make this allowance per ton and

Mr. President: Order, order.

The House stands adjourned till twenty minutes to three.

The Assembly then adjourned for Lunch till Twenty Minutes to Three of the Clock.

The Assembly re-assembled after Lunch at Twenty Minutes to Three of the Clock, Mr. President in the Chair.

Pandit Nilakantha Das: I was saying, before the House adjourned for Lunch, that pig iron was sold at Rs. 67, at Calcutta, the price being Rs. 65-12-0 and the freight, according to the reduced rate, being Rs. 1-4-0. Similarly according to that rate, the price at Patna, including freight, must be Rs. 67-11-0. Instead of that they charge Rs. 78.

Similarly Rs. 10 more are charged in every place wherever it is sent for sale. The concession freight affords no advantage to cast iron firms. This is also one of the difficulties which is created on account of the pig iron trust or the combine formed in India. If I may be permitted, I shall say that this trust is practically managed and controlled by concerns in India, which are British in economic status and character; that is, managed and controlled by what may be called rupee, as well as Sterling British capital. The Trust has actual British capital, as well as *de facto* British capital so to say. The Tatas alone, of firms with Indian capital, have somehow been dragged into and have joined the trust. The pig iron sale of Tata in India is only 10 per cent. of the total Indian consumption. The total pig iron sale in India is 150 thousand tons. Out of that consumption, Tatas supply only 15,000 tons.

(At this stage Mr. President vacated the Chair which was taken by Sir Darcy Lindsay.)

There is no reason why the Tatas should have joined this pig iron trust. That mystery must be investigated and found out either by the Commerce Department or the Industries Department.

I shall not detain the House much longer with these figures and commercial technicalities. The Government, it is found, are directly and indirectly, helping this pig iron trust, with a view to keep out the younger and newer concerns, for whom no concession for supplying cast iron is either allowed, or of avail. Let us take another instance of direct help. The other day I asked a question about cast iron sleepers and the steel part of it called the tie-bar, which joins both the plates. I pointed out that the actual duty realised on these bars was only Rs. 10 per ton, whereas the tariff duty, according to the Schedule, should be Rs. 26 and Rs. 37 per ton. In the 150th item, the import duty for railway steel tract material tie-bars is Rs. 26 per ton British and Rs. 37 per ton non-British. I asked a question in order to be enlightened as to why it is charged Rs. 10 per ton. I was given the reply that "tie-bars for cast iron universal sleepers which cannot be used as tie-bars for rails" the freight charged is Rs. 10 per ton. I could not follow this reply, as it was perhaps not meant to be followed. I have been referred there to item 61. In item 61, we have iron or steel tramway tract material, under which comes the tie-bar for tramways, that is, tie-bar connecting tramway rails and for these the rates are Rs. 100 per ton. How could any one follow this reply then? I asked my Honourable friend Mr. Parsons for fuller details; he too could not explain it. He said it was given to him by the Commerce Department. I hope perhaps the Honourable the Commerce Member, Sir George Rainy, whom I have already written to, to secure me the help of his Commerce Secretary in the matter, will to-day explain it. Of course, there is bound to be some explanation, for which action of the Government has not? But the intention of the Tariff Board is clear on the point. The Tariff Board say in their Steel Report of 1927, Vol. I, page 92:

"Spikes and tie-bars require to be dealt with. We recommend that the principle embodied in the present protective scheme should be adhered to, namely, that these articles should be subject to the same duties as bars. The basic duty would thus be Rs. 26 per ton and the additional duty of Rs. 11 per ton."

They have given a schedule to explain this. In this schedule distinct mention is made of tie-bars in railway track material, selected for this protection duty. This schedule has been copied in the Tariff Duty No. 150 in the

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list. Now the mystery which seems to surround the name 'universal sleepers' would be another interesting piece of research. In a word, the name is something like a patent mark, and the sleeper so named does not materially differ from any ordinary cast iron sleeper of any other type. They want perhaps to purchase steel sleepers from England and other countries for reasons obvious. As the daily output of cast iron sleepers is in danger of growing in India from year to year, a very good device is invented to check this progress. There are experts employed to invent types from time to time. The types of cast-iron sleepers may have little difference from one another, still these experts say, that this type will not do, that type is better and so on, with the result that our poor firms and young concerns are forced to give up all hope under pressure of types. Types manufactured by favoured firms sometimes are the only articles that count. Thus the 'universal' type which has been supplied for three years by the pig iron combine having *de facto* British capital, is used by the Bengal Nagpur Railway. This "universal" does not mean anything else, but a kind of patent mark. The "universal" cast-iron sleeper is as good as our cast-iron sleepers sanctioned by our own experts in the Railway Board. It may even be worse, who knows? But the Bengal Nagpur Railway has nothing to do with all that. The Bengal Nagpur Railway will only have that "universal" sleeper from that particular company without, as far as I know, even the formality of a public tender. Public tenders are not called for. It is strange that the Railway Department should be sleeping over the matter and the Bengal Nagpur Railway should go and purchase these universal sleepers by secret arrangements and in the dark. In spite of the fact that the experts in the Railway Board have certified to the quality and utility of cast iron sleepers of many other firms and patterns, the Bengal Nagpur Railway would not care for their opinion, but would go in only for this half foreign "universal" sleepers. The other day I was told that the Bengal Nagpur Railway, being a company-managed railway, would not care for the Railway Board in their purchases and in their tenders. Very well, we shall see what is the policy behind this.

When wooden sleepers and cast-iron sleepers are so plentiful in India, why should our railways go in for sleepers from other countries? If you go into the modern industrial basis of human relations, and thus if you go to the modern industrial life of India in its economic aspect, what do you find? You find that the entire demand for sleepers can be met in India alone, and yet no advantage is taken of this by those who have to guide the economic and industrial destiny of India. India is being sacrificed at the altar of vested as well as foreign interests. To illustrate this I crave your indulgence for troubling you with some figures here quoted from our Railway Administration Reports. Cast-iron sleepers, indigenous, in 1925-26 amounted to Rs. 25,21,000. In 1926-27, to Rs. 92,48,000—that is an increase; this is how new firms and enterprises were encouraged and nursed to elicit sanction for big expenditure. In 1927-28, Rs. 76,51,000, *i.e.*, a decrease began here perhaps to continue. These sleepers, it must be remembered, can be purchased in India to the extent of the entire demand. But so many firms have actually been starving for want of orders and some of them have even been killed. As regards the cost of import from foreign countries of cast-iron sleepers, it was Rs. 2,91,000 in 1926-27 and Rs. 6,58,000 in 1927-28. Mark the increase.

In steel sleepers, what do you find? In 1926-27, it was Rs. 36,15,000. but in 1927-28, it rose by about 450 per cent., *i.e.*, to Rs. 1,65,82,000. In this year's budget, I looked in vain for any enlightenment. In your detailed estimates, you simply put "sleepers". There may be very many varieties, but you do not say if they are wooden or steel or cast-iron sleepers. In the disbursement of the Depreciation Fund in the different books for different Railways is found, say, "B., B. C. I. sleepers, total 32 lakhs rupees; N. W. R. sleepers, total 54 lakhs rupees, etc." But whether it is wooden, cast-iron or steel cannot be known. So, 186 lakhs go undenominated. You cannot know this much of details which is most vital in a way, yet you have got a pompous array of pink books called a budget. What is the use of this budget? (Laughter.) Only a few railways have, however, been kind to us, and they are the careless Bengal Nagpur Railway, the South Indian Railway and the East Indian Railway. They say plainly that these sleepers will have been purchased from England by this time next year. They are honest folk. (Laughter.) At least they are honest in their mismanagement of our national industry.

But I do not want to carry you further into all these details. I shall simply say something about the price, the comparative life or durability of the cast-iron sleepers produced in this country and the steel sleepers imported here. I asked a question, and I was given a statement from which I found that generally the prices were equal. In the case of cast-iron sleepers, the price was 2as. or 3as. this way or that way per sleeper. Mr. Parsons, in reply to one of my questions, said that, expert opinion is, that the life of a cast-iron sleeper is 50 years, and that of the steel sleeper, which is being imported, is 35 years. That being the case, and the price also being almost the same, why should you have this gradual increase of imported steel sleepers and the gradual decrease in the purchase of indigenous cast-iron sleepers? Then we have to look to the price prospects. If you look into the *Trade Review*—as good business people do—and I think the Commerce Department also will be well advised to look into the *Trade Review*,—you find that the price of each cast-iron sleeper is about As. 12 or As. 14 less than the steel sleeper in the coming year. There is also the other factor to count—that the life of the indigenous sleeper is 50 years, while that of the imported sleeper is only 35 years. I hope I have explained the point sufficiently to enable the Members on those Benches to understand the position; and if I inflict on the House greater details I am afraid it will be awful.

An Honourable Member: It is interesting.

Pandit Nilakantha Das: I thank you. I am glad you think so. But here my Honourable friend the Member for Commerce will say: "We are business men, we have nothing to do with your industries;" or "I am always pressing this matter on the attention of my brother, the Member for Industries and Labour" or "You are setting up firms to manufacture cast-iron sleepers which are not good", and such other things. But to him my reply is that, it is you who kill them; you or your Industry brother, matters little to me; I do not know what interest you have in killing them. Presumably your primary economic interest is elsewhere.

And yet you sometimes speak of labour troubles being fomented either by people from beyond the oceans or their accursed agents:

[Pandit Nilakantha Das.]

here, as if you are not capable enough to fan, foment, nurse, or develop such troubles. You come here with a Safety Bill and a Trade Disputes Bill. What is the use, I ask? There are these poor labourers; should I bring them straight into the House so that they may invade you here? Will that then be evidence enough? You have simply starved them in big industrial centres, where you were responsible for bringing them from their hearth and home for you wanted to encourage Indian industry for purposes you know best; and it is on account of what you have done to kill those industries again that they are now out of employment which was rather got up for them with hopes and prospects. You find employment for some people far away for whom you have a soft corner in your heart, though you have come here to serve India—you cannot forget that—and you are asking us to forget those for whom you are daily creating unemployment. How can these things be tolerated and these budget figures be scrutinised with graceful concurrence to find money for your home purposes, I do not know. If I ask you, you simply say that these things are cheaper; or you give a reply which I do not understand. Or you are even unable to explain in certain cases; or again you perhaps say "The Honourable Member will be given a statement" or "the information is not forthcoming and as soon as it is available, it will be duly sent to him", and other such answers. Under these circumstances, Sir, I say this question of steel sleepers has grown to be a regular scandal, and this policy of the Government must be discontinued. (Applause.)

Mr. V. V. Jogiah (Ganjam *cum* Vizagapatam: Non-Muhammadan Rural): I understand, Sir, that according to the Report of the Sleeper Inquiry Committee, the total annual demand of sleepers for the quinquennium ending 1923 was about 49 lakhs, broad gauge and metre gauge, measuring 10 million cubic feet, and 70 per cent. of this is made of indigenous wood, mostly deodar and sal. Again, the total annual demand of steel sleepers—the same Report says—is about 9.76 million cubic feet. And out of this 10 million cubic feet of wooden sleepers required, about 3 million cubic feet are imported from other countries, while only 7 million cubic feet are made of wood obtained from forests in this country. As to the life and durability of wooden sleepers, the indigenous one has an average life of 14 years, so far as deodar and sal are concerned, but it is about 18 years in the case of harder wood such as *asar*, which, it seems, costs not more than Rs. 8 per sleeper. Now, Sir, let us take the life and cost of the foreign sleepers. Foreign sleepers are mostly made of fir and Douglas-pine. These are held to be too soft, and cannot be used without adding bearing plates to them. Now, let us see the life and cost of these foreign sleepers along with the bearing plates. The life of these sleepers is estimated to be about 8 or 9 years, and the cost of about 1 sleeper is said to be Rs. 7-12 or Rs. 8, including the bearing plates. This shows, Sir, that while the foreign sleeper costs the same as the Indian sleeper, its life is far less than the Indian sleeper. The only argument advanced, in favour of the use of foreign sleepers, is the absence of suitable timber to meet the demand. But I understand, Sir, it has now been demonstrated by experiments, which were conducted, that the hard wood available in the jungles of this country, if scientifically treated, would be as good as deodar and sal.

I also understand, Sir, that the price, even after the treatment, will not be more than that of sleepers imported from abroad, nor
 3 P.M. that of sleepers now made of deodar and sal in this country. If this is so, I do not understand why the Railway Administration does not avail itself of this method, and why it does not save the country from a good deal of cost which it has now to meet. If this method is adopted, not only can the wooden sleepers, which are now supplied by foreign countries, be stopped, but these can also replace even the steel sleepers.

I learn that an Indian firm in Calcutta has lately offered to erect a timber plant, and treat Indian jungle wood under expert and efficient technical supervision, and supply, annually, a minimum quantity of three lakhs of sleepers per year for ten years at a cost decidedly lower than that of foreign wooden sleepers. They offered, I am told, Sir, to guarantee the durability of these sleepers and promised to engage the best men to supervise the plant. I submit, Sir, that if this offer is adopted, about three lakhs of sleepers can be got from an Indian firm for the same cost of, or even far less than, what we are now paying for wooden sleepers imported from foreign countries. I therefore trust, Sir, that not only will the railway administration attempt to set up their own plants, but that they will also make an offer to various firms in this country in order to supply wooden sleepers.

As I said, Sir, if this be adopted gradually, not only can the wooden sleepers, that are now being imported, be replaced, but also the steel sleepers, that are now being got from abroad, can be replaced. So far as steel sleepers are concerned, Sir, it is said that they are cheaper than wooden sleepers. It has already been pointed out that wooden sleepers last about 14 years, and I learn that their cost is only 60 per cent. of that of steel sleepers. It must be remembered, Sir, in this connection, that wooden sleepers, after they are cast away, can be utilised for several purposes. For instance, they provide fencing for station yards after being split into splinters. They can also be used as timber for doing petty repairs to railway buildings, and when they are useless for any other purpose, they can be useful, at any rate, as firewood. So, if the saving which can be effected by this means, is calculated on the basis of relative cost, it will be apparent that wooden sleepers will be found cheaper than the steel sleepers on the whole.

I am glad to find, Sir, that the railway administration has been trying to replace steel sleepers and foreign wooden sleepers by Indian sleepers. In the Report of the Railway Board on railway revenues for 1927-28 at page 52, they state that they have established sleeper-making plants at two or three stations and they state under the heading "Pool Committee" as follows:

"A meeting between the Committee and representatives of the Governments of Bengal, Assam, Central Provinces, Bihar and Orissa, and other Governments concerned was held at Calcutta on January 28th, to make arrangements for the future supply, and to fix prices for sleepers. . . . No definite decision was obtained, and the matter is now under the consideration of the Governments concerned and the Railway Board."

Now, Sir, an important matter like this should not take very long. Not only should the Government itself establish such plants, but it should offer it, on tender, to firms willing to take it up. If that is done, a good deal

[Mr. V. V. Jogiah.]

of loss can be avoided. Under these circumstances, I regret very much, that the Government have not taken as yet sufficient steps to see that the sleepers imported from abroad should be stopped, and steel sleepers replaced by Indian sleepers.

Mr. T. A. Chalmers (Assam: European): Sir, I rise to support the previous speakers on this question. In Assam, there are large forests which can supply many hundred thousands of sleepers, and we have, at present, orders for some thousands of sleepers to be supplied by the Forest Department. The Railway Company have set up one of these plants, that have been suggested by the last speaker, for treating the soft woods of Assam, and I understand they propose to treat quite a large number of sleepers in this plant.

Sir Victor Sassoon (Bombay Millowners' Association: Indian Commerce): On a point of order, Sir. Is the Honourable Member in order in discussing wooden sleepers under the title of steel sleepers?

Mr. T. A. Chalmers: Sir, the only alternative to steel sleepers is wooden sleepers. We shall come to concrete sleepers later on.

(At this stage Mr. President resumed the Chair.)

But anyway, I would like to emphasise this, that there are forests that can supply sleepers, and there are plants which can convert these wooden sleepers into much more durable sleepers than what we have been given in the past. Therefore, they should be used more largely than they are used at present. I can also confirm that there are many Indian firms, which can enter into this business, and which have already tendered to the Forest Department and the Assam Government to supply such sleepers, and, I believe, they will be prepared to erect plants, if they are given facilities. Sir, I support this motion.

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons: Sir, the Honourable the Mover quoted, at the beginning of his remarks, the opinion of some American experts, American railway engineers. I believe, in favour of wooden sleeper, rather than steel or cast-iron sleeper, on the ground that they make a better road. In India, it is also possible to find engineers who will hold that a wooden sleeper gives a better road than a steel or cast-iron sleeper. But it is equally easy to find engineers who prefer steel to cast-iron or wood, or prefer cast-iron to wood or steel; and you are dealing, there, really with the personal idiosyncracies of officers, who naturally favour the material which, in their own experience, they happen to have found satisfactory. The Railway Board went into this matter very carefully, and they came to the conclusion that, so far as the track itself was concerned, there was, except in a few places, nothing to be said in favour of either steel, or wood, or cast-iron, as against the other two materials. That being so, the question immediately resolves itself largely into one of price; and on the price factor, a most important point for consideration is the respective life of the three materials. Our experience, so far as it has gone, is that the life of a cast-iron sleeper is about fifty years, of a steel sleeper about thirty-five years, and of a wooden sleeper about fourteen. I am not even sure that fourteen is not on the high side.

Mr. T. A. Chalmers: May I ask the Honourable Member if there are any steel sleepers fifty years old in India?

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons: The steel sleeper, according to my information, does not last fifty years; and unless that statement is inaccurate, it is most unlikely that there are fifty-year old steel sleepers in the track. To resume my argument, the price factor becomes very important, if you can use all these three materials with equal advantage. Taking the present prices of these three materials, you can get a steel or cast-iron sleeper at a price ranging from Rs. 7-8-0 to Rs. 9 each; and, making allowance for their lives, the corresponding price of a wooden sleeper, lasting about 14 years, should be from Rs. 8-12 to Rs. 4-14: so the most we ought to pay for a wooden sleeper is Rs. 4-14. That, I may say, is a price at which we find great difficulty in getting any wooden sleepers at all.

Mr. T. A. Chalmers: Is that for a broad-gauge sleeper?

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons: The prices I am quoting are for broad-gauge sleepers. But, important as it is, the price factor is not the only consideration. If it were, at the present moment wood would be entirely out of court. But there are other considerations. At present, though the Tata Iron and Steel Company can make steel sleepers, and have in fact made some steel sleepers for at least one railway, they are not in a position, I believe, to spare steel for a large output, and we cannot, therefore, rely on them to meet our requirements at the moment to any very large extent. I, personally, hope that that position will change; I have had one or two informal discussions already with a director of Tatas on the subject. It will be of great advantage to us if, when their new furnace is in operation, and they are in a position to produce more steel, they can then supply to us steel sleepers. For at the present moment, as the House is aware, we have a contract with them for all our rail supplies; and if in any particular year our requirements of rails fall below normal, it would, I think, be of advantage both to them and to us, if there was an alternative commodity in the manufacture of which they could use their steel. That, however, is the present position with regard to steel. We cannot get steel sleepers in any large quantity in this country.

I will now turn to cast-iron. That was discussed at considerable length by my Honourable friend, Pandit Nilakantha Das. It is perfectly true that the supply of pig iron in this country is controlled by a very few firms, and that those firms, because they hold control of the supply of pig iron, are practically in a position to dictate the price for cast-iron sleepers. I think myself that there is a good deal in what my Honourable friend said about the difficulty of small firms starting in the cast-iron sleeper business under present conditions.

Pandit Nilakantha Das: Some of them were encouraged and now they are no more. They were starved out for want of orders. Is that not a fact?

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons: At any rate that is the position. I should like the House to look at it from the point of view of the people who are responsible for railway management. Is it sound that we should put ourselves entirely in the hands of a few firms who control the supply of pig iron?

[Mr. A. A. L. Parsons.]

Thirdly, there is wood. The position with regard to wood is peculiar. In recent years, very largely I think because the forests near railways have begun to be worked out, it has been extremely difficult to get wooden sleepers at what, to us, appears a reasonable price—at any rate, at a price at which they compare favourably either with cast-iron or with steel. And here the question arises of the royalty which the owners of forests charge to the lessees. The matter is not a simple one. If we offer a higher price for wooden sleepers, it by no means follows that the timber merchants will make a larger profit, and, be encouraged to extend their operations. The profit may merely be passed on to the forest owners by way of larger royalties.

Now, Sir, what in these conditions should be the policy of the Railway Board? If we went entirely by price, there is no doubt that, at the present moment, cast-iron or steel hold the field. Equally there is no doubt that if we went entirely by price, we should either be putting ourselves into the hands of a small number of firms dealing in cast-iron sleepers, or we should be relying on getting steel sleepers either at the current prices abroad, or, as I hope we may eventually, from the Tata Iron and Steel Company, who are not, however, at present in a position to turn them out in large numbers. What the Railway Board has therefore done, in order to keep control, has been to decide that they will not definitely lay down a policy of using either steel, or cast-iron, or wood. They are anxious to keep all three going. They are particularly anxious to see an increase in the use of steel; they are prepared to purchase cast-iron, if the price is not unfavourable; and they are doing their best to encourage the use of, and cheapen the price of, the wooden sleeper. That is where I think I can give some encouragement to my Honourable friend, the Mover. In actual practice, I do not think that our purchases of wooden sleepers, in spite of the prices being at the present moment rather high have fallen off very much. I have a few figures with me. I see, for instance, that the allotment for next year of broad-gauge wooden sleepers is somewhere in the neighbourhood of 21 lakhs; and that the metre-gauge allotment amounts to rather over 14½ lakhs. That is to say, the two together come to about 35 lakhs. So far as I am aware.

Pandit Nilakantha Das: May I ask the Honourable Member if wooden. . . . (The Honourable Member did not give way.)

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons: [So far as I am aware, at present our demands for metal sleepers, whether cast-iron or steel, will not reach anything like that figure. I do not know if they will reach even 10 lakhs. Also we have been at pains, in order to get an assured supply of wooden sleepers, to make arrangements with the owners of the forests; we have entered into an agreement with the Kashmir Darbar for the supply to us of 350,000 deodar sleepers a year for a period of five years, with the Punjab Government for the supply of 50,000, and with three Indian States on the borders of the Punjab for the supply of about 855,000. We have also made similar arrangements for the supply of chir, fir and sal sleepers in the United Provinces as well as in the Punjab, and we have also some arrangements of a similar character for supplies from Nepal. In addition, we are doing all that we can to encourage the use of other woods than deodar and sal for sleepers.]

I would like to refer here to what my friend Mr. Aney said about the investigations now being carried out in the Forest Research Institute at Dehra Dun. He will find a few remarks on this subject at page 53 of our most recent Report on Indian Railways. I will read a few lines only. What we say there is this:

"Investigations have been continued, with the collaboration of the staff of the Forest Research Institute at Dehra Dun, into the possibilities of the increased use of various indigenous timbers for sleepers and for coach building."

I may say that we are as anxious to be able to use various indigenous woods for coach building as we are for sleepers, and the quantity which we require for our coach building is very substantial. I will leave the Honourable Member to read the remaining remarks there. But the position certainly is that, until we have had these treated woods in use for several years, we cannot definitely say whether they will be successful, and it will therefore be some time before the results of these researches disclose themselves.

We have also—I may here refer to the remarks made by my Honourable friend, Mr. Chalmers—put down a creosoting plant on the Assam Bengal Railway at Nahartali, for we are very anxious to use the woods in Assam. We have further decided to instal a plant of the same nature at Jharsaguda on the Bengal Nagpur Railway, and we have already got a creosoting plant in existence on the North Western Railway, which has an annual capacity for treating 6 to 8 lakhs of wooden sleepers. The position, therefore, that I want to put before the House, before asking the Honourable the Mover to withdraw his motion,—and I hope he will withdraw it,—is that we are not attempting in any way to kill the trade in wooden sleepers. We are attempting to obtain them at a reasonable price, and we are also attempting, as far as in us lies, to adopt all measures which seem likely to increase the use of different kinds of woods for sleepers.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That the Demand under the head 'Railway Board' be reduced by Rs. 1,000."

The Assembly divided:

AYES—35.

Abdul Matin Chaudhury, Maulvi.
Aney, Mr. M. S.
Ayyangar, Mr. M. S. Sesha.
Belvi, Mr. D. V.
Chalmers, Mr. T. A.
Chaman Lall, Diwan.
Chetty, Mr. R. K. Shanmukham.
Das, Mr. B.
Das, Pandit Nilakantha.
Farookhi, Mr. Abdul Latif Saheb.
Gulab Singh, Sardar.
Haji, Mr. Sarabhai Nemchand.
Iswar Saran, Munshi.
Jogiah, Mr. V. V.
Kelkar, Mr. N. O.
Kidwai, Mr. Rafi Ahmad.
Kunzru, Pandit Hirday Nath.
Lahiri Chaudhury, Mr. D. K.

Mehta, Mr. Jamnadas M.
Mitra, Mr. S. C.
Moonje, Dr. B. S.
Mukhtar Singh, Mr.
Murtuza Saheb Bahadur, Maulvi
Sayyid.
Naidu, Mr. B. P.
Neogy, Mr. K. O.
Purshotamdas Thakurdas, Sir.
Ranga Iyer, Mr. G. S.
Rao, Mr. G. Sarvotham.
Roy, Mr. B. O.
Shafee, Maulvi Mohammad.
Siddiqi, Mr. Abdul Qadir.
Singh, Kumar Rananjaya.
Singh, Mr. Gaya Prasad.
Singh, Mr. Ram Narayan.
Sinha, Kumar Ganganand.

NOES—43.

Abdul Aziz, Khan Bahadur Mian,
 Alexander, Mr. William.
 Allison, Mr. F. W.
 Anwar-ul-Azim, Mr.
 Ashrafuddin Ahmed, Khan Bahadur
 Nawabzada Sayid.
 Bajpai, Mr. G. S.
 Bower, Mr. E. H. M.
 Coatsman, Mr. J.
 Cocke, Mr. H. G.
 Cosgrave, Mr. W. A.
 Crawford, Colonel J. D.
 Crerar, The Honourable Mr. J.
 Dalal, Sardar Sir Bomanji.
 French, Mr. J. C.
 Ghasanfar Ali Khan, Mr.
 Ghuznavi, Mr. A. H.
 Gidney, Lieut.-Colonel H. A. J.
 Graham, Mr. L.
 Jowahir Singh, Sardar Bahadur Sardar.
 Keane, Mr. M.
 Lall, Mr. S.
 Lamb, Mr. W. S.

Lindsay, Sir Darcy.
 Mitra, The Honourable Sir Bhupendra
 Nath.
 Mukharji, Rai Bahadur A. K.
 Mukherjee, Mr. S. C.
 Pandya, Mr. Vidya Sagar.
 Parsons, Mr. A. A. L.
 Rainy, The Honourable Sir George.
 Rao, Mr. V. Panduranga.
 Row, Mr. K. Sanjiva.
 Roy, Mr. K. C.
 Sams, Mr. H. A.
 Sassoon, Sir Victor.
 Schuster, The Honourable Sir George.
 Shillidy, Mr. J. A.
 Simpson, Sir James.
 Singh, Rai Bahadur S. N.
 Stevenson, Mr. H. L.
 Sykes, Mr. E. F.
 Webb, Mr. M.
 Yamin Khan, Mr. Muhammad.
 Young, Mr. G. M.

The motion was negatived.

Local Traffic Service.

Pandit Hriday Nath Kunzru (Agra Division: Non-Muhammadan Rural): Sir, I move:

"That the Demand under the head 'Railway Board' be reduced by Rs. 1,000."

I am glad to have this opportunity of having a friendly conversation with my Honourable friend, Mr. Parsons, who will soon leave us temporarily. (Laughter.) If I miss it, I am afraid I may not get any other opportunity of wishing him *bon voyage*. I hope he will appreciate the form which my good wishes are going to take.

Recruitment to the Local Traffic Service with which this motion deals, began in 1921, and continued only till 1924. The Service was also recruited by means of promotions from subordinates. Last year, I understand the total number of men in the Service was 29, 14 of whom were direct recruits, and 15 promoted subordinates. As regards direct recruits, it was admitted by my Honourable friend, Mr. Parsons, that 5 of them had received foreign training, and that the rest had good educational qualifications. As some of the men in the Local Traffic Service have, in the course of the current year, been promoted to the Superior Traffic Service, their number will be somewhat smaller than it was last year. But whatever the exact number might be, the grievances of the Local Traffic Service people remain what they were when this question was before the House in February last. In response to the pressure put upon Government by this House repeatedly, my Honourable friend, Mr. Parsons, replying to a question in September, 1928, said:

"The opportunity has been taken this year of allocating 33½ per cent. of the appointments available for Indian recruitment to the promotion of suitable officers from the Local Traffic Service."

Perhaps, at this point I ought to state that, according to the rules issued in 1921, 20 per cent. of the superior posts open to the India-recruited branch

of the Superior Traffic Service was to be allotted for promotions from the Local Traffic Service. The House will see that this rule applies to all the posts in the Superior Traffic Service. It is not confined to the East Indian Railway, the Eastern Bengal Railway, and the North Western Railway, which alone have Local Traffic Services. So far as promotion to the Superior Traffic Service goes, the rule is a perfectly general one, and any one reading it, I think, would be entitled to presume that, for the purposes of promotion, the 20 per cent. proportion was to be worked out on the total number of Superior Traffic posts including the Great Indian Peninsula Railway.

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons: The Great Indian Peninsula Railway was not a State-managed railway in 1921.

Pandit Hirday Nath Kunzru: I will deal with that point immediately. In July 1926, the rule was changed, so as to make subordinates also eligible for promotion under the 20 per cent. rule. Much before July, 1926, however, the Great Indian Peninsula Railway had come under State management and the rules of 1921 therefore applied to it. If steps had been taken at least to guarantee 20 per cent. of the superior service posts to Indians on the North Western, East Indian, and Eastern Bengal Railways, there would have been some point in what my Honourable friend said. But, I shall show presently, on a review of the promotions made since 1925-26 up to the present year, that the local service men have not got their due share of promotions. I said a little while ago that my Honourable friend, Mr. Parsons, replying to a question in September, 1928, said that opportunity had been taken to make over $33\frac{1}{3}$ per cent. of the appointments available for Indian recruitment to the promotion of suitable officers from the Local Traffic Service. It appears from a reply given by my Honourable friend to a question put by Mr. Neogy on the 11th February, that 13 posts were recruited for last year in the Superior Traffic Service in this country. $38\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of these posts, or 5, were set aside for promotion. Two of these posts were given to promoted subordinates, and three only to the Local Traffic Service men. Now, we know what one-third of 13 is, and although my Honourable friend, Mr. Parsons, is Financial Commissioner, I hope he will be able to make a slight arithmetical calculation on the spur of the moment, and find out that one-third of 13 is $4\frac{1}{3}$. Now, according to his promise, the Local Traffic Service men ought to have got four posts this year, and the fraction ought to have been carried over to next year; but we see that these men have got only three posts.

I will now take, Sir, the total number of superior posts to which men belonging to the Local Traffic Service have been promoted since 1925-26. It appears from the question of Mr. Neogy, to which I have already referred, that from 1925-26 up to the present year, 82 superior posts were recruited for in this country. Now, 20 per cent. of this would be about 6.4. In this period about 8 men have been promoted to the superior service. Now two of these were subordinates. We are therefore not concerned with them. Taking the remaining six, we find that one of them was Mr. Jagtiani who, properly speaking, never belonged to the Local Traffic Service. He started on a higher initial salary than is given to a Local Traffic Service man, and, I believe, was appointed distinctly on the understanding that, if he was found suitable, he would, on completion of the probationary period, be appointed to the Superior Traffic Service. There was another gentleman promoted this year to a special post, namely, Mr. A. G. Khan, of whom also it can be said that he really never belonged

[Pandit Hirday Nath Kunzru.]

to the Local Traffic Service. He was appointed in May 1921, while the Resolution of Government announcing the constitution of a Local Traffic Service was not issued till July or August of the same year, and the service itself was, I believe, not constituted till January 1922. We thus see, Sir, that out of the six men who have been promoted and who might be supposed to have belonged to the Local Traffic Service, only four belonged to that Service and of these four one only, I believe, was a direct recruit. There is another interesting question which arises in this connection. There are certain officiating appointments in the superior service which have been made over to subordinates. I understand that there are, at present, three men acting as Assistant Personal Officers, two of whom are in officiating vacancies, and one is a permanent incumbent. I ask, Sir, if the Local Traffic Service is superior to the subordinate services, why is it that, in considering officiating appointments, preference is not given to Local Traffic Service men. Merely holding officiating vacancies may provide no permanent solution of the difficulties of the Local Traffic Service men, but, in any case, to promote men belonging to the subordinate services when Local Traffic Service men are available, is to do a serious injustice to the latter.

So far, Sir, the arguments that I have brought forward are of a general character, applying to the Local Traffic Service men as a whole, but at this point I should like to put in a special plea for the direct recruits of that Service. I pointed out, a little earlier, that it had been admitted that five of the direct recruits had received foreign training, and that the rest were men possessed of good educational qualifications. Before 1921, when it was decided to constitute the Local Traffic Service, Indians used to be appointed to superior posts. I find that every year, from the year 1918 to the year 1920 with the exception of 1916-17, Indians were appointed to the Superior Traffic Service. After 1924 again Indians commenced to be appointed to the superior service. In fact, in 1925, when it was decided to discontinue recruitment to the Local Traffic Service, the men, who had been successful in the Local Traffic Service examination, were taken immediately into the superior service. This shows that, but for the constitution of the Local Traffic Service, the men who are now in that Service would probably have been in the superior service. You are getting men practically of the same stamp in the superior service. What is the reason, then, for keeping these men of good educational qualifications, with apparently nothing against them, so far as their record of service is concerned, in a lower service, when the duties which they are discharging are the same as those discharged by members of the superior service? Another point in favour of the view I am urging, is that, since the constitution of the Local Traffic Service, the divisional system has come into existence on certain railways, which has increased the responsibilities of the officers concerned. Their responsibility has, in consequence, increased. One would have thought that here, again, there was a clear case for improving the position of the Local Traffic Service men, but I am sorry to say that nothing so far has been done in the matter. In regard to some of the subordinate posts, Government have recognised the cogency of this argument. I will only give one example—that of the chief clerks on the North Western Railway. They were, before the divisional system, getting, I believe, not more than Rs. 300 per mensem, but, since then, the designation of the post has been changed, and the new incumbents get, I think, between Rs. 400 and Rs. 500 a month. Now, if the subordinate services

have been treated with consideration, is it not proper that the men belonging to the Local Traffic Service, also should be treated with the same consideration? Personal justice, justice to the claims of Indians as a whole, alike require that the direct recruits should be dealt with speedily, and that their claims to promotion should be considered as being superior to those of the promoted men. The promoted men, by their very promotion to the traffic service, have got a lift. If they do not get further promotion quickly, they can have no legitimate cause for dissatisfaction; but retardation of promotion in the case of the directly-recruited men does, I think, justly give rise to a sense of injustice and heartburning. You have fixed the proportion of Indians to be recruited every year to the superior services; you need not increase that proportion in order to do justice to the claims of the local service men. You have only to ask the various Agents to tell you whether their work has been satisfactory. After receiving their reports Government will be in a position to find out how many men are deserving of promotion, and once the number of men is settled, there ought to be no difficulty in promoting them quickly to the higher service.

My Honourable friend, Mr. Parsons, in replying to a question of mine the other day, said that, in future, in considering the number of posts on which the 20 per cent. proportion is to be based, superior posts in the Great Indian Peninsula Railway will also be taken into consideration. That will, to a slight extent, improve the chances of promotion of the Local Traffic Service men, but this tardy acknowledgment of their claims cannot by any means be regarded as adequate.

I find, Sir, that in accordance with the Report issued by the Railway Board in 1926, concerning the recruitment and training of railway officers in India, subordinates were to be promoted to the superior posts to be recruited in India, in the Mechanical Engineering Department, in the proportion of a little over 21 per cent. But, in accordance with the reply given by Mr. Parsons to Mr. Neogy's question, to which I have already referred, in the year 1927-28, 44½ per cent. of the superior posts were made over to promoted subordinates in the Transportation (Power) and Mechanical Engineering Departments, and in 1928-29, 57 per cent. of these posts have been made over to them.

Now, if, in regard to the Local Department, you can resort to promotion to such a large extent, I see no reason why you should not increase the rate of promotion from below in the Traffic Department, in order to do justice to the men who should never have been in the lower service, who possess as good educational qualifications as the men in the higher service, and who were brought into the lower service because of a change of policy in 1921, because Government contemplated getting men to do the higher work on lower pay, and because it seems that they wished to shut Indians out from the posts in the superior service.

I wonder, Sir, if any cogent arguments can be urged in favour of the course that Government are pursuing. Hostility to directly recruited men, Sir, is not a feature of the Railway Department only. Students of the question of the employment of Indians in the higher public services are thoroughly familiar with it. In practically every superior service, the attempt has been firstly, to prevent the admission of Indians, and secondly, to try and put as many promoted subordinates as possible in positions of responsibility. Direct recruitment has generally been anathema to the higher authorities. Many changes have taken place during the last 25

[Pandit Hirday Nath Kunzru.]

years in connection with the recruitment of public services. The share of Indians has been largely increased, although we have not yet by any means, reached the final stage. But it appears that the old policy still lingers, to a certain extent, in the Railway Department. I urge that it is time that the policy were revised, and justice done to the class of men whom I have been referring to, whose numbers are small, and whose cases can be dealt with, I believe, without any difficulty.

My Honourable friend, Mr. Parsons, said, on previous occasions in dealing with this question, that the complete disposal of the question must await decision on certain other and much bigger questions. Those questions related to the general organisation of the services, to the number of charges to be made over to the men in the superior services, to the number of posts needed for men who would be in training for higher work, and to the number of men who would be required to do the same kind of work as is done by assistants in the superior services but who cannot be included in the superior services. I submit, Sir, that to delay the decision of the question with which I am dealing till the other questions have been decided, is to do serious injustice to the men concerned. There is no connection between the two. I am not asking for an increase in the proportion of Indians. All I ask is that the proportion of recruitment being what it is, speedier steps should be taken to promote the men in the Local Traffic Service to the superior service within that proportion.

I shall listen with great interest to what my Honourable friend, Mr. Parsons, may have to say on the subject, but perhaps I shall be doing him no injustice if I say that, in view of his record in the past, his speech will be again listened to with disappointment by the whole House.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta (Bombay City: Non-Muhammadan Urban): Sir, my Honourable friend, Pandit Hirday Nath Kunzru, has been as good as his word and has been entertaining Mr. Parsons with that fullness which will last him till he reaches England. I want to give him something more light. The other day when the question of rates and fares for short distances was discussed, I put one question to my Honourable friend Mr. Parsons, whether he had considered the question of the reduction of rates and fares for the local and suburban traffic. He said that no one had raised it. I wish to inform him that the Matinga Association has already sent a representation to the Railway Board on this important question, which I trust the Board will inquire into and deal with by the time he returns.

There is one important question regarding local traffic, which is pending before the Railway Standing Finance Committee. That is the
 4 P.M. question of transferring the local traffic accounting to the Clearing Accounts Office. I hope they will think thrice before doing so, because already the Clearing Accounts Office with regard to through traffic of the State railways has come in for criticism. There is no general agreement as to the efficiency of the Clearing Accounts Office in apportioning the earnings of through traffic on State railways. My Honourable friend knows that last September Mr. Joshi, a Member of the Bombay Legislative Council, had challenged the accuracy of the accounts of through traffic apportioned by the Clearing Accounts Office and that controversy is still going on. I submit that, before the local traffic

accounting is handed over to the Clearing Accounts Office, the Railway Standing Finance Committee will consider the matter thoroughly. In this connection my Honourable friend had promised that he would conduct an inquiry if Mr. Joshi placed before him sufficient material. I have now much pleasure in placing a statement on the table from which it will be found that the optimism of my Honourable friend Mr. Parsons was not altogether justified. On that occasion he informed the House that, out of a total figure of 18 crores or 16 crores—I forget which—the inaccuracies amounted to only Rs. 16,000, and that works out to .0087 per cent. According to the statement prepared by Mr. Joshi the inaccuracies are more serious. On two small railways, whose accounts are dealt with by the Clearing Accounts Office—in both these railways—the admitted inaccuracies, the corrected inaccuracies amount to not less than Rs. 1,47,000. If my Honourable friend will only set up the inquiry which he promised, Mr. Joshi, in his turn, promises to bring forward further inaccuracies to the extent of 30 lakhs and even more. I place this statement on the table*. I am sure my Honourable friend will keep his promise and inquire and I hope that, until and unless he has satisfied himself that the Clearing Accounts Office is up to the mark, he will not extend its operations so far as local traffic is concerned. Sir, I have done.

Lieutenant-Colonel H. A. J. Gidney: I have listened with great interest to the speech of the Honourable Member, Pandit Hirday Nath Kunzru, but I am not quite sure whether his motion was meant for the entire Local Traffic Service, or whether it was only in support of those who are directly recruited into it.

Pandit Hirday Nath Kunzru: I am speaking of the entire Service.

Lieutenant-Colonel H. A. J. Gidney: But the trend of the Honourable Member's argument seemed to point mainly towards those directly recruited, and which in my opinion constitutes the fly in the ointment so far as his speech is concerned. So, while I rise to support the principle underlying Pandit Kunzru's motion, I should like to ask the Railway Board a few questions. In March last year, when this very matter was discussed, I joined the discussion and associated myself very largely with the remarks that fell from my Honourable friend Pandit Kunzru and which I have pleasure in repeating this year. Last year I put a question to Mr. Parsons—it was this: "whether the continued entertainment of subordinate officers in the Local Traffic Service was a means of economising and getting good first class labour at cheap rates, and at a far less cost than the covenanted officials whose very duties they were performing at much less cost?" My Honourable friend Mr. Parsons' reply to this was, "No". In his speech last year on this very point, Mr. Parsons admitted that the Local Traffic Service had been originally formed as a recruiting ground from which officers would be promoted to the superior service. He also said that this experiment had been more or less a failure. He then expressed his sympathy with the unfortunate lot of these officers. I think it was a very rightly expressed sympathy, because in the Local Traffic Service you have a class of officers to whom are given duties equal in responsibility and importance to the duties performed by those officers recruited from England into the superior service and who are expected to perform these duties as efficiently, but who in return receive just about half the

* The Statement is printed as an Appendix to these Debates.

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salary of those officers who are recruited from England. I repeat Mr. Parsons very rightly sympathised with their lot, but he went on to state further that in 1925, the Railway Central Advisory Council had decided to abolish this Service. From 1925 to 1929 this question of abolishing the Local Traffic Service has been under the consideration of the Railway Board. This prolonged consideration reminds me of a little game we used to play when we were children. When one of the players has to say—“The priest of the parish has lost his considering cap; some say this and some say that”, etc. But what I want to know is what has the Railway Board got to say today on this matter after these long years of consideration, and how much longer is this consideration to last? I desire to ask the Honourable Member a straight question, whether it is or is not the intention of the Railway Board to abolish the Local Traffic Service? It is a Service which I know from personal knowledge is very distasteful to its members, because its members as has just now been said, are inadequately paid and though called upon to assume equal responsibilities and to perform the duties of an imported official are treated as glorified subordinates with little or no future prospects—indeed their position is an absolute sinecure. It might be said by the Government that this service was intended to be a kind of provincial service, a sort of middle service between the Upper Subordinate and the District Traffic Superintendent as he was then called. But, Sir, these officers, as Pandit Kunzru has pointed out, are very seldom promoted to the superior service. My Honourable friend Pandit Kunzru asked that promotion to the Superior Service should be especially made from the direct recruited men, but surely he knows that every one of the direct recruited men in this Service is an Indian and that the majority of the promoted subordinates are Anglo-Indians and Domiciled Europeans. For this purpose I take my stand in this House as an Anglo-Indian because, judging from the hostile speeches delivered during the last two or three days against Anglo-Indian employees of railways, I am compelled to infer that it is the considered opinion of the opposite Benches that though Anglo-Indians are natives of India by Statute to them Indianisation means the employment of Indians—Indians as against Anglo-Indians, whom they look upon as aliens and whom they refuse to recognise and accept as Indians. Such an attitude, Sir, is not one of racial discrimination. It is nothing else but a communal discrimination and so with this enforced belief, I take my stand on the platform of this House and ask—what about it? I go further and add that if that is my Honourable friend Mr. Kunzru's view and intention in his Motion, then I oppose him.

Pandit Hirday Nath Kunzru: I had no idea that all the directly recruited men are Indians. I assure my Honourable friend that I had no intention whatsoever of making any difference or distinction between Indian and Anglo-Indian in this respect.

Lieutenant-Colonel H. A. J. Gidney: I thank the Honourable Member very much for that assurance, and accordingly my support to his motion is whole-hearted and I give it for many reasons. The first, as I have already said, is that it is distasteful to the members in the Service, and secondly that its members are unfairly treated regarding pay, status and prospects. Railway Agents have stated that this Service has been a failure. Now if this Service has been a failure it is clearly the duty of the

Railway Board to abolish the Service, instead of retaining it for these many years, and I understand new recruits are being accepted. My Honourable friend Pandit Kunzru gave great prominence to the merits of the direct recruited men in the Local Traffic Service, whom he urged should be given preference in promotion to the superior services. I submit that the principle underlying promotion in any employment should not be the gate through which the employee entered the service but the personal merit of the officer concerned and efficiency should be the only passport. Mr. Parsons in replying to this very point last year, enunciated the principle underlying promotion of the staff on railways, and I agree with every word he said on the subject. I do not agree with my Honourable friend Mr. Kunzru's demand for preferential treatment to the direct recruited men, as opposed to the promoted subordinate; because, in my opinion, the promoted subordinate, who has been through the mill, is an infinitely superior man to the direct recruited man. The direct recruited man may be a B.A., he may be a B.Sc., he may even possess higher qualifications, but, still, as a practical man unfamiliar with the ropes, he cannot be compared as a rule with the subordinate who has been promoted from the lower ranks.

Pandit Hirday Nath Kunzru: A subordinate should then sit in the place of the Honourable the Railway Member.

Lieutenant-Colonel H. A. J. Gidney: I do not care if he becomes a Railway Member. Indeed why should he not?

I submit that worthy subordinates who are in the Local Traffic Service are certainly worthy of greater consideration than those whose only qualification is the possession of some degree and which, in my opinion, is no hall mark of an efficient officer. I therefore oppose this part of Mr. Kunzru's motion very strongly indeed.

Apart from these considerations, Sir, I desire the Honourable Member to state whether it is the intention of Government to retain this Service or to abolish it. If the intention is to abolish it, can the Government of India do so themselves, or is it necessary to apply for permission to the Secretary of State? If it is necessary to apply to the Secretary of State, have the Government of India made such an application? I understand Sir, no such application has been made and that it is not necessary to apply to the Secretary of State. Anyhow, the question must be settled; it has been going on for so many years that the men have become despondent, uneasy and discontented. This regrettable state can be rectified by treating them more justly and recognising their ability for promotion into the superior service. I ask why not advance all the men who are fit for such promotion and put them into the superior service? Those who are unworthy of promotion should be reverted to their substantive appointments; but do not retain a service in which you employ experienced subordinates, camouflaged as officials, and while demanding from them equal responsibilities and duties as the covenanted official, pay them less than half his wages. This I look upon as sweated labour of a particular class of worthy intelligent subordinates who have shown themselves fit for promotion to the superior service, but who are as it were blocked midway, and blocked in such a manner that unexperienced men from England are recruited to the exclusion of those subordinates in the Local Traffic Service. I submit that to make such use of a service is not honest economy. It is an effort—an unjust one—of obtaining first class labour at minimum wages. I know that there are only three railways in which this local service exists. On

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the Great Indian Peninsula Railway, these men are given the same name as the other officers, and are treated in a more generous way but even then there is much cause for complaint. I say that on the three railways in which the local service still exists, the men should be given to understand clearly what their future is. The men should not be put in a position of uneasiness and dissatisfaction for such a condition effects the morale of any service. I call upon the Government of India to make up their minds either to retain the Local Traffic Service or to abolish it, and if they intend to retain it, to deal with these men fairly and squarely and on an equal footing with officers in the superior services for, when all is said and done, they are filling the same positions, performing the same duties, carrying the same responsibilities, and any difference in treatment is positively unjust and clearly unwarrantable. In the name of justice I call upon the Railway Board to put an early end to this intolerable position.

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons: Sir, Mr. Kunzru will, I hope, excuse me if I do not attempt to follow him into the details of the recent promotions from the Local Traffic Service to the Superior Service, as revealed to him, and I think to Mr. Neogy, in a series of questions. I will content myself with repeating an offer which I made outside that, if he finds the facts and figures I have given in those replies difficult to understand, he will be good enough to see the Secretary of the Railway Board about it, and I will issue orders that all our information shall be put at his disposal. I will confine myself today to dealing with the future of this Local Traffic Service. Its present strength is, I think, about 26 men, and it exists, as Col. Gidney has explained, on three railways only. I do not think I need repeat what I said last year about this Service. Admittedly the men are not in a very satisfactory position; admittedly the Railway Board have a good deal of sympathy for them, a sympathy which has not relaxed even though they may themselves be getting slightly tired of the repetition of this subject in this House. Actually what we wish to do is as follows. We wish to abolish the Service in its present form. I do not, of course, mean to say that we can abolish it this week or the next week; then it would be necessary for the men to be discharged in the terms of their agreements, and I am sure that is not what my Honourable friend Col. Gidney would wish any more than what I would wish. What we do propose to do is to abolish it as rapidly as we can, by promoting those men in it, whose work justifies their promotion, to the Superior Service, and leaving in it only those men who are unfit for promotion, informing them that they will have no chance of such promotion, as soon as we are in a position to decide whether or not they are fit enough to be promoted to the Superior Service. For this purpose, we have called from the Agents of the railways concerned for their recommendations as regards the officers already in their service, and we have asked them to report to us in the order of their preference the names of the men whom they consider fit for promotion to the Superior Service; and we shall follow that order as vacancies occur. As I stated in reply to a question the other day, in order to increase the number of vacancies into which these men can be promoted, it is proposed to throw in the appointments on the Great Indian Peninsula Railway. When the Local Traffic Service was started, that Railway was not a State-managed railway, and it had not got any Local Traffic Service. Consequently no

officer at present in the Local Traffic Service has any sort of claim to be promoted in the vacancies occurring on the Great Indian Peninsula Railway; but in order to clear up the position more quickly, we are prepared to throw in the vacancies on that Railway, so that there may be more posts to which the Local Traffic Service men can be appointed.

As regards the promotion of the men taken from the subordinate service in preference to the directly recruited men—and I think this is the second or third time the point has been raised—I can only repeat what I said last year, that their promotion must depend upon their record as railwaymen. Actually, the promotion is made by the Public Service Commission and I cannot conceive the Railway Board going to the Public Service Commission with the names say of two men "A" and "B" and asking the Public Service Commission to appoint "A" in preference to "B" because the former happens to have been directly recruited though in their opinion the latter is the better man. Personally, I would never agree to any such recommendation to the Public Service Commission, and even if I did, I feel certain that they would immediately turn it down.

Pandit Hirday Nath Kunzru: May I ask my Honourable friend when the Public Service Commission began to consider the appointment of the Local Traffic Service men to superior posts, and whether they are allowed to interview the men or have to depend merely on such files relating to them as may be sent to the Committee by the Railway Board.

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons: Would the Honourable Member kindly put down a question?

Pandit Hirday Nath Kunzru: But the Honourable Member will not be here to answer it, Sir.

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons: Then it will fall to my successor to answer it.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That the Demand under the head 'Railway Board' be reduced by Rs. 1,000."

The motion was negatived.

Mr. President: Before we proceed further, I desire to make a statement on a point of procedure. It has been brought to my notice that, in giving notices of motions for token cuts to discuss questions of policy, a practice has grown up which requires to be discouraged. The question is what should be the amount of a token cut of which a Member desires to give notice. There can be no doubt that the practice in this respect should, as far as possible, be uniform, and that the amount of such cut should be as small as possible and not exceed Rs. 100 in any case. Temptation to secure priority for their motions has occasionally led some Honourable Members to value their token cuts at Rs. 1,000 or Rs. 5,000 or even Rs. 10,000 and Rs. 15,000. (Laughter.) I have been told that an expression of opinion from the Chair on this question will be of great assistance to Honourable Members for their future guidance and I therefore take this opportunity of informing them that they will, in giving notice of any token cut on any

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demand for grant on the Railway or General Budget, value it at Rs. 100 or less. I have no doubt Honourable Members will co-operate with the Chair in establishing this convention and treat this expression of opinion from the Chair as its ruling.

Education of the Children of Railway Employees.

Pandit Hirday Nath Kunru: Sir, in view of the statement made on this subject, i.e., railway schools and the education of the children of railway employees by the Honourable the Railway Member the other day, I do not propose to move my motion.*

Bringing the Bengal and North Western Railway under State-management.

Kumar Ganganand Sinha: Sir, I rise to move.

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

An Honourable Member: By Rs. 1,000.

Kumar Ganganand Sinha: In view of the ruling of the Chair, I propose to move it only for Rs. 100.

Mr. President: Has not this question been recently discussed more than once in this House?

Kumar Ganganand Sinha: I want to impress upon the Government Benches that the public demand in connection with this matter is very great.

Mr. President: I think that demand has been voiced times without number during this session—has it not?

Kumar Ganganand Sinha: Not in the form of Resolution but only in the form of questions was this matter brought before the House.

Mr. President: What is the Honourable Member's idea? I think this question has been sufficiently ventilated by means of questions and expressions of opinion from both sides of the House, times without number, during this session. If the Honourable Member, however, wants a clear vote on the question, I can quite understand him.

Kumar Ganganand Sinha: In view of your observations, Sir, I do not want to move it.

Kalyan Power House.

Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas: Sir, I beg to move:

"That the Demand under the head 'Railway Board' be reduced by Rs. 1,000."

As indicated, Sir, in the remark in my notice, I wish to raise the question of construction of the power house at Kalyan on the Great Indian Peninsula Railway. As the House knows, this power house is being constructed by the Railway Department, in spite of the opinion of the Standing

*("That the Demand under the head 'Railway Board' be reduced by Rs. 1,000.")

Finance Committee, which expressed its opinion against this power house. The Railway Department put the necessary grant for this in the budget two years back, and the grant never came up for discussion on the floor of the House but was passed under the guillotine. The apprehensions of members of the Standing Finance Committee were twofold. Firstly, they apprehended that this power house—which was to be worked by coal—was not necessary; and secondly, that the estimate of rupees 97 lakhs, as given for this power house by the Railway Department, was on the low side. As a point of interest, it might perhaps be brought to the notice of the House that an electrical engineer, writing to the *Indian National Herald* on 19th January, 1927, has given figures—which I have of course not verified—which show that the cost of this power house is not likely to be rupees 97 lakhs, as estimated, but is more likely to be in the neighbourhood of rupees 380 lakhs. I wish to ask the Honourable Member as to what is the latest estimate of the power house till now. Looking at what is called the pink book in connection with the Great Indian Peninsula Railway, distributed with the budget this year, on page 17 of the book, under Capital Works, I see that some items included in the estimate for this power house are separately given. The proceedings of the Standing Finance Committee for Railways, dated 4th September, 1925, and the memoranda attached to them show,—Table V is what I am reading from, the items going to make up Rs. 97,40,420—that the total cost of the power house was distributed under 6 heads:

Item 1.—Steel buildings, cranes, boilers, pipework, fuel handling plant—Rs. 33,34,200.

In the pink book for the current year, I see that under this head the estimate is Rs. 30,20,000.

Item 2.—Turbo-alternators and transformers—Rs. 20,68,400.

In the current year, the estimate as put down for this under Capital Expenditure—in the pink book again—is Rs. 19,20,000.

Item 3.—Switch gear, internal cabling and accessories—Rs. 9,18,000. It is estimated in the current year's estimate—pink book again—at Rs. 7,45,000.

Item No. 4 is for spare parts, and therefore, of course, there can be no comparison, because it is not included in the present year's estimate.

Item 5.—Preparation of site, foundations, brick and concrete work circulating water ways, etc.—Rs. 26,36,000.

I failed to find in this pink book, for this year, any corresponding item of expenditure but by the courtesy of Mr. Sheridan I have been able to get these figures. Against this estimated expenditure of Rs. 26,36,000, the revised estimate, I am told is Rs. 47,33,900. There is thus an increase of 21 lakhs under this head, as given in the figures supplied to me by the General Member of the Railway Board. I wish to know where this item can be traced in the pink book for the Great Indian Peninsula Railway and what is the total expenditure incurred, or estimated to be incurred, on the Kalyan power house as against the Rs. 97,40,420 given to the Standing Finance Committee for Railways in September, 1925. I, Sir, wish also to know why the Railway Board do not think it necessary to give information regarding the expenditure from year to

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year for capital head, under the same headings as they gave to the Standing Finance Committee for Railways in 1925, when the estimates for this capital work were first given. I do not think, Sir, it is necessary or it will serve much useful purpose at this stage, to criticise this enterprise of the Railway Board, undertaken despite very substantial voting against it in the Standing Finance Committee. All that I will say is that I hope that the estimate will not go wrong to the extent indicated by the contributor to the *Indian National Herald*. I wish, Sir, to ask for information in the direction that I have indicated, and I wonder if the Honourable Member in charge, who will reply to this, can also tell us whether there has been any revision in the estimated cost of the power which will be generated from this power house in view of the increased cost of the capital outlay.

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons: Sir, just one small point first. In the papers which are laid before the Standing Finance Committee in connection with the Budget in the pink books we generally show the total expenditure proposed on a scheme, but do not show all the details or sub-heads of estimates; otherwise our papers would become even more bulky than they are at present. I am afraid I cannot, at the moment, give the Honourable Member a comparison of the present estimates of the cost of the Kalyan Power House under each of the heads, as shown in the estimate originally laid before the Standing Finance Committee for Railways, but I shall have such a statement prepared and laid on the table of the House at a suitable opportunity. I can, however, give him our latest information with regard to the only two heads on which as far as I am aware there is any reason, to anticipate that there will be a substantial variation from the estimates. Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas will recognise that the figures are still only estimates, but I think they ought to be fairly accurate, because I believe the work is nearly completed. Under item 4 I understand there will be a small saving.

Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas: That is, spare parts.

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons: Yes; under item 4 there will be a saving; under items 5

Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas: May I ask if, under item 4, the estimated expenditure is only Rs. 2 lakhs odd?

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons: A small saving; I think it will be Rs. 8,000 or Rs. 10,000. I am giving the figures for the only two heads I have got at present. The Honourable Member asked for details under these heads, so I am giving what I have.

Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas: I am much obliged for that information; but I wanted it under the heads to which I referred—Spare parts and General Charges are not heads to which I referred.

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons: The Honourable Member is going to receive all the information that I can give him if he will only wait for a moment. Under item 5, which is the important head, we anticipate there will be an excess of about Rs. 21 lakhs. The figures of our present estimate are those which have already been given by the Honourable Member. The original estimate was about Rs. 26½ lakhs and the present estimate is about Rs. 47 lakhs, that is on foundations and preparation

of site. My information is that, of that excess, Rs. 5 lakhs is due to the construction of extra quarters from which rent will be recovered. For present purposes therefore we may assume about Rs. 16 lakhs as the addition affecting the cost on power. At the same time, on the transmission system we anticipate that there will be a saving of about, I think, Rs. 16 lakhs; but there are likely to be excesses of about $8\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs on other items of the estimate, so that on the total expenditure it looks as if there will be an increase of about Rs. 8 to $8\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs over the estimates that we originally prepared apart from the cut of the certain quarters. The reason for the excess on the foundations is that originally it was intended to build the power house at Kalyan—but later on it was decided that there was insufficient water at Kalyan for the condensers and it was then decided to build the power house at Chola, which is some distance, I believe, from Kalyan. For that reason we had to build the additional staff quarters I have mentioned, and I also understand that the excavation was considerably more difficult as it was in rock. Further, as the excavation was in rock, it was considered desirable to excavate at the same time for the foundations for any extension which could reasonably be expected to be required in the future; because excavation after the power house had been started would be likely to affect the very delicate machinery in the power house. Those are the reasons given for the excess. I have had calculations made as to the effect of this increase on the cost of power to us from the power house. Originally we put the cost of the distributed supply at 665 anna per unit; and we estimated that, with a normal increase in traffic after 7 years, the cost of the distributed supply would drop to 594 anna per unit. As far as I can make out, the addition now to the cost of the power house will mean that the cost of distributed power will be increased from 665 to 695 anna per unit at the opening of electrification, and from 594 to 617 anna after 7 years, assuming that we have a normal increase in our requirements. Those, I think, give the figures for which the Honourable Member asked. As I said, I will attempt to have a statement prepared showing, for the heads with which I have not dealt, our present estimates of cost. There are no doubt certain variations, though I understand that they are not material.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: Sir, this Kalyan Power House scheme is one of those cases in which the attitude of Government towards Indian industries is most prominently brought out as one of a step-motherly character. This scheme of the power house for electrification between Kalyan and Poona and Kalyan and Igatpuri, was brought before this Standing Railway Finance Committee as early as September, 1925; and the Committee thought that to build a power house for the purpose of producing power from coal when it was available at the very door of the Great Indian Peninsula Railway from the Tata Hydro-Electric Company, was like carrying coal to Newcastle. The Tata Company had offered to sell electric power to the Great Indian Peninsula Railway for the electrification for their main line and the rate that the Tatas offered was only insignificantly higher than the supposed rate which the Government thought it would cost them to manufacture power from coal. The Government estimate of cost was 59 anna per unit and the estimate of the Tatas was that it would cost 62 anna per unit. The Standing Finance Committee, when it got these two alternative proposals before them in September, 1925, thought that it was not desirable that Government should build a power house themselves when

[Mr. Jaminadas M. Mehta.]

the same service could be rendered by the Tatas—an Indian concern—without any appreciable difference in cost, and one of those who at that time supported us in the Standing Finance Committee was my friend Sir Darcy Lindsay. The Committee decided that the Railway Board should communicate further with the Tata Company in this matter. Early in January, 1926, when the Railway Budget was being discussed in the Standing Finance Committee for Railways, Mr. Sim, the then Financial Commissioner, again came up before the Committee saying that the Government had communicated with the Tatas and, as a result of the discussion which took place, Government had decided not to take the power from the Tatas. A secret document was circulated among the members of the Standing Finance Committee stating the reasons for that decision. I will not be justified in making any detailed reference to that document. But the points discussed were, whether Government could rely on the continuity of supply, whether Government might not have some apprehension that, in times of civic commotion, this supply would be interrupted, and whether the Tatas would give any priority to the Railway Board in the matter of supply. The Standing Finance Committee for Railways discussed the question for nearly half an hour or three-fourths of an hour, and they did not think that the reasons that Government had advanced for not giving the contract to the Tatas were at all satisfactory; the Committee therefore did not agree to the Government building the Kalyan Power House. In spite of this refusal of the Standing Finance Committee to accept the Government proposal, the Government placed the estimates of 97 lakhs before the House at the time of the Budget for the year 1926-27, and unfortunately the Demand came under guillotine and was never discussed. To-day, after three years, for the first time, this important question has been raised, before the House and in the meantime, what the Standing Finance Committee had apprehended, has taken place. The Standing Finance Committee said that the Government estimate of 97 lakhs did not appear to be a final one; that if it was exceeded by a few lakhs, Tatas would be cheaper. The Committee's view has proved true; the estimates have been exceeded by something like 20 lakhs. One important feature is, that the estimate has been split from 97 lakhs and sub-divided under various sub-heads, so that the Standing Finance Committee could not make any head or tail out of the later estimate as to which part of it consisted of the original estimate and which was an additional one. If Honourable Members will refer to the estimate that was placed before the Assembly in 1926, they will find that the Great Indian Peninsula Pink Book contained a lump figure of 97 lakhs. To-day that has been split up—I do not say deliberately,—but the result is the same. It is mystifying, it is bewildering to anybody who wishes to compare the old estimate with the new one. The Standing Finance Committee, Sir, as I have said, was not at all satisfied about the cheapness or the greater efficiency of the Government scheme of having a Power House built at Kalyan. It therefore refused to sanction the estimate; but in spite of that, the Power House has been built and the estimates have been exceeded, as has been already admitted.

There are one or two points which emerge from this, and I am sure the House will take them into consideration. It was pointed out by us at that time that, even if the official estimates were correct, the cost per unit would be only a little less. On the other hand you must not forget the fact that you would have to haul the coal all the way from Bengal to Bombay, and

hundreds of wagons, which would be carrying some other traffic, would be occupied in conveying your coal from Jharia to Kalyan. If Honourable Members take into account the loss of traffic to the Great Indian Peninsula Railway and to other Railways, by reason of the fact that the coal has to be conveyed from Jharia to Kalyan, and if they add it to the cost of the Kalyan Power House, Honourable Members will realise how faulty the estimate was. But that is not all. Moreover, the cost of haulage from Jharia to Kalyan would be calculated at a rate which would conceal the real amount, as that rate would be smaller than that charged to the ordinary consignor of coal. If these two factors are taken into consideration, Sir, it is obvious that the Kalyan Power House from its very inception was far more costly than the offer which the Tatas were making. But it was said that the Government could not rely in the matter of such a vital service as the railways on any third party, as the supply might be interrupted at any moment. That this excuse was merely a ruse would appear from what happened within the short space of two years. There was an electrification scheme for the South Indian Railway in Madras, and all the reasoning that was adduced at the time of making out a case for building the Kalyan Power House was given a go by. No question of continuity of supply, no question of priority, and no question of any reliability of third party was considered,—everything was given a complete go by, and electric power for the Madras scheme was decided to be purchased from an Electric supply concern, which is a private concern in Madras. The only difference was that the Tatas were an indigenous concern, and this particular company is a foreign company. So here we are. In 1921, Sir, when the question of rehabilitation of railways was first mooted before this House and the House was induced to sanction a sum of 150 crores in five years, to be spent for the purpose of rehabilitation of railways, a number of promises were given, among them being that one of the greatest advantages of this rehabilitation would be that railway industries would be largely promoted in India. It was stated then that we would have wagon manufacture in this country, we would have rail manufactures in India, and a number of industries for making materials which the railways would require, would spring up in India. All these promises were held out and 150 crores were sanctioned by the House in the fond belief that, at any rate, this country would be self-supporting in the matter of her railway industries. We have not spent merely 150 crores of rupees but something like double the amount by now. And yet, I would like the Government to state what particular railway industry has sprung up in India as a result of the crores which the taxpayer has been induced to part with on such promises? On the contrary, Sir, one industry after another has been complaining that it does not receive its due share of railway patronage which it has a right to expect, and the Kalyan power scheme is the most flagrant case in which, with their eyes open, the Government would not do the obvious thing for the purpose of electrification of the main line of the Great Indian Peninsula Railway. To-day it is openly admitted that the estimates have gone up, and the price of the current will go up. Whether it will not go up still further is a thing which rests in the womb of time. What is done is done. If only the Government will take a lesson from this, if only they will listen to the advice of non-officials more carefully and carry it out more sincerely, then they will not be placed in the false position in which they are to-day, in that their so-called expert estimates have proved to be wrong, the non-officials have proved to be right, and Government have saddled the taxpayer with an unnecessary burden.

[Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta.]

But it is useless to argue or reason; the House, situated as it is, will vote only in one way; the Honourable Sir George Rainy has become an invincible dictator in this House. Even though it is Wednesday today, the Government could get a vote to show that it is Friday; I do not therefore expect to carry the House with me, but on the Government's own admission this has been a clear case of waste of the taxpayer's money.

Mr. M. S. Aney: Sir, there is only one point to which I wish to draw the attention of the House. When this point was brought before the Standing Finance Committee, the Members of the Committee wanted to know what was the policy of Government in regard to taking upon themselves the responsibility of starting their own power houses, and thus competing with private enterprise in matters of this nature, because the Members of the Standing Finance Committee, as well as the Members of the Railway Board, fully knew that the Kalyan power house was being located in close vicinity to the place where a large generating station, namely the Tata Hydro Electric Power House, existed in an efficient condition. At that time several reasons were put forth before us, and one among them was that there would be no guarantee for the continuity of the supply of electric energy by that Company, and it would be dangerous for the Railway to rely upon such an unsafe source of supply for its own work. Besides, there were difficulties on the part of the Tata Company as regards funds, and that question was also once discussed with the then Finance Member, the Honourable Sir Basil Blakett. I leave aside the other points. But I think that the point emphasised above by me was the main point of difference between members of the Standing Finance Committee and the members of the Railway Board. How this scheme was ultimately passed in this House was told by my Honourable friends, Mr. Jamnadas Mehta and Sir Purnshotandas Thakurdas. Two years later, there was an opportunity for the members of the Standing Finance Committee to consider a similar scheme at Madras. At that time all the arguments that were used by the Railway Board in support of starting the Kalyan power house were used by those who were opposed to it at the time of the first scheme, and strange to say, all those apologists in favour of the Kalyan power house first, became the opponents of having a railway power house at Madras for supplying energy for the suburban electrification scheme which the Railway Board had under contemplation. The explanation is that the Railway Board is drifting and has no definite policy on an important question of that sort. The Railway Board ought to take a lesson from this, and if it wants to save itself from the awkward position in which it finds itself now, it is necessary for it to chalk out a definite policy on this question as to how far the Railway Board should compete with private enterprise in matters of this nature. It must come out with a clear policy before it can hope to satisfy the Members reasonably on a question like this. The mere fact that they can carry the required number of votes with them today to defeat the motion ought not to be considered by them as a triumph of their policy of drift. That is all I want to suggest. I thought that this was a matter of importance which should not be overlooked, and being a member of the Standing Finance Committee on both the occasions when these two contradictory propositions were discussed by us—and on one occasion it was sanctioned also by us—I thought it necessary to put forth this point prominently before the House.

Sir Darcy Lindsay (Bengal: European): My Honourable friend, Mr. Jamnadas Mehta, has brought me into this discussion as I was a member of the Standing Finance Committee for Railways at the time the Kalyan power house scheme was under discussion. My recollection of the matter is that the Committee were very much disposed to utilise the power that one or other of the Tata Hydraulic Companies might be in a position to supply, and they put the whole question back for further information and consideration. At that particular time the Tata Company were in a little difficulty as regards finance, and it was urged upon the Committee that the question could not be held over indefinitely, while the Tatas were arranging their finance. I believe there was some idea that the Government of India might come to their assistance with finance to complete the works necessary to supply this power. As I said, the whole matter was postponed for further information. I join with my Honourable friends in condemning the action of the responsible official of the Railway Board in going past the Committee altogether. The matter was to be considered at a meeting in February, or earlier if necessary, but so far as my recollection serves me, it was a *fait accompli* when it came before the Committee again. I have now seen the correspondence that the Honourable Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas asked to be circulated to the Committee, but, as a Member of the Committee, I can say that this was not placed before us. When the matter came up for discussion or I should rather say reference, it was too late, for it had already been decided by the Railway Board that the power was to be supplied by a power station to be built at Kalyan. As to whether it was advisable to build this power station or not, I, at the moment, am not prepared to argue. There were reasons for and against. One of the strong reasons for, was that there should be this second source of supply, and we should not be dependent on hydro-electric power because the hydro-electric power available was largely needed, entirely needed, for the local services as far as Kalyan and in Bombay itself. There may have been very good grounds for that contention, but, Sir, I think it was due to the Committee to permit them to consider those points finally, before coming to the decision to build the power house. The Honourable Member was not in charge at the time, nor was my Honourable friend, Mr. Parsons. I feel it is too late now to make any move. The power house has been built, but I do join my Honourable friends in expressing the view that a very high-handed action was taken in this matter.

Mr. B. Das: My Honourable friends who have preceded me were either members of the Standing Finance Committee for Railways or Members of Government, and hence they spoke of some confidential documents of which we have had no knowledge, but I speak from the common sense point of view. (Laughter.) There is the military policy of the Government that is at the bottom of this Government power house. They want to control the railways during the time of war. In case there is a war, or say there is a revolution in India, they could not trust the Tata Company—an Indian-managed firm—to supply electric energy to a certain portion of the Great Indian Peninsula Railway for the purpose of carrying imported ammunition or war materials. Bombay will have to be the base whence a huge British army would have to be transhipped at time of war or revolution. They do not think that an Indian firm would supply electricity continuously at such a crisis. That is the genesis of the whole problem. Government estimates often go up by 100 per cent. or 200 per cent., and if the estimates in the

[Mr. B. Das.]

present case have gone up by a few per cent., it matters little from the Government view point. Probably when this whole work is finished, the estimates of the Government, in the case of the Kalyan power house may have gone up 20 or 30 per cent. But that is not the question before the House. The House could not discuss the policy of the Government having their own source of supply of electricity under their full control in 1926 or 1927. The Government have taken this step deliberately in order to keep certain sources of motive power in their own hands for strategic reasons so that in time of war the Indian electric companies might not prove too national to do harm to the intentions of the Government. There may have been the additional incentive of placing huge orders for electric plant with British manufacturers. But, Sir, to me the genesis of this Government power house at Kalyan is the military policy of the Government. My Honourable friend, Mr. Jamnadas Mehta.

(It being then Five of the Clock.)

Mr. President: Order, order. The question is:

“That the Demand under the head ‘Railway Board’ be reduced by Rs. 1,000.”

The Assembly divided.

AYES—35.

Abdul Matin Chaudhury, Maulvi.
Aney, Mr. M. S.
Belvi, Mr. D. V.
Birla, Mr. Ghanshyam Das.
Chetty, Mr. R. K. Shanmukham:
Das, Mr. B.
Farookhi, Mr. Abdul Latif Saheb.
Gulab Singh, Sardar.
Haji, Mr. Sarabhai Nemchand.
Iswar Saran, Munshi.
Jogiah, Mr. V. V.
Kelkar, Mr. N. C.
Kidwai, Mr. Rafi Ahmad.
Kunzru, Pandit Hirday Nath.
Lahiri Chaudhury, Mr. D. K.
Malaviya, Pandit Madan Mohan.
Mehta, Mr. Jamnadas M.

Mitra, Mr. S. C.
Moonje, Dr. B. S.
Murtuza Saheb Bahadur, Maulvi
Sayyid.
Naidu, Mr. B. P.
Neogy, Mr. K. O.
Purshotamdas Thakurdas, Sir.
Rahimtulla, Mr. Fazal Ibrahim.
Ranga Iyer, Mr. C. S.
Rao, Mr. G. Sarvatham.
Roy, Mr. B. O.
Shafee, Maulvi Mohammad.
Siddiqi, Mr. Abdul Qadir.
Singh, Kumar Rananjaya.
Singh, Mr. Gaya Prasad.
Singh, Mr. Ram Narayan.
Sinha, Kumar Gangananad.

NOES—36.

Abdul Aziz, Khan Bahadur Mian.
Allison, Mr. F. W.
Anwar-ul-Aziz, Mr.
Ashrafuddin Ahmed, Khan Bahadur
Nawabzada Sayid.
Bajpai, Mr. G. S.
Bower, Mr. E. H. M.
Chatterjee, the Revd. J. C.
Coatman, Mr. J.
Cosgrave, Mr. W. A.
Crerar, The Honourable Mr. J.
Dakhan, Mr. W. M. P. Ghulam Kadir
Khan.
Dalal, Sardar Sir Bomanji.
French, Mr. J. C.
Ghazanfar Ali Khan, Mr.
Gidney, Lieut. Colonel H. A. J.
Graham, Mr. L.
Jowahir Singh, Sardar Bahadur Sardar.
Keane, Mr. M.

Lall, Mr. S.
Mitra, The Honourable Sir Bhupendra
Nath.
Mukharji, Rai Bahadur A. K.
Mukherjee, Mr. S. C.
Parsons, Mr. A. A. L.
Rainy, The Honourable Sir George.
Rao, Mr. V. Panduranga.
Row, Mr. K. Sanjiva.
Roy, Mr. K. C.
Sams, Mr. H. A.
Schuster, The Honourable Sir George.
Shillidy, Mr. J. A.
Simpson, Sir James.
Singh, Rai Bahadur S. N.
Stevenson, Mr. H. L.
Webb, Mr. M.
Yamin Khan, Mr. Muhammad
Young, Mr. G. M.

The motion was negatived.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 12,61,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1930, in respect of 'Railway Board'."

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 2—INSPECTION.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 2,40,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1930, in respect of 'Inspection'."

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 3—AUDIT.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 13,50,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1930, in respect of 'Audit'."

The Assembly divided:

AYES—38.

Abdul Aziz, Khan Bahadur Mian.
Allison, Mr. F. W.
Anwar-ul-Azim, Mr.
Ashrafuddin Ahmed, Khan Bahadur
Nawabzada Sayid.
Bajpai, Mr. G. S.
Bower, Mr. E. H. M.
Chatterjee, the Revd. J. C.
Coatman, Mr. J.
Cocke, Mr. H. G.
Cosgrave, Mr. W. A.
Crawford, Colonel J. D.
Crerar, The Honourable Mr. J.
Dalal, Sardar Sir Bomanji.
French, Mr. J. C.
Ghazanfar Ali Khan, Mr.
Ghuznavi, Mr. A. H.
Graham, Mr. L.
Jowahir Singh, Sardar Bahadur Sedar.
Keane, Mr. M.

Lall, Mr. S.
Lindsay, Sir Darcy.
Mitra, The Honourable Sir Bhupendra
Nath.
Mukharji, Rai Bahadur A. K.
Mukherjee, Mr. S. C.
Parsons, Mr. A. A. L.
Rai, The Honourable Sir George.
Rao, Mr. V. Panduranga.
Row, Mr. K. Sanjiva.
Sams, Mr. H. A.
Sassoon, Sir Victor.
Schuster, The Honourable Sir George.
Shillidy, Mr. J. A.
Simpson, Sir James.
Singh, Rai Bahadur S. N.
Stevenson, Mr. H. L.
Webb, Mr. M.
Yamini Khan, Mr. Muhammad.
Young, Mr. G. M.

NOES—3.

Ranga Iyer, Mr. C. S.
Roy, Mr. B. O.

Singh, Mr. Ram Narayan.

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 4—WORKING EXPENSES: ADMINISTRATION.

Mr. President: The question is:

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 13,32,00,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1930, in respect of ‘Working Expenses: Administration’.”

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 5—WORKING EXPENSES: REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE AND OPERATION.

Mr. President: The question is:

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 39,38,00,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1930, in respect of ‘Working Expenses: Repairs and Maintenance and Operation’.”

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 6—COMPANIES' AND INDIAN STATES' SHARE OF SURPLUS PROFITS AND NET EARNINGS.

Mr. President: The question is:

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 1,25,00,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1930, in respect of ‘Companies' and Indian States' share of Surplus profits and net earnings’.”

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 9—APPROPRIATION TO DEPRECIATION FUND.

Mr. President: The question is:

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 12,60,00,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1930, in respect of ‘Appropriation to Depreciation Fund’.”

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 10—APPROPRIATION FROM DEPRECIATION FUND

Mr. President: The question is:

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 10,50,00,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1930, in respect of ‘Appropriation from Depreciation Fund’.”

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 11—MISCELLANEOUS.

Mr. President: The question is:

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 17,50,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1930, in respect of ‘Miscellaneous’.”

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 12—APPROPRIATION TO THE RESERVE FUND.

Mr. President: The question is:

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 3,25,73,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1930, in respect of ‘Appropriation to the Reserve Fund’.”

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 14—WORKING EXPENSES AND MISCELLANEOUS.

(Strategic Lines.)

Mr. President: The question is:

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 1,58,50,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1930, in respect of ‘Working Expenses and Miscellaneous’.”

The motion was adopted.

Expenditure charged to Capital.

DEMAND No. 7—NEW CONSTRUCTION.

Mr. President: The question is:

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 8,14,50,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1930, in respect of ‘New Construction’.”

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 8—OPEN LINE WORKS.

Mr. President: The question is:

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 24,05,67,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1930, in respect of ‘Open Line Works’.”

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 15—NEW CONSTRUCTION AND OPEN LINE WORKS.

(Strategic Lines.)

Mr. President: The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 47,50,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1930, in respect of 'New Construction and Open Line Works'."

The motion was adopted.

The Assembly then adjourned till Five of the Clock on Thursday, the 28th February, 1929.

APPENDIX I.*

STATEMENT LAID ON THE TABLE BY MR. JAMNADAS M. MEHTA AT THE MEETING OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY ON THE 27TH FEBRUARY, 1929.

In accordance with my challenge against the system adopted regarding apportionment of freight in the Clearing Accounts Office, I make the following statements in support thereof.

There appears no change in the system of preparing the accounts in the Clearing Accounts Office so far as preparation of accounts of other than Clearing House Traffic is concerned. As regards the preparation of accounts by the Clearing House system, double the work is involved, compared with that of company-managed systems. The accounts are prepared from the forwarding station transaction, which is naturally incomplete, so long the responsibility of collection of correct freight lies on the heads of receiving railway stations. That means, the accounts, once prepared, are required to be checked in many cases with the returns of the receiving railway's stations. It was not needed in the former system. It is stated in the report on the system of Clearing Accounts, that all the work is done on the machine, but this is not the case; on the contrary, to bring those machines into use for the apportionment of freight, does mean even the slightest reduction in the work but on the contrary, the work has been enormously increased, as will be seen from the following comparisons in a few cases :—

COMPARISON.

Company-Managed System.

Clearing House System.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Receiving invoices are sorted according to the railways and vias for rating. 2. Invoices rated, i.e., the proportion of each railway's rate shown for calculation and apportionment. 3. When the calculation of rates is ready, invoices compared with abstracts. 4. After having compared the abstract, the summaries are made and division sheet, showing the apportionment of freight to each railway is compiled. This ends the Accounting of Traffic. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Forwarding invoices are sorted according to the railways and vias for rating. 2. Invoices rated and each railway proportion and total rate shown for calculation and apportionment of railways concerned. The rates then converted into pies to enable the machine section to apportion the freight. Machine section has to code all the invoices and prepare the cards by punching process for machine. For such invoices, separate cards are required to be prepared for each commodity. 3. The invoices then compared with the abstract. 4. Summaries are then made in three forms, one showing the amount of punched traffic, another of not punched traffic, and the third, military and live stock. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4 (A). Not punched traffic is 25 per cent. and the former system of compiling the Division Sheet cannot be ignored in the case of the Clearing House system, also (not punched). 4 (B). Machine section, after having prepared the cards has to agree to the amount of figures of Summaries, which are prepared by hand. After which the apportionment of rates on machine is made. 4 (C). The invoices on which the undercharges are formed are necessarily required to be compared with receiving Railway abstracts. |
|--|---|

Remarks.

1. No change.
2. No change, but additional work of conversion of rates into pies, coding of invoices, and of preparing cards for each invoice, and commodity is enormously increased.

* Vide p. 1357 of these Debates.

3. No change.

4. Double work involved.

4 (A) & (B). This is again the company-managed system adopted.

4 (C). This work has been increased.

In support of my statement regarding the inaccuracy of work, I have to point out that, since the introduction of this new system, not a single *rate-tariff* is being corrected and maintained up-to-date in the Clearing Accounts Office, and this very fact itself proves that, in many cases inaccurate accounts are prepared with foreign Railways.

While asking sanction in the Simla Session, for Supplementary Grants, Mr. Parsons had made a statement showing an error of only Rs. 16,000, in the transaction of eighteen crores of rupees in 1927-28. I give the following errors which have been pointed out by small railways, like the Southern Punjab and the Bhopal State, amounting to more than a lakh of rupees in the same period, which entirely exceeds the amount of error. The statement made is therefore inaccurate, and numerous errors over lakhs of rupees will be found if the accounts are tested for that period by independent and competent men. Further, I would add to my statement that the outstanding is being enormously increased, due to insufficient staff.

The staff working in the Clearing Accounts Office is made to work hard daily, and even on Sundays, and holidays, in order to show some saving in the present system, which cannot be called the real saving due to reduction in work.

Moreover, the C. P. D. B. & P. A. Railways are not being credited with their proportions in the Clearing House transaction. Further, I may point out that the old system is to be followed merely for half the work of preparing the accounts of worked lines of the Bombay, Baroda and Central India Railway, as the new one is proved improper, and has thereby involved double work. In conclusion, I would say that there is not any accuracy, efficiency, and simplicity in the present method of accounting and apportioning the freight with the foreign railways.

I therefore request that, before confirmation of this method, a thorough enquiry into the system as compared with that of company-managed systems be made by independent men so as to avoid more expense which is likely to be incurred in future

Claims received from the Agent, Southern Punjab Railway, which are adjusted in the subsequent months.

Goods and Coaching Accounts, Worked line section.	1927.		
		Rs.	A. P.
June	32,431	0	0
July	17,706	0	0
August	11,623	0	0
September	13,692	0	0
October	20,660	0	0
November	15,225	0	0
December	14,537	0	0
Total	1,25,874	0	0

Claims received from the Auditor, Bhopal Durbar, which are adjusted in the subsequent months.

	Goods.			Coaching.		
	Rs.	A.	P.	Rs.	A.	P.
June	2,834	14	0	3,652	1	10
July	3,894	1	0	2,815	0	4
August	1,129	8	8	1,728	5	10
September	510	4	9	2,806	1	11
October	866	6	5	1,109	12	4
Total	9,235	2	10	12,111	6	3
Totals.						
Rs. A. P.						
1,25,874 0 0						
9,235 2 10						
12,111 6 3						
Grand Total	1,47,220 9 1					