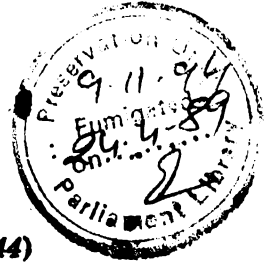


24th February 1944

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY DEBATES
Official Report

Volume I, 1944

(7th February to 28th February, 1944)



TWENTIETH SESSION
OF THE
FIFTH LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,
1944



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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Deputy President :

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Mr. GOVIND V. DESHMUKH, M.L.A.

Sardar SANT SINGH, M.L.A.

Mr. N. M. JOSHI, M.L.A.

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Thursday, 24th February, 1944.

The Assembly met in the Assembly Chamber of the Council House at Eleven of the Clock, Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim) in the Chair.

STARRED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

(a) ORAL ANSWERS.

DISCONTINUANCE OF TRAVELLING VAN PORTERS IN KARACHI DIVISION, NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY.

197. *Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: Will the Honourable Member for Railways, be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that travelling van porters, employed on the Karachi Division of the North Western Railway, have been discontinued and their functions are performed by contract labour; if so, since when, and why;

(b) whether it is a fact that there were no frequent thefts in running trains when the Railway van porters were employed, who had stake in service and were entitled to all Railway privileges, and whether it is also a fact that thefts have considerably increased since the employment of the contract labour;

(c) how many contractor's porters and other members of the staff have been challaned for thefts during the last one year;

(d) how many claims have been refused during the last one year to the public on the ground that the loss or pilferage was due to theft in running trains; and

(e) what steps Government propose to take to ensure that the public is not deprived of compensation for loss of goods, if none, why?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: (a) The statement is partially correct. I understand that on five sections of the Karachi Division, road van portage is performed by contract labour whereas Railway van porters are employed on the remaining six sections. I believe the change has been made gradually from the end of 1941 as experience showed that contractors' labour is more efficient.

(b) Government have no precise information. The matter is under enquiry and a statement will be laid on the table of the House in due course.

(c) 7 Railway van porters and 4 contractors' porters.

(d) I regret the information is not readily available.

(e) None, as the existing law, in the opinion of the Government, is adequate.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: May I know from the Honourable Member how it is partially true?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: Well, Sir, it is true in part!

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: That is only paraphrasing. What I want to know is whether it is or not a fact that thefts have increased in the trains and that the people are, therefore, suffering because they are not being given compensation?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: No, Sir. That is not the case.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: Will the Honourable Member then enquire into it and make sure that this is a fact and that people are suffering? If true, the contract should not be stuck to.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: I have made enquiries. The thefts have tended to be on the increase but while the North Western Railway have repudiated the claims on the score of running train thefts they have not done so if the contractors and railway porters have been proved to be involved.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: Then who is responsible? It must be either the contractors or the railway porters? What is the Honourable Member going to do?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: That is not the Honourable Member's question.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: What steps have been taken by the Government to prevent the thefts which are increasing?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: Under present war time conditions there is a general tendency for thefts to increase.

COMMUNAL RESERVATION IN PROMOTIONS TO STENOGRAPHERS' POSTS IN NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY.

198. ***Mr. Lalchand Navalrai:** (a) Will the Honourable Member for Railways be pleased to state whether it is a fact that the Railway Board in May, 1942, decided to apply communal reservation orders to the appointments of stenographers made on the North Western Railway by promotion? If so, under what specific provision of the Government of India, Home Department Resolution, dated the 4th July, 1934, was communal reservation in promotions justified?

(b) Do Government propose to abandon this policy in the matter of promotions to stenographers' posts? If not, why not?

(c) Is it a fact that the Railway Board desired in January, 1943, that appointments to posts of stenographers made since April, 1941, should be reviewed by the North Western Railway Administration and necessary adjustments made in future recruitments to make up for any deficiency in the recruitment of the members of the minority community, to such posts? If so, why were the orders given retrospective effect?

(d) Do Government propose to revise the orders referred to in part (c) above, to take effect from the date of issue? If not, why not?

(e) Are appointments to the posts of stenographers made on the North Western Railway by selection or as a result of competitive examination? If by selection, is it proposed to make appointments to these posts by competitive examination? If not, why not?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: (a) No, the orders issued in May 1942 only clarified a position which has existed for a long time and does not amount to communal reservations in vacancies filled by promotion; as regards the second part, the provisions regarding direct recruitment are applied to these appointments.

(b) No, because it is not opposed to any declared policy of Government.

(c) Yes; it was considered reasonable that the adjustments ordered should be made.

(d) No, for the reason given in the reply to part (c).

(e) The selection is made as a result of a competitive test. The other parts do not arise.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: Am I to understand that promotion among the stenographers is being made on a communal basis? I want a direct answer.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: There is no promotion to stenographer's grade.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: May I know whether some circular referred to in this question is being applied retrospectively and that is affecting the stenographers promotion?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: Nor, Sir.

FAMILY RATION COUPONS FOR STAFF OF BENGAL AND ASSAM RAILWAY.

†199. ***Mr. Amarendra Nath Chattopadhyaya:** (a) Will the Honourable Member for Railways please state if it is a fact that the General Manager of the Bengal and Assam Railway, Calcutta, had passed orders, which were published in gazette No. 12 of 1943, that the entire staff on the Bengal and Assam Railway should get ration for their families on coupons, irrespective of the fact that their families actually reside in their native places and do not reside with them in their headquarters?

(b) If the reply to (a) be in the affirmative, does the Honourable Member propose to apply the same order to the staff of the Railway Department working in Delhi, and allow coupons to Railway hands in Delhi for their families living

in their native places on account of pecuniary difficulties and difficulties regarding quarters at Delhi?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: (a) No, but certain staff who are forced to live away from their families are given ration cards for their families, i.e., wives and children.

(b) Does not arise; moreover, conditions in Delhi cannot be compared with those on the Bengal and Assam Railway.

SELECTION OF MEN FROM BRANCH OFFICES FOR RAILWAY CLEARING ACCOUNTS OFFICE, DELHI.

†200. ***Mr. Amarendra Nath Chattopadhyaya:** (a) Will the Honourable Member for Railways please state if it is a fact that some hands have been selected from respective sections by respective Branch offices to the Railway Clearing Accounts Office, Delhi? If so, what are the basic principles observed by officers for the selection of such men, and what special qualifications do such selected men possess for which they had been selected in preference to other men?

(b) How many men have been selected and sent to the Railway Clearing Accounts Office, Delhi, and how many of these were Punjabis—Hindus and Muslims, and Bengalis and Mahrattas and United Provinces men?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: (a) The particular selection to which the question refers is not indicated and detailed information cannot, therefore, be collected.

(b) During the latter half of 1943 efforts were made to recall 113 clerks who had been lent by the Railway Clearing Accounts Office to the Supply and other Departments. These efforts met with practically no success and up to the present only two clerks (one Muslim and one Hindu) have been allowed to return to the Clearing Office. Nobody else has been transferred to the Clearing Office during the last six months.

TRANSFER OF MEN FROM RAILWAY CLEARING ACCOUNTS OFFICE TO THE RATION OFFICE, DELHI.

†201. ***Mr. Amarendra Nath Chattopadhyaya:** Will the Honourable Member for Railways be pleased to state if it has been decided that some people are to be transferred from the Railway Clearing Accounts Office, Delhi, to the Ration Office in Delhi? If so, what number has to be transferred, and what standard of qualifications will be required for the selection of such transferees? What will be the basic principles for such selection?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: In reply to the first part of the question, no decision has been reached. The points raised in the other two parts of the question do not arise.

POST WAR SOVEREIGNTY OF AIR PORTS BUILT IN INDIA BY FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS

202. ***Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi:** (a) Will the Secretary for Posts and Air be pleased to state if the Government of India are aware of the demand of a growing section of public opinion in the United States of America for retaining sovereignty of air ports built by the United States of America during the period of war?

(b) Have the Government of India examined this question and its implications regarding the sovereignty of air ports in the country?

(c) Will the Government of India assure that, under no circumstances, the sovereignty of the air ports built or to be built during the war time in India by the United States of America or by any other Government will be given to that Government?

(d) Are Government vigilant about safeguarding the essential Indian rights in any post-war settlement about civil aviation, particularly with reference to questions of transit or control of air ports or of an adequate share in Empire and International air transport, as suggested in the letter, dated the 10th November, 1943, addressed by the Indian Chamber of Commerce, Calcutta, to the Government of India on the question of development of civil aviation?

(e) Have the Government of India under preparation a blue-print of post-war air development in India, as is being done not only in leading countries like Britain and the United States of America, but also in the Dominions like Australia, Canada and South Africa?

(f) If the answer to (e) be in the affirmative, are the Indian public, in general, and the Indian commercial community, in particular, being consulted in the matter? If not, why not?

(g) Do Government propose to set up in the near future a non-official committee to advise them in the matter of post-war development of civil aviation in India? If so, when?

Sir Gurunath Bewoor: (a), (b) and (c). Government have seen Press reports to the effect that sections of public opinion in the United States of America have urged the acquisition of certain rights in relation to aerodromes built with American funds in other countries. No question of the transfer of sovereignty can arise and indeed according to Press reports the President of the United States has rejected any such idea.

(d) and (e). Yes.

(f) and (g). The plans for the post-war development of Civil Aviation in India are being got ready and will be placed before the Post-War Reconstruction (Policy) Committee, on which there are representatives of Provinces, the Indian States and of Trade and Industry.

Sir Gurunath Bewoor: I have already made a considerably detailed reference to this matter. Sir, on the discussion of the Aircraft Bill yesterday before this House.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: What are those reserved rights?

Sir Gurunath Bewoor: There are no reserved rights. What I stated was that certain sections of public opinion in the United States of America have urged the acquisition of certain rights in relation to aerodromes built with American funds in other countries, the certain rights being, among others, the right to use the aerodromes for traffic purposes.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: Have any aerodromes been built by the United States Government in India?

Sir Gurunath Bewoor: I am unable to answer that question.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: Does the inability to answer the question come out of want of knowledge or on account of some other consideration?

Sir Gurunath Bewoor: The matter does not belong to my Department.

Mr. Muhammad Azhar Ali: Are these reserved rights only for the ports or also for the aerodromes?

Sir Gurunath Bewoor: There is no question of ports. The question is as regards certain rights for the use of aerodromes.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra: Can aerodromes be constructed in this country without any reference to the Honourable Member's Department?

Sir Gurunath Bewoor: Certainly. The Army or the Air Forces can construct aerodromes without reference to the Civil Aviation Department.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra: Then for the construction of aerodromes the Honourable Member's Department is not at all consulted?

Sir Gurunath Bewoor: My Department is not concerned with military aerodromes.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra: Then there is no co-ordination at all in this matter.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: Do I take it that this question was not considered even with reference to part (b) of this question, *i.e.*, the question as to the actual existence of air ports built at the expense of the United States Government in India, even though for military purposes?

Sir Gurunath Bewoor: It was considered, Sir, and I answered accordingly, *viz.*, that there is no question of sovereign rights arising.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: What I should like to know is whether there is in existence any air port in India with reference to which this question need at all be raised?

Sir Gurnath Bewoor: That is purely hypothetical.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: The Honourable Member's answer dealt with a hypothetical proposition. If there were no air ports the question would not arise.

Sir Gurnath Bewoor: But that is not the question.

PAUCITY OF MUSLIMS IN THE ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT, BOMBAY, BARODA AND CENTRAL INDIA RAILWAY.

203. *Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi: (a) Will the Honourable Member for Railways please state if it is a fact that trained and deserving Muslims are not given chance to fill up responsible positions of Chief Clerks, Head of Establishment Sections and Permanent Way Inspectors, etc., in the Office of the Engineering Department, and in outside staff of the Bombay, Baroda and Central India Railway on meter gauge system?

(b) How many promotions of Muslim candidates have been held up in the above offices during the last three years?

(c) What is the total number of posts in the offices of the Engineering Department of the Bombay, Baroda and Central India Railway on meter gauge system in the following grades, and how many of those posts are filled by Muslims:

(i) Grade	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	400
(ii) "	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	250
(iii) "	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	200
(iv) "	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	160
(v) "	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	120 and
(v) "	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	80 ?

(d) What is the total number of posts in the Permanent Way Staff of the above Railway in the following grades, and how many of those posts are filled by Muslims:

(i) Grad	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	500
(ii) "	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	450
(iii) "	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	400
(iv) "	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	350
(v) "	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	300
(vi) "	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	225
(vii) "	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	120 and
(viii) "	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	100 ?

(e) How many Assistant Signal Engineers, Chief Signal Inspectors, Signal Inspectors and Assistant Signal Inspectors are there in the above Railway, and how many of these posts are filled by Muslims in each category?

(f) If it reveals that the Muslim community has been handicapped in getting the proportionate number of posts in the Bombay, Baroda and Central India Railway on meter gauge system, what steps does the Honourable Member propose to take in the matter?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: (a) No.

(b) None.

(c), (d) and (e). I lay a statement on the table giving the required information.

(f) The percentage of Muslims employed in the offices of the Engineering Department is in excess of the quota laid down.

Statement showing total number of posts in each grade of clerks and Drawing office staff, Permanent Way Staff and Signal staff of the B., B. & C. I. Railway metre gauge system.

Grade	Total No.	Clerks. No. filled by Muslims.
(I)	1	Nil
(II)	13	Nil
(III)	1	Nil
(IV)	8	1
(V)	43	7
(VI)	134	27
Total	200	35

		Total No.	Drawing Office. No. filled by Muslims.
Grade	(I)	Nil	Nil
"	(II)	1	Nil
"	(III)	Nil	Nil
"	(IV)	8	2
"	(V)	20	3
"	(VI)	18	3
Total		47	8
			Permanent Way Staff.
Grade	(I)	2	Nil
"	(II)	4	Nil
"	(III)	4	Nil
"	(IV)	6	Nil
"	(V)	9	Nil
"	(VI)	7	1
"	(VII)	22	4
"	(VIII)	34	9
Total		88	14
		Total post.	No. filled by Muslims.
Assistant Signal Engineers		2	Nil
Chief Signal Inspectors		6	1
Signal Inspectors		9	Nil
Assistant Signal Inspectors		15	Nil
Total		32	1

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: If it is not in excess, what is the remedy?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: It will adjust itself in course of time.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: What has necessitated this excess?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: It may be an excess in this department and a deficit in another department of the same railway.

VISIT OF MR. WRIGHT HENDERSON TO NEW DELHI.

204. ***Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari:** (a) Will the Honourable the Supply Member please state whether it is a fact that Mr. Wright Henderson, who is interested in the leather industry in the United Kingdom, has arrived in New Delhi? If so, has he come out on the invitation of the Government of India?

(b) Is the Honourable Member aware that this Mr. Wright Henderson's arrival in New Delhi has synchronised with the arrival in the capital of the representatives of the non-Indian Leather interests in this country, and is a conference of such interests with the Government of India being contemplated?

(c) If the answer to (b) above is in the affirmative, are Government in a position to assure the Indian interests which handle nearly 80 per cent. of the trade in hides and skins that they will be consulted before Government decide on any action consequent on the visit of Mr. Wright Henderson?

The Honourable Dewan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar: (a) Yes, but Mr. Henderson has not come out on the invitation of the Government of India.

(b) Mr. Henderson arrived in Delhi on the 26th of January, 1944. On the 25th of January the Government held their usual quarterly conference with the representatives of the entire tanning industry—Indian as well as non-Indian Government do not contemplate holding any additional conference of this nature on account of Mr. Henderson's visit.

(c) Does not arise.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra: Do I take it that this gentleman came of his own accord and had nothing to do with the Government conference?

The Honourable Dewan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar: He had nothing to do with the Government conference; he came out because the Ministry of Supply sent him out.

FIXING OF PAY OF RETRENCHED STAFF RE-APPOINTED IN THE COMPILATION SECTION, NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY.

205. *Bhai Parma Nand: Will the Honourable Member for Railways please refer to his reply to my starred question No. 117, asked on the 12th November, 1943, regarding old scales of pay to the retrenched staff of the Compilation Section, North Western Railway, and state the result of his examination?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: The Honourable Member is referred to the reply laid on the table of the House on the 7th February, 1944, relating to his starred question No. 117 asked on the 12th November, 1943.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: May I know why it is the policy of the railway that these draftsmen, permanent or temporary, should get the old scales and not the new scales?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: I should require notice of that question.

CANCELLATION OF CONTRACTS ON ACCOUNT OF DELAYED SUPPLIES FROM STOCKISTS AND MANUFACTURERS.

206. *Seth Sunder Lall Daga: (a) Is the Honourable Member for Supply aware that Government's War efforts are affected, and that contractors to the Department of Supply are often made to suffer losses by the cancellation of their contracts with the Department on account of delay on the part of stockists or manufacturers to supply to the contractors materials for which orders are placed with them by Government?

(b) If the answer to (a) is in the affirmative, what action does the Honourable Member propose to take against such delinquent stockists or manufacturers?

The Honourable Dewan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar: (a) The answer is in the negative. If the Honourable Member will furnish me with specific examples, I shall have them examined.

(b) Does not arise.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra: Is it the Honourable Member's contention that he is not aware that the delay on the part of the contractors in the supply of goods to his Department is caused by the failure of the stockists to deliver the goods in time to the contractors? Is that the Honourable Member's position?

The Honourable Dewan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar: No. The question related to the Government war effort being affected and the contractors being made to suffer loss by the cancellation of the contracts. There is no question of the cancellation of their contracts. The answer is in the negative; and if any case of cancellation of a contract is brought to my notice under the circumstances mentioned in the question, I shall certainly see whether the cancellation is justified.

DELAY IN THE ISSUE OF PERMITS FOR TRANSPORT OF GOODS INTENDED FOR THE SUPPLY DEPARTMENT.

207. *Seth Sunder Lall Daga: Is the Honourable Member for Supply aware that contractors to his Department are frequently put to great inconvenience and loss on account of either non-issue or delay in the issue of permits for transport of goods for the supply of which they have entered into contracts with the Department? If so, what action does he propose to take to improve the situation?

The Honourable Dewan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar: Railway priority certificates, referred to by the Honourable Member as "permits for

transport", are issued by Regional Controllers of Railway Priorities working under the War Transport Department. Recommendations for the grant of such certificates, in the case of contracts placed by the Supply Department, are made by selected officers of the Department of Supply and I am not aware that there is any delay on the part of these officers in dealing with applications from contractors. It is inevitable, however, in the present acute transport conditions, that priority transport cannot be authorised in some cases and that in others there should be some delay in the issue of Railway Priority Certificates. I should make clear, however, that under the conditions governing Supply Department contracts there is generally no legal obligation on the Department to provide transport for the delivery of the goods ordered; the responsibility for the delivery of the goods at the time and the place fixed in the contract is solely that of the contractor. But Government, nevertheless, renders all possible assistance and in hard cases they even authorise payment for the goods in advance of their despatch.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra: Do I take it then that one of the conditions in the contract is that the contractor will himself arrange his own transport?

The Honourable Dewan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar: That is so, in most contracts.

Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi: But that is not possible.

The Honourable Dewan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar: That is why the Supply Department gives facilities extra-legally.

Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi: These goods are intended for Government use, and I have been asked to put this complaint that Government own the wagons and know what wagons are available over different railways; unless permit is given, the goods cannot be moved; but even in spite of permits, railway wagons are not available and I have been made to suffer loss.

The Honourable Dewan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar: I have already explained that my Department gives the necessary permits; but the priorities are arranged by the Railway and War Transport Department, which has to take into consideration not only the needs of this Department but the needs of several other Departments, and in some cases the arrangement of priorities is such that the needs of contractors supplying to the Supply Department at a certain time have to be put aside in preference to other more vital and urgent needs. That is due to the acute shortage of transport. I have said that in such hard cases Government in the Supply Department are prepared sometimes to pay to the contractors even before the goods reach the destination.

HARASSMENT OF SUPPLY DEPARTMENT CONTRACTORS.

208. *Seth Sunder Lal Daga: Is the Honourable Member for Supply aware that contractors are being harassed and put to considerable financial losses by cancellation of contracts without regard being paid to the contractors interests and commitments? Is he further aware that on the ground of expiry of delivery date, acceptance of manufactured articles is refused, even when the articles were tendered before the due date? If so, does he propose to take steps to protect them against such losses and harassment?

The Honourable Dewan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar: The answer is in the negative. If the Honourable Member will furnish me with specific examples of the type of cases referred to by him, I shall give very careful consideration to such cases.

AMERICAN OFFICERS EMPLOYED ON RAILWAYS.

209. *Mr. Ananga Mohan Dam: Will the Honourable Member for Railways please state:

(a) if it is a fact that several American officers have been employed on various Railways; and, if so, the number of such officers;

(b) if it is a fact that certain sections of the Bengal and Assam Railway have been placed at the disposal of the American Military Authorities; if so, whether Government propose to lay before the House the particulars of the

arrangements or contracts entered into between the United States and the Central Government; and

(c) whether the lease and lend agreement envisage control over Railway lines by the American Military?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: (a) No, but on occasions American Officers have been associated in work which affects the movement of their own war equipment and stores.

(b) No, but traffic operation on certain sections of the Bengal and Assam Railway will be handed over for control and direction by the Americans who will employ a number of their own army railway personnel. The General Manager of the Railway, will, however, continue to exercise general control.

(c) No, this has nothing to do with Lease-Lend.

Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad: I would like to know what portion of responsibility has been transferred to the Americans as regards the administration of the Bengal and Assam Railway?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: Operational control of movement on the section of the line concerned.

Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad: May I ask why he did not consult the Assembly in such an important matter?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: Immediate action had to be taken for operational reasons.

Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad: But why did he not even report the fact to the Assembly?

(No answer.)

Mr. K. C. Neogy: Do I take it that the controlling officers of the American Government will virtually be subordinates to the General Manager and the railway administration?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: Yes; the General Manager will be in general control.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra: What is the relationship between the American military authorities and the Railway Board?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: Cordial.

Mr. Hoosainbhoj A. Lalljee: What was the necessity for handing over to the American authorities?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: To assist the railway in a very difficult job.

Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad: Are Government contemplating to hand over the administration of other Indian railways to the Americans?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: No.

Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad: Will that be done without our knowledge and given in answer if we put down a question?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: I have just said it will not be done.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra: I am not asking about the cordiality of the relationship, but about the constitutional relationship between the Railway Board and the American authorities.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: The relationship will be through the General Manager.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra: Do I take it that the operational control means that the American authorities also have control over the railway stores and stocks?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: Over such stocks and stores as they use on that section of the railway.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra: I want definite information from the Honourable Member on this point: in the railway demands there are specific amounts which relate to the railway stocks and stores. I want to know whether the American authorities can freely draw upon the railway stocks and stores without reference to the Railway Board?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: That again is regulated through the General Manager; the General Manager will give them such stocks and stores as are necessary for operating the sections.

Maulana Zafar Ali Khan: May I ask whether the ban on the entry of Indians into America will be lifted if we hand over the railways to the Americans?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: That hardly seems to arise out of the question.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: May I ask what portions of this railway have been handed over to the Americans?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: That is information which, I am afraid, I cannot give to the Honourable Member.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: May I ask the Honourable Member to give us some approximate idea?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: No; I must refuse, I am afraid, to give an answer, for reasons of security.

Mr. Muhammad Azhar Ali: Is there any intention to transfer the whole of India to the American Government?

(No answer.)

Mr. K. C. Neogy: I do not know whether the Honourable Member will give the reasons for handing over control of a section of this railway, its importance to the Americans or their want of confidence in the Railway administration?

Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad: Was it due to our inefficiency?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: No, Sir; but owing to the exceedingly heavy strain which is falling on certain sections of the railway, we welcome the assistance of the Americans in increasing the lift over those sections.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: Did the Honourable Member open negotiations with the Americans with a view to securing relief for his staff? Who took the initiative in these negotiations?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: It was in mutual consultation.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: May I know from the Honourable Member if the Government are short of their own hands and cannot carry on and, therefore, they have given it to the Americans?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: Yes, that was one of the principal factors.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: Will the Honourable Member do the same as regards other functions and will the rule in India be transferred to them?

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Order, order. Next question.

QUOTA OF ASSAMESE IN BENGAL AND ASSAM RAILWAY SERVICES.

210. *Mr. Ananga Mohan Dam: Will the Honourable Member for Railways please state:

(a) the quota in services obtaining in the Bengal and Assam Railway as a whole, and the previous communal quota in the Eastern Bengal Railway and the Bengal and Assam Railway, separately; and

(b) whether any percentage is reserved for the natives of Assam; if so, what?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: (a) The reservations in recruitment for the minority communities are still separate for the E. B. and A. B. sections of the B. & A. Railway. These are:

	A.B.	E.B.
Muslims	35%	45%
A. I.	8%	8%
Other Minority Communities	1.12%	0.63%
Scheduled Castes	7%	7%

(b) No, because reservations are not made on a provincial basis.

Mr. Hoosenbhoy A. Lalljee: Will these quotas remain under the administration of the American officers who are for the time being managing it?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: No.

APPRENTICE MECHANICS RECRUITED COMMUNITY-WISE IN BENGAL AND ASSAM RAILWAY.

211. *Mr. Ananga Mohan Dam: Will the Honourable Member for Railways please state:

(a) the number of apprentice Mechanics recruited in the Bengal and Assam Railway this year, and how many of them are Hindus (giving the number of Bengali and non-Bengali Hindus), Muslims and Anglo-Indians;

(b) if it is a fact that in cases of Anglo-Indian and Muslim candidates, the minimum standard previously required, *i.e.*, passing of the B.A.O.T. examination, is not required; and

(c) the reason why Government are lowering the standard of the technical education?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: (a) to (c). I have called for the information and a reply will be laid on the table of the House in due course.

Mr. Ananga Mohan Dam: Is the Honourable Member aware that the quota for caste Hindus has been reduced?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: I have called for information.

RESIGNATION OF APPRENTICES FROM THE FREELAND HOSTEL, AJMER.

212. *Mr. Frank R. Anthony: (a) Will the Honourable the Railway Member be pleased to state if it is not a fact that sixteen of the twenty-two apprentices living in the Freeland Hostel at Ajmer resigned because of the conditions prevailing in the Hostel?

(b) Is it not a fact that the *ex*-General Manager, in spite of representations made to him supported the local official, and encouraged the continuance of conditions which drove the apprentices to resign?

(c) Is it not a fact that the management of this Hostel is entirely different from those on other Railways?

(d) What is the net income of this Hostel per annum, and is any audit check made by the Railway authorities?

(e) To whom do the proceeds from this Hostel go?

(f) Does the Honourable Member propose to order an enquiry into the direction of the affairs of the Hostel which resulted in the resignation of the apprentices?

(g) Does the Honourable Member propose to consider the desirability of giving these young lads an opportunity of continuing their apprenticeship, but under different and more regular management?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: (a) Sixteen apprentices resigned as a protest against the discharge of another apprentice. They also alleged unsatisfactory conditions in the Hostel.

(b) The late General Manager was satisfied after full enquiries that the allegations about conditions in the Hostel were unfounded.

(c) I believe there is no material difference.

(d) As no rent is recovered from the apprentices, there is no income as far as the Hostel is concerned; the second part does not arise.

(e) Does not arise.

(f) No.

(g) I understand that the Railway will be prepared to consider taking the apprentices back on the merits of each case. I see no reason for making any changes in the arrangements made by the Railway.

Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi: Who was the late General Manager?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: Mr. Laughton.

Mr. Frank R. Anthony: With regard to answer to part (b) of the question, what was the enquiry, if any, which the *ex*-General Manager made?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: I have only the authority of the Railway to say that the General Manager made personal investigations into it, but I should like to add also that the President of the local Anglo-Indian Association, on the invitation of the local railway authorities, on two occasions made surprise visits to inspect the quality of the food which was the subject

of complaint, and I understand that he reported both to the apprentices and to the local railway authorities that he had nothing to complain about.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: May I know from the Honourable Member if these apprentices made any representation to the Government that they were not satisfied with the enquiry which was made by the Manager?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: No.

Mr. Frank R. Anthony: Is the Honourable Member aware that the local President has now satisfied himself that the conditions in fact are of a discreditable nature?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: That is not my information.

Mr. Frank R. Anthony: Will the Honourable Member be prepared to advise the President to hold an enquiry?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: No. The matter is within the competence of the General Manager of the Railway.

Mr. Frank R. Anthony: How does the administration of this hostel differ from other hostels?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: I have already said that I believe that there is no material difference.

Mr. Frank R. Anthony: Is the Honourable Member aware that the income from this hostel which is subsidised by the railway—the house is given free, furniture is free, lighting is free, services are free, but it is still run as a private enterprise fetching an income of about Rs. 1,000 a month?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: The Superintendent of the Hostel receives no salary but in return pays no rent. He gets free housing accommodation for superintending the hostel.

Pandit Lakhmi Kanta Maitra: Did the Honourable Member say that there was no income from this institution?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: That is so.

Mr. Frank R. Anthony: Is the Honourable Member aware that the apprentices have, irrespective of the fact that their parents may be living in Ajmer, to live in the hostel and also to pay Rs. 40 a month?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: The figure is incorrect, but that is so. The apprentice pays the superintendent for his board.

Mr. Frank R. Anthony: How much is the figure?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: Without referring to the file, I think it is about Rs. 38.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Next question.

CONFERENCE OF DOMINION PREMIERS IN LONDON.

213. ***Mr. K. S. Gupta:** (a) Will the Foreign Secretary please state when the Conference of Dominion Premiers is to meet in London?

(b) Will India be represented in that Conference? If so, who is to represent India? Will he be an official or a non-official? Will he be an Indian or non-Indian?

Mr. O. K. Caroe: This is a question which should have been addressed to the Honourable the Leader of the House.

REGIONAL COUNCILS.

214. ***Mr. K. S. Gupta:** (a) Will the Foreign Secretary please state what is meant by a Regional Council? What are the functions of such a Council? Who are to constitute such a Council?

(b) Is there a Regional Council for East Asia? If so, is India an independent constituent of such a Council? Is the representative for India to be an elected one or a selected candidate by the Government of India?

(c) Would the Atlantic Charter be the guiding principle for discussions in such Regional Councils?

(d) Would not America and other United Nations have to be consulted in the formation of such Regional Councils?

(e) Is there any secret or avowed pact between America and Britain to hold India under a permanent bondage?

(f) Is the statement of Senator Taft, the Republican Leader, that America is more interested in upholding "the rule of law and order" throughout the world than in leading a crusade for the liberty of subject nations. "There is not the intention on our part to insist on the freedom of India or apparently even the freedom of the Baltic States or Eastern Poland", a frank and fair comment on American Policy?

Mr. O. K. Caroe: (a), (b), (c), and (d). No plans for what the Honourable Member calls Regional Councils have been brought to the notice of Government. These parts of the question, therefore, do not arise.

(e) No.

(f) It is not for Government to interpret American policy.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra: Theirs is to accept and not to reason why!

FUTURE STATUS OF INDIA IN REGIONAL COUNCILS.

215. *Mr. K. S. Gupta: (a) Will the Foreign Secretary please state if there is any correspondence between the Government of India and the British Government about the future status of India in the Regional Councils? If so, would it be placed on the table?

(b) Would this House be consulted if any arrangement is to be affected in the constitution of Regional Council for East Asia?

(c) Does Sir Henry Craik voice the sentiment of the British Government or the Government of India when he makes the Indian States the pretext for Britain's remaining in India "to hold the ring"?

Mr. O. K. Caroe: This is a question which should have been addressed to the Honourable the Leader of the House.

ACTION FOR REMOVAL OF RESTRICTIONS ON ENTRY OF INDIANS INTO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

216. *Sardar Mangal Singh: Will the Foreign Secretary please state:

(a) whether, in view of the fact that the United States of America Congress has repealed the Chinese Exclusion Acts, the Government of India has made any representation to the Government of the United States of America for the removal of restrictions on the entry of Indians into the United States of America; and

(b) whether any reply has been received; and, if so, what?

Mr. O. K. Caroe: (a) Yes: the Indian Agent General has made representations to the State Department on more than one occasion.

(b) Sir Girja Shankar Bajpai has been informed by the State Department that the Government of the United States of America view his representations with sympathy, and that they will examine the possibility of having legislation introduced in the sense desired.

Sardar Mangal Singh: On what date was this reply given?

Mr. O. K. Caroe: I cannot give the actual date of the diplomatic negotiations. They are going on over a considerable period of time.

Sardar Mangal Singh: Have the Government of India instructed their Agent General in America to pursue this matter?

Mr. O. K. Caroe: Government are very greatly interested in this matter and the Agent General has been instructed to pursue it.

PREVIOUS CONSULTATION WITH GOVERNMENT OF INDIA *RE* THE TEHRAN CONFERENCE

217. *Sardar Mangal Singh: Will the Foreign Secretary please state whether or not the Government of India were consulted before the holding of the Tehran Conference?

Mr. O. K. Caroe: I regret that it is not in the public interest to make any disclosure regarding the Tehran Conference beyond the announcements already made public.

REPORT ON INDIAN PROPAGANDA IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

218. *Sardar Mangal Singh: Will the Foreign Secretary please state:

(a) whether Government have received any report from their Agent in the United States of America of the propaganda carried on for India; and

(b) whether the same can be laid on the table of the House?

Mr. O. K. Caroe: This question should have been addressed to the Honourable Member for Information and Broadcasting.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR INDIAN PROPAGANDA IN THE U. S. S. R.

219. *Sardar Mangal Singh: Will the Foreign Secretary please state:

(a) whether the Government of India have made any arrangements to carry on propaganda in U. S. S. R. on behalf of this country; and

(b) whether there is any Indian correspondent or a press correspondent representing any Indian paper in the U. S. S. R.?

Mr. O. K. Caroe: This question should have been addressed to the Honourable Member for Information and Broadcasting.

MINORITY COMMUNITIES' REPRESENTATION RE LAWLESSNESS ON THE NORTH WESTERN FRONTIER.

220. *Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: (a) Will the Foreign Secretary be pleased to state if representations by the minority communities of Hindus and Sikhs from North-West Frontier and the neighbourhood have been made to the Government and His Excellency the Viceroy that the minority community is suffering by the lawlessness prevailing there, owing to which repeated raids are made by trans-frontier raiders, and that Hindus are often murdered and their men, women and children are abducted, their houses and shops are set on fire and other excesses are being committed on them?

(b) Is His Excellency the Viceroy aware of such atrocities?

(c) Have the Hindus represented through the press and petitions that the Provincial Government of the North-West Frontier Province is unable to cope with the situation?

(d) What steps has His Excellency the Viceroy hitherto taken or is proposing to take now to protect the minority communities there, against such onslaughts by ruffians including those residing in the tribal areas?

Mr. O. K. Caroe: (a) A few petitions have been received.

(b) Government are aware that raids have been made from time to time and persons of different communities and sexes have been killed or kidnapped.

(c) No such representation can be traced.

(d) Government maintains armed forces and police to protect the inhabitants of the North West Frontier Province as far as possible. These forces carry on vigorous patrolling by day and by night with a view to prevent the ingress of raiding gangs into the North West Frontier Province, and where they succeed in doing so, to intercept them. Release of kidnapped persons is obtained by all possible kinds of pressure on the tribes involved, reinforced if necessary by air or military action. Punishment is similarly inflicted on guilty tribes or sections.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: May I know if, after this representation, representations were made to the Government? And Government knew that lawlessness was still going on. Have the Government taken any more intense measures to see that the lawlessness is stopped or it is diminished?

Mr. O. K. Caroe: Crime, not only in the North West Frontier Province, but in other places, is continually going on and Government are continually taking measures either to meet resurgence of crime or to keep crime down. Actually the North West Frontier Province is possibly during the last 2 or 3 years one of the most peaceful parts of India.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: May I know what intenser measures have been taken to checkmate crime?

Mr. O. K. Caroe: A large number of additional police have been enlisted, and as I say the result has been that the North West Frontier Province has probably been the most peaceful part of the whole of India during the war.

QUALIFICATIONS AND DUTIES OF COAL COMMISSIONER.

221. *Mr. K. C. Neogy: (a) Will the Honourable Member for War Transport please refer to the reply given in the Legislative Assembly on the 17th November, 1943, to question No. 250, that "the principal factor that contributed to the shortage of coal is undoubtedly the shortage of labour", and state why it was deemed necessary by Government to appoint a Coal Commissioner to help to increase coal raising when the primary cause of shortage, according to the above-mentioned reply, was shortage of labour?

(b) What will be the duties of the Coal Commissioner, and what are the qualifications of the person appointed? Are Government satisfied that no Indian of the requisite qualifications is available?

(c) What will be the official relations of the Coal Commissioner with the War Transport Department, the Railway Department and any other Department of the Government, respectively?

(d) What emoluments will the Coal Commissioner be entitled to?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: (a) Although labour has undoubtedly been the principal factor in recent months, other factors have also operated at other times. The demand for coal is now in excess of the previous maximum production. In view of this and of the fact that production, labour, purchase and distribution fall within the purview of 3 different departments, it was thought desirable that there should be a high powered officer to co-ordinate the activities of these departments and to concentrate on all possible methods for increasing the production of coal.

(b) Subject to what is stated in (c) below, the Coal Commissioner's functions are to co-ordinate (1) the purchase of coal, (2) the distribution in accordance with any rationing scheme in existence, and (3) production of coal, including questions of supply of colliery stores, labour and the amenities and food for labour. He will also enquire into the possibilities of fuel economy. The Coal Commissioner joined the State Railways Impl. Engr. Service on 1st October 1903. He was Secretary, Indian Railway Board, 1914-16. Assistant Inspector General of Transportation, France, 1917-18, General Manager, Kailan Administration, Tientsin, 1923-32, and was subsequently Director, Chinese Engineering and Mining Company. He has recently been Coal Supplies Officer, Scotland.

The answer to the last part is in the affirmative.

(c) The Coal Commissioner has been requested to put forward proposals designed to achieve the most efficient methods of production and distribution and his official relations will depend upon the decisions taken after consideration of his proposals.

(d) £5,000 per annum.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: May I know from the Honourable Member whether this officer will have the fullest authority over distribution of coal among the different consuming parties, namely, the industries engaged in war effort, as also other industries, besides the other consumers?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: That is decided by the Government.

Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi: Who pays the income tax on the £5,000?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: The officer concerned.

Sir F. E. James: What is the status of the Coal Commissioner? Is it the status of a Secretary?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: No, Sir.

Sir F. E. James: What is the status?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: It is a special appointment.

Sir F. E. James: My Honourable friend said that he was a high powered officer. Has my Honourable friend realised that it makes a great deal of difference to his power—what particular status he has in the Secretarial grade?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: That is so and his exact status will depend upon the decisions taken after consideration of his proposals which are now being formulated.

Dr. P. N. Banerjee: Will the status be higher than that of a Member of the Executive Council?

(No answer.)

Mr. K. C. Neogy: What does the Honourable Member mean when he says that he is a high powered officer? What is the extent of the height of the power of this officer?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: Well, Sir, I mentioned at some length the experience of this officer, which is somewhat unique.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: May I know how this appointment has been received by the trade?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: It is for the Honourable Member to inquire of the trade.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: Is it not a fact that this appointment has been very much criticised by at least one section of the coal trade?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: A representation has been received.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: May I raise a point of order arising out of the replies given by the Foreign Secretary?

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): That stage has passed. You cannot raise the subject now.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: It is a general point of order with reference to the reply that the questions ought to have been addressed to some other Department.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): You ought to have risen after the Honourable Member replied.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: I was in my seat. I want to raise a general point of order. He repeated that answer twice.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): You cannot do that now.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: Will the Chief Mining Engineer and the Controller of Coal Distribution be in a subordinate capacity compared with this officer?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: Yes, Sir, probably.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: Is it not a fact that Kham Bahadur Farrukh, the present Controller of Coal Distribution has fully proved his capability and also enjoys the confidence of the trade, and if that be so, what are the reasons for placing another officer over him—a British officer over this competent Indian officer, for the purpose of dealing with the transport aspect of the question?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: The answer to the first part of the Honourable Member's question is very much in the affirmative. As regards the second part, I would refer the Honourable Member to my answer to part (a) of the question.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: May I raise my point of order now?

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The Honourable Member cannot.

UNSTARRED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

BRINGING CERTAIN OLD SCALES OF PAY INTO LINE WITH THE REVISED SCALES ON NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY.

67. Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: (a) Will the Honourable Member for Railways, be pleased to state whether it is a fact that the revised scales of pay for the Railway staff, introduced in 1934 on the North Western Railway, were lower than the scales already in force?

(b) Is it a fact that the revised scales of pay for certain categories, such as Ballast Inspectors, Waiting Room bearers, etc., are higher than the old scales?

(c) Is it a fact that in reply to the representation by the staff through a deputation, for bringing the old scales of pay into line with the revised scales of the affected categories, the General Manager, North Western Railway, said that he could do but little in that direction, having regard to the policy of leaving the old scales of pay unchanged?

(d) Is there any restriction on the revision of the old scales of pay, at least to bring them into line with the 1934 revised scales? If so, why, and which authority imposed that restriction?

(e) Is it proposed to remove the anomaly in the scales of pay referred to in part (b) above? If not, why not?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: (a) Yes, generally.

(b) Yes, except that the revised scale of pay of Ballast Inspector is lower than the old scale.

(c) Perhaps the Honourable Member has in mind the reply given by the G. M. to a deputation from a union. The question discussed, Government understand, did not concern equalising the revised scale and the old scale but two different old scales.

(d) Yes, Government do not ordinarily favour a revision of old scales of pay.

(e) No, because staff on old scales of pay continue to be eligible for the old scales throughout their service and cannot claim the best of both sets of conditions.

NON-PAYMENT OF EXTRA DUTY ALLOWANCE TO BOMBAY CIRCLE RAILWAY MAIL SERVICE STAFF.

68. Mr. N. M. Joshi: Will the Secretary for Posts and Air be pleased to state:

(a) whether the staff of the Railway Mail Service are being paid Extra Duty Allowance for curtailment of their rest, resulting from the performance of Extra Duties;

(b) whether the Railway Mail Service staff in the Bombay Circle were refused payment of Extra Duty Allowance from July, 1941, for Extra Duties performed by them which they were getting prior to that date;

(c) whether their refusal was the result of an interpretation by the Auditor General, Posts and Telegraphs, on Government orders sanctioning the said allowance;

(d) whether in other circles, this allowance continued to be paid for the period July, 1941, to July, 1942, according to the old basis;

(e) whether Government thought that the said interpretation was not correct and, therefore, the same was set right by Government orders issued in July, 1942, and the payment of the Extra Duty Allowance was made in the Bombay Circle on the old basis since July, 1942;

(f) whether Government have paid Extra Duty Allowance to their R. M. S. staff in the Bombay Circle for such extra duty performed during the period July, 1941, to July, 1942, and, if not, the reasons for their refusal; and

(g) whether Government propose to pay arrears of that allowance for the period July, 1941, to July, 1942, to the officials concerned?

Sir Gurunath Bewoor: (a) to (g) except part (d). The Honourable Member's attention is drawn to the reply given to his unstarred question No. 6 on the 10th February, 1943.

(d) Information is being collected and a reply will be laid on the table in due course.

SUPPLY OF FOODGRAINS, ETC., TO EMPLOYEES IN THE POSTS AND TELEGRAPHS DEPARTMENT.

69. Mr. N. M. Joshi: Will the Secretary for Posts and Air be pleased to state:

(a) the arrangements Government have made for adequate and regular supply of foodgrains and other essential articles to their employees in the Posts and Telegraphs Department in British India, in view of their employees being brought under the Essential Services Ordinance;

(b) whether Provincial Governments have made special arrangements for adequate and regular supply of foodgrains and essential articles to their employees; and, if so, what those arrangements are; and

(c) if no arrangements have so far been made, whether Government propose to take any steps in this matter now?

Sir Gurunath Bewoor: (a) All employment under the Crown has been declared essential under Section 3 of Ordinance XI of 1941. The P. & T. staff are, therefore, not the only employees of Government, who come under the Essential Services (Maintenance) Ordinance, 1941, and the question of any special arrangements being made for the supply of foodgrains and other essential articles to them on this account does not, therefore, arise.

(b) Some Provincial Governments have made arrangements for the supply of foodgrains and other essential articles to their employees but it is not possible to give these in detail. I may inform the Honourable Member, however, that such concessions as are given by Provincial Governments to their own employees are extended to the P. & T. staff working in the Province concerned. Schemes for the supply of certain foodstuffs have been adopted in Bengal, Assam, the United Provinces and Delhi Province, and have been made applicable to the P. & T. staff in those Provinces. Similar arrangements in Bihar were discontinued at the beginning of December 1943, when they were found no longer necessary.

(c) Does not arise.

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

DETERIORATION OF EFFICIENCY OF THE TELEGRAPH DEPARTMENT.

M. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): I have received notice of a motion for the adjournment of the business of the House from Mr. K. S. Gupta. He wants to discuss a definite matter of urgent public importance, namely, the failure of the Government of India to keep proper supervision over the Telegraph Department, the efficiency of which has deteriorated to this extent that a telegram received in Delhi on the 11th February, 1944, is received by the addressee on the 23rd February, 1944.

Is that the measure of deterioration of efficiency, that a telegram has been delayed? Surely this is not a matter for an adjournment motion. The motion is disallowed.

STATEMENT *RE* CONVENTION CONCERNING CONDOLENCE MOTIONS.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): I wish to clear up any misunderstanding that may have arisen with respect to my ruling of yesterday that Dr. Banerjea was not in order in attempting to make a statement after the questions were finished and before the business on the list was taken up. If he wanted to refer to the death of Mrs. Gandhi, which has caused us all much sorrow, and to move for adjournment of the House as a mark of respect to her memory, he could not do so, for, according to the Convention which has been arrived at in the matter, such references and motions of condolence can only be made in respect of deaths of Members of the Assembly. If, on the other hand, Dr. Banerjea wished to make a statement on behalf of his own Party and of any other Members that they would not take part in the proceedings of the day owing to this sad event, the proper time for explaining their position would have been, according to the practice of the Assembly, when the first motion on the list had been moved, and Dr. Banerjea would have had an opportunity to address the House.

I may also mention that if Honourable Members desire to revise the present Convention on the subject of condolence motions, I shall be prepared to discuss the matter with the Leaders of Parties.

THE RAILWAY BUDGET—LIST OF DEMANDS. SECOND STAGE.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The House will now consider the Demands for Grants in respect of Railways.

The Chair understands that the various Parties and the unattached Members have agreed that the available time should be divided among them as follows:

Today the Congress Party have been allotted time up to 3-15 P.M. They will move cut motion No. 117. From 3-15 P.M. to 5 P.M. today and from about 11-30 A.M. to 11-45 A.M. to-morrow the Nationalist Party will have the time at their disposal. They have selected cut motions numbers 1, 59 and 54. These arrangements, I observe, are based on the assumption that on the 25th and the 26th February the question period will terminate by 11-30 A.M. I should like to point out at this stage also that the various cut motions selected can only be proceeded with if they are in order.

To-morrow the European Group will occupy the time from 11-45 A.M. to 1-15 P.M. They will move cut motion No. 85. Then from 1-15 P.M. to 1-30 P.M. and again from 3 P.M. to 4-15 P.M., the time will be at the disposal of the Independent Party. They have decided to move cut motion No. 45. From 4-15 P.M. to 5 P.M. on Friday and from about 11-30 A.M. to 12-45 P.M. on Saturday, the time has been allotted to Unattached Members. The cut motions selected by them are numbers 18 or 19 or 20 and numbers 23 and 43 or 44.

The Muslim League Party have been allotted time from 12-45 P.M. to 5 P.M. on Saturday, the 26th February. They will move cut motions Nos. 80 and 107, the cut motion on late list No. 1 and cut motion No. 65 on the final list.

As regards the time-limit for speeches, the usual practice has been for the Mover of the cut motions to take fifteen minutes and the other speakers also to take fifteen minutes and the Government Member replying will have twenty minutes. I suppose this will suit Honourable Members.

DEMAND NO. 10.—APPROPRIATION TO RESERVE.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall (Member for Railways and War Transport): Sir, I move:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 20,84,08,000, 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, 1945, in respect of 'Appropriation to Reserve'."

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Motion moved:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 20,84,08,000, 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, 1945, in respect of 'Appropriation to Reserve'."

Enhancement of Passenger Fares.

Mr. B. Das (Orissa Division: Non-Muhammadan): Sir, I move:

"That the demand under the head 'Appropriation to Reserve' be reduced by Rs. 10,00,00,000."

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): This is an economy cut.

Mr. B. Das: Yes, Sir. Very little argument is left over to this side of the House as the subject was discussed on the floor of the House the other day and already throughout the country the War Transport Member has been condemned for this new policy of enhancement of passenger fares. The War Transport Member has got no support in the country nor has he been supported by the Press in India. Even his own Anglo-Indian Press, the *Statesman* and the *Times of India*, have deserted him and have condemned him. He has, of course, got the support from his own constituency, the European Association and the Associated Chambers of Commerce and the Leader of the European Group. These are the only supporters of his policy, because they are great admirers of the attitude of mind of the Honourable the War Transport Member for the last 10 or 15 years because he represents in India the attitude of the mind of British Imperialism, the brand of British democracy that we see beyond the Suez, where democracy is Imperialism and where the Benthall circular rules the day. The Benthall circular is the *Meinkauf* of the European Community sitting there. My Honourable friend made this quite clear 12 years ago, when he took as Motto of the Europeans in India to be, I quote from his circular: "Never explain; your friends do not need it; your enemies won't believe it". Sir, I am proud to be his enemy; I belong to the rank and file of his enemy camp. I do not believe in what he said during the last three days or in his speech on Monday last. But I cannot understand why he took so much time to

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explain in such detail the reasons for enhancement of fares to his friends, the members of the European Group. Sir Henry Richardson has already given his unqualified support to whatever fell from the lips of the War Transport Member.

Sir Cowasjee Jehangir (Bombay City: Non-Muhammadan Urban): Will the Honourable Member first explain the exact financial results of his amendment, so that we may understand what we are voting for?

Mr. B. Das: I thought my Honourable friend Sir Cowasjee Jehangir did understand that I want to take away the 25 per cent. increase in the railway fares which the War Transport Member is imposing.

Sir Cowasjee Jehangir: Will it have that effect? Please explain that point.

Mr. B. Das: I accept the estimate of the War Transport Member that Rs. 10 crores will be secured by the increment of passenger fares to the tune of 25 per cent. He has shown a reserve of Rs. 20·84 crores for this year. If these 10 crores are taken away from it, he will have a reserve of Rs. 10·84 crores only for the year 1944-45.

Sir Cowasjee Jehangir: It may have a very different effect.

Mr. B. Das: The accounts of appropriation to Reserve are given in Appendix IX, page 45 of the Explanatory Memorandum.

Out of the three points which the War Transport Member made in support of this increase in fares, one was the question of inflation. It is not proper that we should discuss this question today. My Honourable friend, Sir Jeremy Raisman, will bring out that particular issue in the General Budget and we will then be in a better position to deal with it. The War Transport Member, who is no doubt the dictator of the European Community over the Government in India, cannot take shelter under plea of inflation. So far as overcrowding is concerned, he laid stress on the fact that 156 millions of passengers have increased which means 600 train loads of extra passengers per day. He has not provided one extra train for the civilian population during the year 1943-44. Whatever overcrowding has occurred, it is due to the movement of the army personnel and also the huge auxiliary personnel in connection with the war efforts. If the army had been quadrupled in 1943-44, the auxiliaries must have been multiplied not four times but rather 20 times. What with huge constructions of aerodromes and military buildings, the transport of supplies of munitions, the manufacture and supply of war supplies, the very large personnel engaged in War efforts, and such semi-military personnel travelling in civilian clothes, and all these go to overcrowd the railways. It is no use the Honourable Member for War Transport trotting out that argument. Last year there was a persistent demand from the civil population for extra trains. The Railway Member did not supply them. He might have supplied one or two goods trains or a few wagons for transport of foodstuffs to the famine distressed area of Bengal. Last year an epoch making situation arose here. Somehow or other the Hindu population believed that the old iron age—Kali-Yuga was passing over and the golden era was going to be ushered in. Therefore, there was a great movement of Hindu population to visit holy places, particularly Puri Jugannath in my constituency attracted large crowds. But the B. N. Railway supplied no additional trains for the movement of the civilian travelling public. I concede there was overcrowding of civilian travelling public last July and August.

We thought that *Satya Yug* or the golden era would bring new hopes for India. Unfortunately it has come in the shape of the strong rule of my Honourable friend the War Transport Member as the dictator of the Government of India. As I told at the beginning, I am a student of the activities of the War Transport Member about how India is to be governed. He played no inconspicuous part in framing the constitution which laid down that railways of India should be separate from all political control. Today, to India's misfortune the railway administration is under a British politician who is applying all the venoms and hatred of British politicians to the Indian politician and raising civilian passenger fares without thinking at all how hard the Indian people are hit. There is famine and distress in Bengal, the Honourable Member's own Province, not to speak of Orissa, Travancore and certain portions of Madras.

That does not at all touch the War Transport Member. He says that wheat was formerly bringing Rs. 10 to the farmer and now the farmer gets Rs. 40 for the same amount of wheat, and why should he not pay more in railway fare? That is the kind of argument which an outsider, a non-national would advance, one who is out to exploit this country would advance. That is typical of the British race. If he would have felt as an Indian, he would have felt for the utter poverty and distress in Indian homes. Why does he not take a leaf from the Viceroy and go to visit village homes and then he will find that the luxury which he paints is all an illusion. In England, the index price has gone up only by 60 per cent. In spite of lack of certain luxuries, the Britishers today are not paying more than 60 per cent. on what they were spending in 1939. In Bengal the price of commodities has gone up to 600 per cent. and even 900 per cent. in some cases. In some other parts of India the price has gone up by 400 per cent. If that is so, it is no use quoting that the cultivator who was getting Rs. 10 is now getting Rs. 40 and why should he not pay three annas to the Honourable Member's pocket? Why does the Honourable Member need the money? Why does he need this extra ten crores? Why does he think of remaining in this country to save the destiny of Indian transport five years hence when the war is over? The war may not be over in less than five years? Why does the Honourable Member who is a Britisher, think of remaining in this country and keeping the money for a rainy day? It is really callous on his part to put this heavy burden on the travelling public in India.

Instead of raising the passenger fares, he ought to have raised the railway freight. I am agreeable to the raising of the railway freight. The Honourable Member should study and restudy Acworth Committee's report. In the last war a sound financial policy was not followed for railway transport in India. There were many purchases of locomotives and wagons scrapped after that War. There was heavy wear and tear of the permanent way too. If there is heavy wear and tear of the permanent way, if there is heavy wear and tear of wagons and locomotives and if there is shortage of wagons and locomotives, the Honourable the Transport Member who is so charitable towards the Military Department should make them pay for the wear and tear of the permanent way and other assets and the consequent heavy losses incurred by the railways. Sir, this point about the Army Department will be raised in the General Budget also. The country never agreed to the Honourable the Finance Member's settlement of allocation of military expenses between England and India. It is a wrong allocation. The Honourable Member should have raised railway freight and get more from the military side for transport of their supplies and then spend the amount on improvement of railways, purchase of wagons and so on. How can all this be done by a member of the British race who do not have India's welfare at heart? It does not matter what happens to India, the Britishers are out to establish their view point how India should be governed.

In conclusion, I submit that the Transport Member should try to take up the Indian attitude and not impose this burden on the travelling public. Sir, I move.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Cut motion moved:

"That the demand under the head 'Appropriation to Reserve' be reduced by Rs. 10,00,00,000."

Mr. G. Rangiah Naidu (Madras City: Non-Muhammadian Urban): Mr. President, when this Budget was presented before this House the Honourable the War Transport Member appealed to this House to consider this Budget and pass it *nem con*. Will it be possible for this House to pass this Budget, at least to consider this Budget when it contains so many controversial items. Yes, it is the duty of this House to consider and pass this Budget when it does not contain such controversial items. I know that. But will it be possible? It will be possible, but only when all these controversial items have been completely removed from this budget. Only then will this House unanimously pass this budget. Sir, I wish to inform Government that I am an ex-railway employee who held important and responsible positions in the

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rates section. I know the secret of railway rates and I know the history of their enhancement during the last 40 years. I will give an instance now. Some 40 years ago the passenger fare from Madras to Bezwada was Rs. 3/7/9 by mail train. That continued for some years but afterwards it was increased to Rs. 4/11/- and later on to Rs. 5/11/- which continued till 1st March, 1940, when by a surcharge of one anna in the rupee, when people were already complaining of increase in fares, it was raised to Rs. 6/1/-. And now like a palmyra fruit falling on the head of the already suffering jackal comes this increase of 25 per cent. The people of India, 40 crores of them, are waiting to see what we do here,—elected and nominated Members, Independents and dependants, all Indians—and whether we are going to vote it down. The Indian Members of this House will have to face the public tomorrow and answer them as regards their action about this raising of fares. I have received number of memoranda and resolutions passed by public bodies in our country and every one of them has been protesting against this enhancement.

After this surcharge of one anna in the rupee was levied, in six months they got 11·83 crores, that is to say, 6·83 crores more than the originally estimated sum of 5 crores. Where is that money? The surplus of the current year's budget by this rate of Rs. 6/1/- is 43·77 crores. There are three shareholders, among whom this surplus money will be distributed: the Depreciation Fund, the Railway Reserve Fund and the biggest shareholder is the General Revenues. Out of this 43·77 crores the Railway Reserve Fund gets only 11·50 crores, while the "General Revenues" get 32·27 crores. Why should not the Railway Reserve Fund get more? The poor shareholder, the Depreciation Fund, also gets more every year but not the Railway Reserve fund. If money is kept there the public gets the benefit of it. And what is the effect of this 25 per cent. increase? I will give an instance by taking the fare from Madras to Delhi. The existing fare is Rs. 25/3/- and according to the proposed increase it will be Rs. 31/7/9.

Although Honourable Members sitting on the Treasury Benches travel at public expense, when they send their families they will have to meet the cost of these fares from their own pockets. They must remember that. European Members may not have to spend, because they have no real interest in our country. But I know that they have been exploiting us always. The Indian Members sitting there must, however, remember that they have to do their duty by the country, they must keep their hands on their hearts and say whether it is reasonable to increase the fares like that and whether it is not going to make things still harder for the poor Indians.

Sir, I have calculated fares on certain sections in order to give you an idea of what will be the increase, comparatively speaking. Here are some of the rates: Inter class fare from Delhi to Madras at present Rs. 47/11. After 25 per cent. enhancement Rs. 59/9.

Mark the difference. Sir. Will it be possible for the poor man to pay Rs. 59/9? Already our Indians are suffering from starvation, and now you are making it difficult for them even to move about.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The Honourable Member has only one minute now.

Mr. G. Rangiah Naidu: Sir, everybody in the country, not only Mussalmans, not only Hindus, not only Christians, not only Anglo-Indians, but every individual in this country will suffer by this enhancement in fares if this is passed by this House. With these few words, Sir, I appeal to my Honourable friends in this House—elected, nominated, and independent—and Members of the various parties—Muslim League, Congress and Nationalist—everybody who is interested in the welfare of the Indian public, to throw out this item of enhancement of railway fares. Sir, I have done.

Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad (United Provinces Southern Divisions: Muhammadan Rural): Sir, I rise to oppose the enhancement of rate as announced by the Honourable the War Transport Member. He gave three arguments in

support of the enhancement of rates and I will examine those arguments one by one. They were:

- (i) that he expected a reduction in the passenger traffic;
- (ii) that he wanted to build up a reserve to provide facilities to the travelling public after the war; and
- (iii) that it will have a deflationary effect.

Taking the first argument, the travelling has already become so inconvenient at present that only those persons travel who must travel and cannot help doing so, and those persons must travel whether or not you increase the fares. If there is no room in the carriages, as is the case at present, they travel on the tops of the carriages and on foot-boards; only 50 per cent. of passengers find room inside the carriages. I ask the Honourable Member to make an enquiry and find out the conditions as they prevail at present on O. T. Railway.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: May I ask why the Honourable Member thinks that 156 million more people should travel this year than in the previous year?

Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad: I will, if time is not deducted from my fifteen minutes. My argument was this: That by increasing the rates and fares, travelling cannot be decreased, as the Honourable Member expects to do, because only those persons travel at present who must travel, and because there are no other means of travelling people have to use the railways.

His second argument was about reserve. I draw your attention to this Budget report. Here the Railways have already got two reserves: called Reserve A and Reserve B. Reserve A is Railway depreciation Reserve and Reserve B is Railway Reserve Fund. Taking the two Reserves together, I find that by the end of 1943 the Railways will have 91·72 crores according to their own figures, and by the end of April 1944 it will go up to 108·76 and by the end of April 1945 it will go still further up to 123·72. That will be the total of A and B Reserves. But if the war continues for a sufficiently long time—and even after the war the traffic conditions will not be eased and I am certain that the incidence of income will remain as it is at present for at least five years more—I find by calculation that at the end of five years the accumulated reserve under the heads A and B will be about 250 crores. If we add 3 per cent. interest to this—I do not know whether this money has been handed over to the Government without interest—then the sum total of Reserve A and B in 1950 will stand at 270 crores, i.e., it will be 33 per cent. of the capital at charge. My Honourable friend, Sir Frederick James, on the other day, mentioned that the reserve ought to be 10 per cent. of the capital at charge. The capital at charge is 800 crores. Therefore, at this percentage reserve should be 80 crores. But he will be surprised to know—I have already given the figures—that by 1950 even if the present state of things continue, your reserve under A and B will be 270 crores, that is to say, about 33 per cent. of the capital at charge. Now, my Honourable friend is not satisfied with these A and B Reserves, and he wants to open a C Reserve for which there is no justification whatsoever. He is not satisfied with this percentage and so he wants a higher percentage still.

Then, I draw your attention to the figures given on page 26. Just before the war, the income from the passenger traffic was 27·78 crores of rupees. In the present year—1944—this has been increased to 68·14, i.e., more than double. It has already been increased $2\frac{1}{2}$ times, but the Government do not seem to be satisfied with this increase of $2\frac{1}{2}$ times; they want to inflict a further surcharge of 25 per cent. This further charge of 25 per cent. is very unjustifiable from the business point of view. I ask whether any Government or any business will ever be justified to increase their income when it is steadily increasing and it has already increased $2\frac{1}{2}$ times. Sir, the increase has been very steady, because we find from year to year that there is a substantial rise in the actual income from the estimated income. I have calculated that if this 25 per cent. surcharge is imposed, the additional income which will accrue out of this will be about 100 crores, with interest, by 1950. I say, is it really desirable that you should

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build up a 'C' Reserve under a different name and put into it another hundred crores? I don't think so. The total of your three reserves will be about 370 crores, yielding 45 per cent. of the capital at charge. I ask, when any company builds a reserve which is 45 per cent. of the capital, will it be justifiable? Will not my friend, the Railway Member, had he been the head of a business concern, be asked to pay the income-tax and excess profits tax which every business man must pay. But the Honourable Member, because he has changed benches from this side to that is exempted from income-tax, super-tax and all other taxes. Further, he is unfair by putting substantially large sums of money under the head of Reserve Fund, which no company under any rules of business is justified to keep. After all you have the powers and you can do whatever you please. Even if you double the rate the public will continue to travel, but those persons who represent Indian opinion and who are in public life, especially those who represent labour and the poor people, they realise that it is not fair to the travelling public to squeeze money out of them. I have seen cases where poor men from the villages have had to travel in the first class. They wanted tickets but no tickets were available. A woman had to purchase a first class ticket because she had to travel. You will only go on increasing your reserves to an unjustifiable extent.

Now I come to third argument, about inflation and deflation. As regards inflation I always said that this theory of inflation is started by the business man in order to cheat the consumers: and now the theory of deflation, which he has mentioned, has also been started in order to cheat the travelling public. Inflation and deflation are really words which very few people understand. As regards myself, the Finance Member and the Railway Member, I quote the Persian proverb:

As regards myself, I come to the category:

"An kas ki nadānad wa bidānad ki nadānad."

It means: I do not know but I know that I do not know it.

As regards the Railway Member, he does not understand. . . .

Maulana Zafar Ali Khan (East Central Punjab: Muhammadan): You have not given the complete verse. It is:

"An kas ki nadānad wa bidānad ki bidānad."

Dar Jehl-i-murakkab abad-ud-Dhar bimānad."

Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad: As regards the Railway Member:

"An kas ki nadānad wa bidānad ki bidānad."

As regards the Finance Member:

"An kas ki bidānad wa nadānad ki bidānad."

It means that the Finance Member knows very well the theory of inflation but he is always very modest and he thinks he does not know it. But really speaking he knows it as well as anybody else.

Here I would like to draw attention to the Resolution I moved about stabilization of prices. It was to the effect that this Assembly recommends to the Governor General in Council to give foremost place in the monetary policy to the stabilization of prices, on which the prosperity of the country largely depends. Now the Honourable Member accepted the principle that the thing on which the foremost attention should be paid is the stabilization of the prices—the purchasing power of the rupee. May I ask, whether by raising the fares by 25 per cent. the value of the rupee is not depreciated accordingly? The Finance Member says he would like to stabilize the prices. It does not mean the price of the commodity but the cost of travelling. When you increase the cost of travelling you certainly lower the purchasing power of the rupee and the value of all the other articles will be regulated accordingly.

My friend does not fully realise that the travelling expenses of the public are always regulated by the third class fare, in the same manner as the price of most of the foodstuff is regulated by the price of wheat. Whenever the price of the third class fare is fixed, the price of motor traffic will be fixed, as well as the price of tonga fare and bullock carts. So by raising third class fares the cost of travelling by whatever method it may be is increased. Therefore to

increase the fares of the third class by 25 per cent. is really to decrease the purchasing power of the rupee and to raise the cost of traffic by this percentage, not only in the case of railways but for every other form of travelling. So we ought to be very careful with regard to this particular thing and I think it is not very fair. You may take it for granted that as soon as this is through, then the price of petrol will immediately go up. If the railways are making money why should not the petrol authorities do the same. The hire of tongas will increase. In short, he is really doing an injustice to the poor people who must travel and for whom he has put on an additional tax of four annas in the rupee.

There is another aspect to which I would like to draw the attention of my Honourable friend and which he has entirely overlooked when he made his speech. If we build up a big reserve for the railways, which according to my estimate in 1950 will be Rs. 270 crores provided the present emergency continues, then the railways will be in a position of very great advantage compared to the other two competitors, *i.e.*, road and air. Roads will have no capital. It will depend on the goodwill of the Government whether they build roads or not. The air services will have no reserve.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The Honourable Member's time is up.

Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad: I will finish in half a minute. In this way he will be able to dictate terms later on. If we build up a reserve in this unjustifiable way, then as soon as the war is over and a national Government comes into power, it will take this capital and distribute it to the other two competitors—air and roads.

Mr. H. G. Stokes (Bombay: European): Sir, I rise to oppose the motion. In his speech on the general discussion, my leader has I think made our position clear on this matter of an increase in fares. Sir Henry Richardson said then that we consider all the reasons given by the War Transport Member to be good ones. But I am prepared to admit now that some of these reasons have more force than others. We believe, Sir, firstly, that the raising of fares will check overcrowding. We think that it may even reduce it as a similar enhancement of fares did in the last war. But, Sir, the evil has attained to such proportions, and it is so widespread, that in our view much stronger measures are needed. At a meeting, Sir, of the Central Advisory Council for Railways, my Honourable colleague, Sir Frederick James, on the 16th November last referred to certain measures that we advocated against overcrowding. Apart from an increase in passenger fares he recommended flying squads as ticket collectors, a system of priorities for upper class travel, and an increase in the police force to prevent overcrowding, incidence of summary punishment and finally full scale propaganda against unnecessary travel. Now, Sir, Government have accepted only one out of all these proposals and that one possibly the least effective. I would like to know what has happened to the rest. Will the Honourable the War Transport Member please let us know what is being done? If Government have any figures of the percentage of ticketless travel, we should very much like to hear them, as we must regard this evil of ticketless travelling as public enemy No. 1 in the overcrowding campaign.

Apart from the measures which Sir Frederick James has advocated, there are others which will, I think, mitigate the effect of the increase in military traffic, which is felt of course mostly in the upper classes. I refer to a proposal which my leader has already referred to for the zoning of military leave. A certain zone will be allocated to each military area, and normally military officers and men will not be allowed, unless some very special reason exists, to take their leave outside that particular zone. Then, I think there may be more system in the grant of leave, particularly in the case of troops. I find from many people whom I meet in the Hill station where I live that there are a very large number of cases where men are given leave at very short notice. I suggest that all that makes for over-crowding, because obviously movement control cannot possibly deal with a batch of men thrown upon them at the last moment, when the trains are already full.

[Mr. H. G. Stokes.]

Now, I pass to item No. 2—the anti-inflationary benefit of these proposals. Here I find that our views are at variance with those of my Honourable friend, Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad. We here agree that to check inflation is, in the War Transport Member's own words, India's most pressing economic problem, though we may not always appreciate the measures which the fertile brain of the Honourable the Finance Member conceives for our good. The Aman crop in Bengal is a very heavy one. Let us suppose that 2 million tons of rice, that is 56 million maunds, are sold at an increase over pre-war prices of Rs. 10: we get an extra purchasing power from that transaction of Rs. 560 millions. That is a single crop in a single province and I quote it to show what we are really up against in the matter of inflation. The remedy both for overcrowding and for inflation seems to me very much alike; for the one we need more trains, and for the other we need more consumer goods; but unfortunately neither of those remedies are open to us; and it therefore seems to us that to withdraw 20 crores of purchasing power during the next two years is a very valuable contribution to India's needs.

Then there is the third argument, and here again I am afraid that we must differ from the learned doctor. We here are only too afraid that the Honourable Member's prophecy of the future will prove accurate. We feel that earnings will fall more rapidly than costs once war activity fades away—we see much the same thing after every period of intense industrial activity—and that with a dwindling surplus we shall have a huge bill to face for rehabilitation. It is true that if the war goes on for another two years the Reserve and Depreciation funds will be a good deal better than they are at present; but they will still in our view, be a very long way from what we think constitutes real safety. In bad times reserves have a way of melting like snow on a wall. I think that the future Government of India will have every reason to be grateful to this Government for the 20 crores or more which will then be available for lower class amenities. Let us bear in mind too that the Government is under no obligation to build for the future and to undertake what obviously must prove a most unpopular measure: all the more credit to them for having done so, in our opinion.

Now, there is the question of hardship, and I admit that this increment of fares must cause some hardship, as every other measure of the kind does cause some hardship; but I venture to suggest that the hardship will not be as severe as one might think at first glance. We have been given figures to show that 30 per cent. of travel in certain areas is luxury travel and unnecessary. We have also been told, I think I am correct in saying, that 85 per cent. of the earnings from third class passengers comes from very short distance traffic, which will not be affected by this measure. I feel that both these factors go to mitigate the hardship that may be experienced. Also, I think it is a pity that there should have been so much agitation against this measure in the expectation that it would be brought in, that is, before the budget was introduced, and before the Honourable the War Transport Member was able to give us the very good reasons that he has done in support of the proposal. I think it is quite possible that a number of people who made up their minds that this was a bad proposal at the start and before they heard the War Transport Member might possibly have taken the other view if they had heard it later.

Lastly, may I put in a special word for the province of Assam? This would not normally be my duty, but in the absence of my colleague, Mr. Griffiths, due to his absence elsewhere, my friends there in Assam have asked me to say something. Assam has been called a Cinderella province sometimes, and we all know that though Cinderella had a rough passage she did not come out so badly in the end. I am afraid my friends in Assam have very little hope that the fairy prince in the form of the Honourable the War Transport Member will descend from his golden chariot to bring them relief. Conditions there, my correspondents say, are unbelievably bad and of course we cannot expect very much in what is an operational area, but if, Sir, the War Transport Member will

consider the possibility of affording some relief—immediate relief—to the conditions there, particularly as regards extra rolling stock I am sure we would remember it with great gratitude. With these words I oppose the motion.

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman (Finance Member): I feel that I ought to intervene in this discussion because reference is continually being made to the relation of Government's proposal to increase passenger fares to the inflationary situation and the effects which it is likely to have.

Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad: And the price level.

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad quoted a Persian proverb when talking about inflation. I regret that I am not a Persian scholar, but what he said did remind me of a famous passage of Plato relating to the Greek philosopher, Socrates, who went about telling people that they did not know certain matters and unfortunately they did not know that they did not know. He himself claimed only the modest distinction of not knowing but knowing that he did not know. However, Socrates was put to death by the Athenian democracy because the enlightenment of the ages had not yet descended even upon that very advanced community. And he is a supreme example of how proposals which may be for the benefit of the country can be so misrepresented that the authors of them can be regarded as being public enemies instead of public benefactors.

Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad: What about the other two?

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: But, Sir, I got up to try and throw a little light on the argument in regard to inflation. I feel that, although it is a complicated and technical subject, the way in which this particular measure operates is not too difficult to understand. To put the thing in simple language, the trouble at the present time is that Government has to pour out large quantities of rupees. It has to do that because it cannot stop the war, and, in fact, it must assist in the prosecution of the war. It has to go on paying the soldiers, the sailors, the airmen, the people who supply the goods which the army requires, the people who supply the goods which those people require, and so on. So long as war continues and India participates in it, the Indian Government is bound to provide the rupees necessary for those operations. On the other hand, Government also receives rupees from the country. It does so principally by taxation and borrowing. To the extent that Government is the owner of any business or any domain, the exploitation of that business or domain in order to yield the maximum of income is definitely anti-inflationary. The cause of inflation is that the rupees going out exceed the rupees coming back, that is the simple position, and therefore, the residuary amount of purchasing power in the hands of the people of the country is excessive in relation to the goods and services which are available for consumption. I was saying, therefore, that there can be no question as to how this thing operates. Whatever brings money back to the Government is anti-inflationary. That is the first simple and important fact to keep in mind.

Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari (Tanjore *cum* Trichinopoly: Non-Muhammadan Rural): Even if you get money from people who have nothing to spare?

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: Now, I am talking economics and not humanitarianism. I am trying to put this thing in its simple and broad features.

Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari: Even economically it cannot be true.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Order, order.

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: What is the position in this country to-day? The position is that practically every business, every interest which supplies goods and services to the public or to the Government, has increased its price, has increased its margin of profit. That involves a further outgoing of rupees. Government alone, broadly speaking, have made practically no increase in their charges, certainly nothing compared with the general increase in the charges for goods and services provided by private interests. That is exactly the wrong way round. If you want to cure inflation, the situation that you should have is that private interests should be getting no more or

[Sir Jeremy Raisman.]

very little more and Government should be getting more. That is the state of affairs you want to bring into operation in order to cure inflation. I have tried to put it in simple language. Capital has been made of the fact that the Chief Commissioner in a highly abbreviated sentence last year said that Government did not propose to increase rates and fares because they did not want to stimulate inflation. That is very easy to explain. To the extent that Government supplies services or commodities which are so basic or essential that their cost enters into the cost of all other goods, to that extent the deflationary effect of an increase in the cost of that service is neutralised by the fact that the price structure is adversely affected. In the case of freights—which I notice that the Honourable the Mover of this cut motion would prefer to have raised rather than fares—in the case of freights on certain kinds of goods there is an inflationary effect which neutralises the deflationary effect. It is true that, even if Government were to increase freights, it would *prima facie*, be deflationary, but since the cost of additional transport would in the case of certain commodities, particularly essential commodities, have to be passed on to the various stages throughout the price structure, that would be inflationary and would neutralise the advantage which was gained by the additional incoming of rupees to Government.

Now, Sir, the subject of inflation is one which is widely discussed in many countries throughout the world to-day. It is a curious thing that, when we see things happening in other countries, we generally know instinctively what is right and what is wrong. It is only when unpopular action has to be taken in the country in which we happen to be that our ideas are apt to get rather blurred on the subject. If we read of anti-inflationary measures in other countries, a great country like America, we all know without any doubt what the administration is trying to do is the right thing and is called for. So we talk of pressure groups, we talk of resistance, we talk of unpopularity, we talk of the political position of the Government. Well, Sir, the position is very much the same here to-day. There is no doubt whatever that from the economic point of view, from the point of view of what is needed for the economic health of this country, this measure is absolutely called for. There is no doubt whatever that if any impartial and outside authority were asked to judge on this he would be able to give the answer in a second. There is, to my mind, no possibility of argument upon that. It may be said, and it has been said, that, though the effect of this will be salutary upon the economy of the country, it is a comparatively limited effect but what you want is a very much larger effect. Well, Sir, I would agree with that, although the argument might lead to the conclusion that the chief thing that is wrong with this proposal is that the increase is not sufficient. But I am under the difficulty that the Railway Budget has to be presented before the General Budget and it is not possible to give a complete picture of the Government's proposals at the time when the Railway Budget is presented. What I would, however, say is this, that I entirely agree with the last speaker that this measure will make a substantial contribution towards the alleviation of the greatest hardship of all at the present time. If you do nothing to deal with inflation, then you impose a greater hardship than any which have been mentioned in connection with this discussion. Overcrowding, overcharging, if you like, all these things are insignificant compared with the untold misery which uncontrolled inflation is capable of inflicting on the country. My Honourable friend, Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad, said that what his party had asked for in a certain motion last session was a policy of stabilization of prices and that I, as the spokesman of the Government, had accepted that motion and that policy. I entirely agree with that. If the question was—Do Government intend to stabilise prices by raising the cost of railway fares—the answer is 'Yes'. Curious as it may seem, the answer is quite clear that unless you can counter inflationary tendencies you cannot resist, cannot control the upward price movement and the additional return of rupees to Government is precisely the weapon that is needed in order to enable you to resist the upward move of prices.

Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad: But the money will not go to Government. It will go to the Reserve Fund.

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: That is just the same; so long as the money is absorbed from the country and remains in Government balances it does not matter whether the money goes to the Railway funds or any other fund. As I explained at the beginning, so long as it is a Government concern to which the money comes back, the anti-inflationary effect is positive and sure.

Now, Sir, it has been said by a very great economist, no less, I think, than Lord Keynes, that inflation is what happens when you do nothing to deal with the economic problem, if you don't tax or borrow sufficiently, if you don't face up to the necessities of the situation. Then inflation comes in silently. It swells up silently like the tides. That is what is happening in this country. It is the duty of this House, it is the duty of this Government, it is their paramount duty, it is their first duty to deal with that matter and looked at from this point of view, this measure is a very important contribution towards dealing with that problem. It will, in my considered opinion, clearly do far more to mitigate the undoubted hardship to the people than the trouble which it may cause to a section of the population who obviously are trying to use a service which cannot meet all their needs and trying to use it to an extent which is in any case impossible.

Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad: Will it increase the purchasing power of the paper rupee?

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: It will increase it, in its ultimate effect.

Sir Cowasjee Jehangir: During the two speeches made by the Honourable the Transport Member and the speech made by the Finance Member just now, pictures have been drawn for our gaze and examination. I have been trying very hard to admire the two pictures drawn by my Honourable friend, the Transport Member. But the closer I try to examine those pictures, the more defects I find in the perspective. In dealing with urgent issues in critical times, not only we but the Government themselves are apt to lose the background. What is the background of this question. The department with which we are at present dealing was supposed to be a commercial department. It was supposed to be a public utility department giving, to the public, service in return for an adequate remuneration. In 1924, this Honourable House gave this question detailed attention and they definitely came to the conclusion that out of profits, after setting aside adequate amounts for interest, depreciation and reserve funds, a certain limited profit should be credited to general revenues. Now, when we want to review the present position, we should see how much more general revenues are getting today than they would have got if the 1924 Convention had not been altered last year. These figures are rather interesting. If the Convention of 1924 had not been altered by mutual consent of the two Honourable Members most concerned in 1943-44, General Revenues would have got 17·17 crores, but by the change made by mutual consent of these two Honourable Members, General Revenues in 1943-44 actually get 32·27 crores, that is an addition of 15·10 crores. The Railway reserve would have got 26·60 crores instead of which under this mutual arrangement it is getting 11·50 crores, which is 15·10 crores less than they should have got under the understanding we came to in 1924. In 1944-45 the figures are that the General Revenues gain 14·38 crores, while the reserves lose 14·33 crores. Now, you will see from these figures that due to the war we have already made and have agreed to make a very serious change

1 P.M. in that Convention giving to general revenues vast amounts of money, which, if that Convention had not been changed, would have gone into reserves.

Now, may I point out what appears to me to be a very serious inconsistency in the speech made by the Honourable the Transport Member. In a passage of his speech, in dealing with these reserves, he very rightly points out that these huge amounts in reserve—huge compared to what we used to have—are

[Sir Cowasjee Jehangir,]

illusory, and he goes to show that under present conditions and the conditions that may prevail how much more ought to have been put into reserves and he argues that very correctly and at some length. He sounds a note of warning that we are not paying sufficient into our reserves to meet our future liabilities. But, then, unfortunately, again, he goes on to state that it may be argued that the railways are making good money and that the percentage of contribution from the railway surplus to general revenues should be reduced and the railway reserves correspondingly increased. "This matter was gone into thoroughly last year and there is no reason to upset the ratio of the division of a surplus which has been accepted as fair in present conditions." I cannot see how we can reconcile those two main arguments of his. If these reserves are illusory and if they are not sufficient, how can he say that he has examined the division between the general revenues and the reserve and found them satisfactory? He ought to have insisted on the arrangement he made a year ago being changed, more going into reserves and less going into general revenues. And that is the foundation of his proposals that extra money should be got from the travelling public to make up the reserves, which he thinks to be necessary in the interests of the railways. Another 10 crores he puts into reserves, and that not by taking them from the allotment to general revenues but by extra taxation. That is the way he reconciles his two statements,—one that the reserves are illusory and the other that the present arrangement must continue. Then, he looks about for ways and means of augmenting his reserves and he comes to the conclusion that he is not strong enough to fight the Finance Member with regard to the contribution to general revenues. But he may be strong enough to fight the public to increase their fares. Well, Sir, that is the perspective of the picture he has drawn. I have not sufficient time to go into these matters in very great detail, but there are, of course, interesting aspects which might be considered.

Now, Sir, about the anti-inflationary effect that these extra fares will have. That pre-supposes that all the third class traffic consists of people who have benefited by the war or a large majority of them are people who have benefited by the war. In other words, they are in a better position today than they were before the war and can afford to pay the extra fares. That is a very hypothetical proposition. To say that this will be an anti-inflationary measure because all these people are better off and can afford to pay is not an argument which I can accept without very considerable examination. He turns round and asks us, how can we explain the extra traffic? If the people are not better off, why is it that they are travelling more? The answer, to my mind, is this. Trade and industry have increased in this country on account of the war to much higher proportions than we ever dreamt of and industries have been brought into existence of which we have not been aware. If there is more trade and more industry, surely there will be more demand on travel from the public specially third class passengers. You cannot help there being more travelling. But that does not mean that they are ill in a better position than they were before the war. And unless you can show conclusively that they are in a better position than they were before the war, you cannot conclusively prove that your measure will have anti-inflationary consequences. It may be that the effect will be that you will make a large majority of people worse off than they are. We know that large numbers have been adversely affected by the war; the cost of living has gone up and they have not been adequately compensated for that higher cost. (Interruption.) I am told promptly that the labour in Bombay and Ahmedabad are being very handsomely compensated. I agree.

Mr. N. M. Joshi (Nominated Non-Official): No.

Sir Cowasjee Jehangir: Here is a gentleman who will never be satisfied and rightly so because he is their representative. But I agree that they are being handsomely compensated. But what percentage of the travelling public are these mill labourers of Bombay and Ahmedabad? I do not wish to encourage

my friend on my left or my friend behind me, but how much more are we paying dock labourers and how much more are we paying other labour for the higher cost of living? Now, if we can show that all labour is being paid just as the mill labour is being paid in Bombay, Ahmedabad and Cawnpore, then I would understand the validity of the anti-inflationary arguments, raised by my Honourable friend, the Finance Member. Under the circumstances, looking at the picture as a whole and looking at the Department with which we are dealing and considering the enormous amounts we are crediting to general revenues not allowed by the Convention of 1924, I cannot come to the conclusion that an increase in fares is justified either as an anti-inflationary measure or is justified from the revenue point of view.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Honourable Member's time is up.

Sir Cowasjee Jehangir: Perhaps I might get another opportunity of expanding on this matter in connection with another cut motion. Under the circumstances, I would ask the Government to consider this matter very carefully and see whether they cannot meet public opinion and again examine this point whether it will have the anti-inflationary tendency which they believe.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta (Bombay Central Division: Non-Muhammadan Rural): Sir, the speech of the Honourable the Finance Member clearly establishes what was behind this proposal to raise the railway fares. If anybody had any doubt about the unwisdom, the impropriety, and the injustice of raising the fare, all that impression must have been cleared by the speech of the Honourable the Finance Member who let the cat out of the bag. He did not argue the proposal on the basis of the cost of running of railways, whether the railways were earning a decent remuneration or not, whether on the economic grounds of railway transport service, this raising was necessary or not, he did not touch that point at all. He quite frankly admitted that the raising of rates was required not because the railway transport service needed it, but because he needed it. No doubt should, therefore, remain that this is a non-railway proposition foisted on the railways owing to the exigencies of the finance of my Honourable friend the Finance Member who raised the storm of inflation and now wants to visit its consequences on us. That is the long and short of that proposition. Otherwise, I am surprised that the Transport Member should have ever listened for a moment to the question of raising the fares. The Finance Member demanded it. Have the travelling public demanded it?

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: What did you say yesterday about bank loans, and the Manager?

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: This is not a banking company. If you compare the Railways to a banking company, it shows the desperate condition of your argument. There is no analogy at all. It only means that you are simply driven to desperate arguments.

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: Would the travelling public ever ask for an increase in the fares?

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: They might at least not object if it is a reasonable thing. As representing the interest of the workers when we see that the transport service is running at a loss, we have sometimes not objected. You are grinding dividend from the traveller and the trader to the extent of 45 crores a year, after making provision of 30 crores by way of interest and 15 crores to depreciation and concealing crores and crores in various other ways, all I can say is that a C. I. D. should be sent after you to find out your burglaries from the railway revenues. I assure the House and the country that burglaries which these people commit on the income of the railways in various guises and disguises will be up to 10 to 15 crores a year. Is it claimed that a public utility company should grind dividends like these? Has any public Association approved of it? Apart from the Chamber of Commerce and the Federation, the Passenger Traffic Relief Association of Bombay, a body which sat with the Honourable the Transport Member in Bombay, have been sending piteous telegrams and letters. I am told by their members that they argued it out with

[Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta.]

the Transport Member against the proposal. That is what they told me in Bombay.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The Honourable Member can continue his speech after lunch. The House will now adjourn for lunch till half past two.

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

The Assembly re-assembled after Lunch at Half Past Two of the Clock, Mr. Deputy President (Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta) in the Chair.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: Sir, when we rose for Lunch I was submitting that for no railway purpose was this increase of fares necessary because the railways are now having a plethora of money for which a utility concern should rather feel ashamed. We have had the honour of having a new Financial Commissioner and I am sorry that his entry into this charmed circle has been signalled by a terrible burden on the people. The other excuse given is inflation. I shall have something to say about this at the time of the general budget, and the question requires more time than I have now at my disposal. But the Honourable the Finance Member could have had his own remedy outside the third-class passenger. I have always felt that he never likes anything better than probing the pockets of the poor man, like the tiger who has tasted blood; the more he tastes it the more he wants it. (*An Honourable Member:* "Is he a tiger?") For the poor man the Honourable the Finance Member is a real tiger. Then the other excuse given is that so many people are travelling and that shows that they have got money. Many rejoinders have been already given to this excuse, but the Finance Member and the Transport Member know that a large part of this increase in travelling is due to the action of Government themselves. Take the city of Delhi alone. Their Ordinances themselves require so much of interpretation and relief that thousands of people have to come to Delhi only for understanding what their Ordinances mean. That traffic could have been avoided; it is an enormous traffic. The stoppage of motor transport is another reason for this rise in traffic. Thousands of people who cannot travel by motor are now compelled to use the railways. Then there are war contracts and war industries. But I may inform the Transport Member that the real and the decisive cause of this increased traffic is the war. Does he know that when bombs were thrown in Calcutta millions of people had to run about, not once or twice or thrice but several times up and down their homes and other places? This happened all along the eastern coast; and at the possibility of the Japanese invasion even Bombay was evacuated to the extent of 40 per cent. So the real cause of the extra travelling is the panic among the people of this country due to the war, the bombing, and the uncertainty of life which it generated; the terror and the panic among large masses of people including thousands and lakhs of evacuees and jumping up and down the country for the purpose of safety of their near and dear ones. That, to my mind, is the real reason and nothing else,—not the money in the hands of the people, but the simple necessity, the obligation to save themselves, the fear which the population felt in Bombay, Karachi, the eastern coast, Calcutta and all over the country. You are visiting the consequences of that panicky travelling on the third class passengers. Think what you are doing. I say 95·5 per cent. of the people of this country have not had their income increased. Therefore you are quite wrong; perhaps you know you are wrong; but the Finance Member is inexorable, and whoever comes near him is finished.

Then, Sir, I assure you that the hardships of the people deserve some relief from the existing revenues. Instead of loading the Finance Member with crores upon crores, putting into the depreciation fund crores and crores and increasing your surpluses in the reserve fund by crores, you should have used this money for increasing the amenities of travel. The amenities are tomorrow, the increase is today. That is a very wrong thing.

About overcrowding the less said the better. I think even in war stricken countries where whole populations were evacuating the miseries of the refugees

could not have been greater than the miseries which you have inflicted on our people during these last three years by overcrowding.

There is one thing more which I wish to say before concluding my observations and it is this. They say that travelling in India is cheap. I want to lay this ghost finally to rest. It is entirely incorrect; it must be incorrect to the knowledge of Government; it is patently absurd. As I told the House the other day the income of an average Britisher per year is Rs. 1,065 or even a little more; as against that the income of the Indian is Rs. 65 a year. So, the income of the average Britisher is more than 15 times the income of an average Indian. And what is the third class railway fare there? So far as I remember, it was one penny per mile; here it is 2½ pies per mile. There may be a little discrepancy here and there and I shall be glad to be corrected. So, 2½ pies is really equal to a pice. A penny is not now equal to 4 pice; it is about 11 pies. Therefore, the Britisher pays only three times higher railway fare although his income is more than 15 times higher. I pay a little over one-third of the railway fare in England which means that railway travelling is 400 per cent. higher in this country than the railway travelling in England. This hoax about India being the country in which travelling is cheapest must be once for all exposed, or let the Honourable the Railway Member prove that the income of the Indian is this and he pays so much per mile. Simply because in terms of pies it is higher in England it is said travelling is cheap here. As Macaulay said when framing the Indian Penal Code, "Don't think that a fine of five rupees on the poor man is the same as a fine of five rupees on the rich man. The figure is the same but the rich man can spend five thousand rupees when a poor man cannot spend five rupees". Therefore these figures only are most misleading. I say you are taxing these poor and overcrowded people who are already paying more than you know, on economic lines in a commercial railway. And all the excuses given are thoroughly hollow, oppressive and cynical.

Sir, I support the cut and oppose the grant.

Mr. Abdul Qaiyum (North-West Frontier Province: General): Mr. Deputy President, Sir. I do not propose to take all the time which a Member of this House is entitled to but I wish to make one observation. The course of the debate has revealed how utterly out of touch the present expanded Executive Council is with the wishes and feelings of the Indian people. If they can claim to represent any party or if they can legitimately claim to have any constituency it is the European block sitting right opposite in this House. I can understand European Members of the expanded Executive Council agreeing to such a monstrous proposal as the one which has been brought before this House by the Honourable the War Transport Member. But I really fail to realize how any Indian—even if he be a member of the Viceroy's expanded Executive Council—could stoop so low as to be a party to such an iniquitous impost on his own countrymen.

Dr. P. N. Banerjee (Calcutta Suburbs: Non-Muhammadan Urban): Have they been consulted?

Mr. Abdul Qaiyum: If they have not been consulted, then the sooner this farce of expanded Indian Executive Council is put an end to, the better for all of us.

As far as the European Group is concerned, I was of opinion that our European friends in this country are the enemies of the Indians as far as deeds and actions are concerned, but the speech which my Honourable friend of the European Group just now made on the floor of this House reveals that even in their thoughts they are anti-Indian. They are so hopelessly out of touch with the conditions in this country. Really I am amazed at the attitude which the Government have taken up over this matter—the rise in fares amounting to 25 per cent.

The Honourable the Finance Member came to the rescue of his colleague and started delivering a lecture. It reminded me of the days when I was a first-year student in the London School of Economics. We used to have our

[Mr. Abdul Qaiyum.]

professors. They used to come in and we used to look at them. They used to talk in the same manner. The Honourable the Finance Member talked in the same strain and talked as if we are all fools, as if we do not understand the minds of our people, as if he alone can understand or is at all in touch with the people whom we have the honour to represent in this House. It is no use. Our country has gone too far to be tricked any more by the speeches of the type which the Honourable the Finance Member has just delivered. Therefore, we once again call upon you—I do not propose to take any more time and I shall resume my seat in two minutes—if you have any respect for the wishes of this House or the views which are very strongly held by the people of India, it is high time that you retraced your steps and withdrew this monstrous and iniquitous tax which you are trying to impose on our countrymen. You are only trying to finance a war over which we have absolutely no say, and you simply refuse to take us into your confidence; you wish to carry on merrily as long as you can. If you have a handful of industrialists on your side and a handful of princes who have no other option but to help you—the industrialists are those who have profit motive—and many of our unfortunate countrymen who, as a result of your economic bungling, have been forced to join your army because they were impelled by hunger, you think that the whole of India is with you. You talk of the example of United States. But how does your Government compare with the Government of the United States? You are a Fascist Government, absolutely callous in thought and action. You do not represent the people in this country. We on this side of the House have decided to oppose this iniquitous tax—this monstrous extortion, which you wish to levy on our people.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: Sir, this discussion on the cut motion has taken the form of another general discussion on the Budget. So far as Government is concerned, we have endeavoured to base our case upon reason throughout. We have given the reasons. . . (Interruptions). . . for imposing this increase and we have answered our critics with reason, and I must confess that we have received a very little constructive criticism from the opposition.

If I might take the case of the last speaker and the first speaker for the Congress Party, they produced very few reasons against what we propose to do, and when they start disparaging their opponents in the manner that they have done, I suggest that that merely shows the weakness of their case. I will answer Mr. Das on some other occasion. In fact the only proposal that I understood him to make was that military travel other than tickets of soldiers travelling on their own account should be brought into account for this purpose. If that means anything, it means. . .

Mr. B. Das: I did not suggest that I advocated increment of freight.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: Then I misunderstood the Honourable Member.

I will just deal with one or two points only. Dr. Sir Zia Uddin said that by 1950 the Reserve Funds of the Railways would amount to 370 crores.

Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad: Under heads A, B and C.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: Well, Sir, I suggest that that was the sort of mathematics which brought on the disaster of the 1930. The Honourable Member has clearly not observed even the year 1944-45, the budget year. We are already making inroads into the Depreciation Fund although there is as yet no scrapping of old plant because we have to keep it in operation during the war. Then, he has also neglected the graphs which were put before him at the time when we were discussing the Depreciation Fund on the Convention Committee, which showed so far as I can recollect, that the Depreciation Fund will be exhausted by about the year 1960—I am not sure of the exact date, but the Depreciation Fund will be exhausted. So, Sir, I maintain that this sort of argument should bear no weight with the House and I would ask the House to reserve its decision on the Depreciation Fund until the Convention Committee has considered it.

My Honourable friend, Mr. Stokes, of the European Party asked that I should give reply as to what we have done in regard to the recommendations of the Central Advisory Council for Railways. Time does not permit me to go into all these details, but I would like to assure him now that all those points which he has raised have been taken up and where action is possible, action is being taken. He made an important point, I thought, about Assam. Unquestionably, passengers in Assam are in the main travelling on account of the war and certainly there is hardship owing to the curtailment of the services, but it is difficult to put on more trains and all that I can say is that all that we can do at the moment is to try and help the province with buses to relieve the congestion.

Mr. Naidu referred to the increased cost of travelling. In spite of what Mr. Jamnadas Mehta says it is still the cheapest travel in the world, in spite also of the fact that Mr. Mehta himself is trying consistently to put up the cost by demands for increased concessions for labour. I am not saying that he is not right. He is trying to do what we ourselves are trying to do. He is trying to get up the standard of living of his workers as we are trying to get up the standard of third class passenger travel. But I do think that my Honourable friend should be consistent.

Sir Cowasjee Jehangir says that we should treat railways as a public utility company and see that we give service. That is precisely what we are doing, but we admit that in the past we have not given good enough service to the third class passengers and this is a genuine attempt to do so. This is the first attempt of its kind and I say that to have this turned down would be a bitter blow to the first steps towards post-war reconstruction. He says that I am inconsistent when I say that the reserves are insufficient and yet I agree to the apportionment between the railways and general revenues. He suggests that I should have stuck out and succeeded in getting a greater apportionment for the railways. If I were in charge of the railways alone, I would naturally wish to claim all the railway surplus, all of which should be retained by the railways. Anyone with that responsibility only would wish to look after his own concern but I am a Member of Government and I must consider the finances of Government as a whole and so, I respectfully suggest, must the House.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: It is an admission.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: Yes.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: Not on merits.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: Certainly, and I would remind the House that they agreed to this apportionment. The railway surplus arises in the main out of the increased operational efficiency of the railways in relation to a wholly temporary war activity. That is the phrase I used in the Budget speech. In other words, these surpluses come out of the war and it is only reasonable that a proportion should go back to it.

Sir Cowasjee Jehangir: May I point out that the depreciation is also due to the war. The greater extent of the depreciation on railways and the greater use of the railways are also due to the war.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: That is why the Convention Committee suggested that Government should allocate additional funds to depreciation and we accepted that view. But there is no question about it that this surplus does come out of the war and it is only reasonable that it should go back to it. The war has got to be won. If it is not, there will be no railways to run at all.

The next question is whether the contribution to Government is disproportionate to the needs of the general budget. Well, that, is a matter of opinion. Sir Cowasjee Jehangir would like some other form of taxation. He would perhaps wish that the railways should stand absolutely first and the war second, but personally as I stated last year, I think, taking into account all the circumstances in the situation in which we are placed, the allocation between railway reserves and general revenues is reasonable.

Finally Sir Cowasjee Jehangir seemed to argue as if the proceeds of this increase were going to general revenues. I would point out that we have arranged

[Sir Edward Benthall.]

to put these Rs. 10 crores to a special fund. It does not go to general revenues. In that respect we are in accord with his views. He further said that if we could show conclusively that people could pay, he would not oppose this increase. I have quoted instances which convince me that the bulk of the people—there are admittedly cases of hardship—are in a position to pay. I will quote three more.

On the 1942-43 figures, taking a population of 400 million in this country, the number of journeys made per person on an average is $1\frac{1}{2}$. The enhanced revenue from third class fares represented by this increase amounts to less than three annas per head of the population. There are few articles which any average person purchases that do not give a greater increase to the average individual budget.

I will take the second case. One speaker mentioned in talking of inflation that Bengal rice crop was bringing in an addition of 56 crores to the people of Bengal, apart altogether from increases in the value of the jute crop.

Dr. P. N. Banerjee: Millions are starving.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: People are starving because people in control of the rice are charging a price which the poor people cannot pay.

Out of the 56 crores on an all population basis, the incidence on this is $1\frac{1}{2}$ crores out of 56.

As the third instance, I would take a telegram which I have received today from Bombay, a piteous appeal, Mr. Jamnadas Mehta would say, from a gentleman who appears to be living outside the 10 mile zone. He claims to represent, as he himself says, $2\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs people travelling once or twice a week for sheer necessity of livelihood. Well, Sir, the cost to those people who appear to have to make a journey once or twice a week would be two to four annas per week, and knowing what we do of the increase in wages in the Bombay area, and recognising, as Sir Cawasjee Jehangir himself has said that the bulk of these are travelling on account of increased war activity, and recognising also that these workers in the war industries can command good wages, I do not think it can be argued that two or four annas a week is an excessive charge against what we know to be the increased wages of those people. Such people can either travel once a week and save money or if they make one journey a week, at the worst they would have to pay two or four annas more.

I won't take the time of the House further. I still maintain that on its merits this increase deserves the support of the House in order to achieve a social benefit and provide a nation-building fund for the future.

[At this stage, Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim resumed the Chair.)

Before I sit down I think I should make clear to the House what this cut motion really means in case any Member is not quite clear. The effect of the cut motion disapproving the transfer of Rs. 10 crores to railway reserves will be to leave this sum in the railway surplus, with the automatic result that this sum will be transferred to general revenues. That is the automatic result of this cut motion if it goes through. (Interruptions.)

May I continue, Sir?

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Order, order; let the Honourable Member continue.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: If this cut motion goes through, it would defeat my object, it would defeat Sir Cawasjee Jehangir's object and everybody else's object, whose desire is to build up the railway reserves for this particular purpose. If this goes through, it will deprive third class passengers of the fund to improve their amenities.

3 P.M.

Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. K. O. Neogy (Dacca Division: Non-Muhammadan Rural): Do not shed crocodile tears.

Dr. P. N. Banerjea: Do not misinterpret.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: I may inform the House of what is the effect of this cut motion. That is the effect.

Honourable Members: No, no.

Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari: Stabilise the Executive Council.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: May I continue, Sir? . . .

(Interruptions.)

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Order, order; let the Honourable Member continue.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: That is what will be the effect of this cut motion. It will deprive third class passengers of a fund to improve their amenities and will only result in assisting the Honourable Finance Member's own budget. That is not the intention of the Government and I do not think, frankly, that that is the intention of this House, but that is its effect. If the Honourable the Mover and his supporters wish to press this motion, I must ask the House to reject it as being quite contrary in its effect to all their arguments.

Honourable Members: No, no.

Nawabzada Muhammad Liaquat Ali Khan (Rohilkund and Kumaon Divisions: Muhammadan Rural): May I ask a question? Will the Honourable the War Transport Member agree not to increase the railway fares if this cut motion is withdrawn?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: No, Sir.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The question is:

"That the demand under the head 'Appropriation to Reserve' be reduced by Rs. 10,00,00,000."

The Assembly divided:

AYES—51.

Abdul Ghani, Maulvi Muhammad.
Abdul Qaiyum, Mr.
Abdullah, Mr. H. M.
Azhar Ali, Mr. Muhammad.
Bajoria, Babu Baijnath.
Banerjea, Dr. P. N.
Chattopadhyaya, Mr. Amarendra Nath.
Choudhury, Mr. Muhammad Hussain.
Dam, Mr. Ananga Mohan.
Das, Mr. B.
Datta, Mr. Akhil Chandra.
Deshmukh, Mr. Govind V.
Essak Sait, Mr. H. A. Sathar H.
Ghuznavi, Sir Abdul Halim.
Gupta, Mr. K. S.
Habibar Rahman, Dr.
Hans Raj, Raizada.
Hegde, Sri K. B. Jinaraja.
Hosmani, Mr. S. K.
Ismail Khan, Hajee Chowdhury Muhammad.
Jehangir, Sir Cowasjee.
Jinnah, Mr. M. A.
Joshi, Mr. N. M.
Kailash Bihari Lall, Mr.
Krishnamachari, Mr. T. T.

Lahiri Chaudhury, Mr. D. K.
Lalchand Navalrai, Mr.
Lalljee, Mr. Hooseinbhoj A.
Liaquat Ali Khan Nawabzada Muhammad.
Maitra, Pandit Lakshmi Kanta.
Mangal Singh, Sardar.
Mehta, Mr. Jammadas M.
Misra, Pandit Shambhudayal.
Murtuza Sahib Bahadur, Maulvi Syed.
Naidu, Mr. G. Rangiah.
Nairang, Syed Ghulam Bhik.
Nauman, Mr. Muhammad.
Neogy, Mr. K. C.
Pande, Mr. Badri Dutt.
Parma Nand, Bhai.
Raza Ali, Sir Syed.
Reddiar, Mr. K. Sitarama.
Sham Lal, Lala.
Siddique Ali Khan, Nawab.
Srivastava, Mr. Hari Sharan Prasad.
Subbarayan, Shrimati K. Radha Bai.
Umar Aly Shah, Mr.
Vamin Khan, Sir Muhammad.
Yusuf Abdool Karim, Seth.
Zafar Ali Khan, Maulana.
Zia Uddin Ahmad, Dr. Sir.

Ahmad Nawaz Khan, Major Nawab Sir.
 Ambedkar, The Honourable Dr. B. R.
 Anthony, Mr. Frank R.
 Azizul Huque, The Honourable Sir M.
 Benthall, The Honourable Sir Edward.
 Bewoor, Sir Gurunath.
 Bhagchand Soni, Rai Bahadur Seth.
 Caroe, Mr. O. K.
 Chapman-Mortimer, Mr. T.
 Chatterji, Mr. S. C.
 Daga, Seth Sunder Lall.
 Dalal, Dr. Sir Ratanji Dinshaw.
 Dalpat Singh, Sardar Bahadur Captain.
 Gwilt, Mr. E. L. C.
 Habibur-Rahman, Khan Bahadur Sheikh.
 Haidar, Khan Bahadur Shamsuddin.
 Imam, Mr. Saiyid Haidar.
 Inskip, Mr. A. C.
 Ismaiel Alikhan, Kunwer Hajee.
 James, Sir F. E.
 Jawahar Singh, Sardar Bahadur Sardar Sir.
 Khare, The Honourable Dr. N. B.
 Krishnamoorthy, Mr. E. S. A.
 Kushal Pal Singh, Raja Bahadur.
 The motion was adopted.

Lawson, Mr. C. P.
 Maxwell, The Honourable Sir Reginald.
 Miller, Mr. C. C.
 Muazzam Sahib Bahadur, Mr. Muhammad.
 Mudaliar, The Honourable Dewan Bahadur
 Sir A. Ramaswami.
 Ogilvie, Mr. C. M. G.
 Piere Lall Kureel, Mr.
 Raisman, The Honourable Sir Jeremy.
 Richardson, Sir Henry.
 Roy, The Honourable Sir Asoka.
 Shahban, Khan Bahadur Mian Ghulam Kadir
 Muhammad.
 Siva Raj, Rao Bahadur N.
 Spence, Sir George.
 Srivastava, The Honourable Sir Jwala
 Prasad.
 Stokes, Mr. H. G.
 Sultan Ahmed, The Honourable Sir.
 Thakur Singh, Capt.
 Trivedi, Mr. C. M.
 Tyson, Mr. J. D.
 Wagstaff, Col. H. W.
 Zahid Husain, Mr.
 Zaman, Mr. S. B.

DEMAND NO. 1—RAILWAY BOARD.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Now the Nationalist Party will move their cuts.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: I wish to move No. 54. Demand No. 1 has got to be moved first.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: Sir, I move:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 14,55,000, 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, 1945, in respect of 'Railway Board.'"

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Motion moved:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 14,55,000, 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, 1945, in respect of 'Railway Board.'"

Enhancement of Railway Fares.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: Sir, I move.

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

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): It has already been discussed on the last cut motion.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: May I explain my point? The Honourable Member in charge tried to make out that the effect of the carrying of the cut motion which has just been carried, would be quite different from what we intended it to be. Now, in order to place that point beyond any shadow of doubt, I should like to be permitted to move this cut motion formally and without any speech dealing with the merits of the question, so that the whole matter may be placed beyond the shadow of any doubt and the intention of this House may be expressed in the clearest possible terms. In that event, if we could carry this cut motion, the other cut motion which has just been adopted would be taken to be a sort of consequential cut.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The cut motion is that the demand under the head 'Railway Board' be reduced by Rs. 100 to discuss the enhancement of railway fares. That has been discussed under the cut motion that has just been adopted, and I do not think that this cut motion will carry the matter any further.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: I quite see. If by your own ruling you place the matter beyond any doubt, our purpose will be perfectly well served.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): I do not know what the effect will be, but the discussion on the last cut motion was entirely on the basis that the increase in railway fares out of which the sum of Rs. 10 crores

was to be obtained is not justified. As a matter of fact this motion cannot clinch the matter any further. Therefore, I hold that this motion is out of order as it will entail mere repetition.

Dr. P. N. Banerjee: Our purpose has been served.

Disapproval of Policy and Working of the Railway Board.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra (Presidency Division: Non-Muhammadan Rural): I move:

"That the demand under the head 'Railway Board' be reduced to Re. 1."

Sir, this cut motion is designed to bring to the notice of Government our sense of strong disapproval of the policy and working of the Railway Board. In all parliamentary institutions a motion for refusal of supplies is an extreme step and is only resorted to when the situation is such that relief through any other constitutional methods is unattainable.

Now, Sir, the Indian railways with a capital outlay of about Rs. 750 crores are the greatest national asset of India, and I emphatically say that the administration of this vast national asset has been carried on by the Railway Board in a manner which is prejudicial to the best interests of this country. It is not possible within the brief time at my disposal to lay my finger on the manifold misdeeds of omission and commission of this Railway Board. I will indicate briefly some of the aspects of its administration which call for very serious notice of this House.

The House is well aware that the income of the Railway Department has been mounting to almost astronomical figures compared to the incomes it used to earn in the years 1930 and 1931. In 1942-43, the receipts amounted to 155.48 crores. In 1943-44, they rose to 178.5 crores and in 1944-45 they are expected to yield 192 crores; and yet with all these mounting receipts the Railway Board has not been able to bring the expenses well under control. The expenditure has also gone up by leaps and bounds. That is due partly to extravagance, partly to want of a regular plan and partly because it is not at all responsive to public opinion in this country. With this phenomenal increase in the earnings of the railways, what have the people got in return? They have got drastic curtailment of all facilities of travel. This is a point which has been emphasised in the course of the Railway budget debate. By one stroke of the pen the other day, we found that 71 trains were cancelled. That is an achievement of which the Honourable Member may feel proud, if he wants to. Then, Sir, there is the question of overcrowding in trains. It has assumed formidable proportions. Train journey today is feared by people to such an extent that I can assure the Honourable the War Transport Member that luxury travels have long disappeared. Nobody will dream of undertaking a railway journey in these days if he can help it. My friend the Transport Member has been under the illusion that the Indian people are suffering from a surfeit of wealth and therefore they should be relieved of this extra money in their pockets by all manner of taxation.

Leaving aside the facilities of travel, what about the amenities? So many Members have drawn pointed attention to the despicable condition of the railway coaches in which people are called upon to travel. Bath-rooms have not got lights, water closets do not work. Platforms and waiting rooms are in a terrible mess. The Honourable the Transport Member claims to have made elaborate provision for the amenities of the third class passengers. I would call the attention of the House to the Explanatory Memorandum on page 17. There the House will find a list of the various categories of amenities, such as improvement of latrines and sanitary arrangements, water supply to passengers, provision of lower class waiting rooms and waiting halls, provision of covered platforms, provision of refreshment rooms and tea stalls for lower class passengers, booking facilities, raised platforms, additional carriages to reduce overcrowding, improvements in existing carriages and other objects to improve the amenities of lower class passengers. This pretentious programme gives the impression that we are soon going to have a regular Paradise in the Railways. What is the amount that is provided? Only 4.39 lakhs as against the estimated income, as

[Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra.]

I said, of 192 crores! This is about the amenities which they propose to provide during the coming year.

Then, Sir, in the Central Advisory Council for Railways, we pressed hard for the provision of greater facilities by way of providing more trains, adding more coaches to existing trains, so that the pressure of overcrowding may be relieved to some extent. Well, on their own admission, they have reduced passenger train mileage by 37 per cent. of the pre-war level.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: No, Sir. I referred to a figure of about 20 per cent.—the passenger vehicle mileage.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra: I am taking the passengers mileage as it is given in the Explanatory Memorandum.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: That is train mileage. The vehicle mileage is much lower.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra: It does not make much difference. I am viewing the case from another point of view. So far about the amenities of travel.

Now, let us see how they are getting on with the vast income they have earned. We had had occasion to draw attention to the scandal of cheap grain shops. In the Standing Finance Committee, for the first time, I drew the pointed attention of the Committee to the fact that cheap grain shops were being run and concessions are allowed to all classes of railway servants irrespective of their pay, including General Managers who draw Rs. 4,000 a month. This is absolutely scandalous and I am told that owing to administrative difficulties the discrimination cannot be made between the different classes of service. They estimated that these grain shops would cost 3 crores of rupees. They now come forward and say that the loss has been more than 10 crores of rupees and they want to provide 1½ crores more this year for the purpose of extension of this privilege in the shape of other necessaries of life,—and these other necessaries of life mean toilets! Let me not be misunderstood. I am in favour of giving concessions to poorly paid railway staff but what is the sense in calling an institution 'cheap grain shop' and at the same time distributing from it to all railway servants, irrespective of their pay, all manner of things that they may require on earth, including toilets and luxury goods.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: We do not sell toilets from the grain shops.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra: The Honourable Member said that soaps are also supplied.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: Washing soap is no toilet.

Pandit Lakshmi Kant Maitra: If it is not toilet, it certainly is not grain. Grain shops should have nothing to do with soaps and all that kind of thing.

Then, Sir, all sorts of favouritism are shown to Railway officials. When they are due to retire, instead of retiring them, extensions are being given to all British Railway officials. General Managers who are due to retire are being given extensions. If they have been already given extensions, more will be given. In the Standing Finance Committee for over a year we considered the question of the abolition of the Lower Gazetted Service. We held that a major administrative change of that character should not be taken up during the period of the war. We discussed the question threadbare and the House knows now with what scant courtesy the Honourable the War Transport Member has dealt with our recommendation on this subject in his Budget speech.

On top of all this, they have increased the railway fares. We have just adopted a motion against the increase. What are the reasons given for this increase? Conservation of coal, checking inflation and engine capacity. Who is responsible for this coal business? What steps did the Railway Administration take to compel the colliery owners to produce coal to the highest possible limit? The European colliery owners did not raise the coal to the highest limit because they would in that case have been amenable to the Excess Profits Tax. So, they won't do it. And the Railway Administration would not exploit their

own collieries to their fullest capacity. Now, threatened with shortage of coal, they say they cannot run sufficient number of trains because they have to conserve the coal position of this country.

Then, take the question of the locomotives. We have been time and again moving in this House for the manufacture of locomotives and wagons in this country. All our demands have been turned down. They are going to import over 600 locomotives in the coming year and yet they would not manufacture any locomotives here. They are not seriously tackling that problem at all. But as we have got a specific cut motion on this subject, it will be debated more fully later on. We sent away many of our locomotives and wagons to the Middle East not caring to ascertain what our own requirements would be. Now, we are faced with the critical situation of power shortage. That is how they are administering the railways in this country.

Take, again, the question of the supply of wagons. It is well known that for want of adequate supply of wagons and for want of proper transport facilities Bengal had to suffer the worst famine in her history last year. Even today foodstuffs are lying piled up in different railway stations. There is no transport which can be provided by this Railway Administration for carrying them to the deficit areas. Almost every day I have been receiving reports saying that huge quantities of foodstuffs are lying about in different places; but where is the transport? It is the Railway Board functioning here in Delhi which is to allot wagons. The result is that Bengal is steadily heading towards another crisis. Unless that situation is promptly attended to I do not know what is going to happen again in that hapless province.

As regards fuel, in the city of Calcutta and in the Mofassil towns people have not known what is soft coke for a number of months. Coal cannot be transported for want of wagon facilities. Kerosene cannot be transported to the places, where it is in short supply. So, this inadequate supply of wagons has been causing tremendous inconvenience and hardship to the people. Vital industries are on the verge of collapse on account of shortage of coal. No adequate step is being taken to relieve this situation.

Then, again, Sir, on several occasions we have asked the Honourable the Transport Member to tell us definitely what are his schemes of priorities with regard to the supply of wagons for the transport of essential commodities. At one time, I think, we were told in this House that food had the first priority. I am not quite sure if that view is held by the Transport Member today.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: Did the Honourable Member say imported articles?

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra: I am speaking of the wagon supply for food transport within India. But unfortunately even today there is the most lamentable lack of transport facilities for the transport of foodstuffs.

Sir, my time is nearing its end and I cannot dwell on the other aspects of this question, but what I have said so far is, I think, enough for the Honourable House to refuse supplies to this autocratic, irresponsible and irresponsible body, the Railway Board, which is a citadel of reaction and inefficiency.

Sir, I move.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Cut motion moved:

"That the demand under the head 'Railway Board' be reduced to Re. 1."

Mr. Muhammad Nauman (Patna and Chota Nagpur *cum* Orissa: Muhammadan): Mr. President, Sir, I rise to support the motion before the House. The Railway Board stands condemned for the mal-administration and the way in which it has been running the business for the last so many years. I do not want to dilate at length on points which have already been stressed as to the helpless position to which the passengers have been reduced. I would only remind the Honourable the War Transport Member to the statement that I made in a question that he and the whole paraphernalia of the Railway Board is responsible for many suicides which are being committed by those passengers who travel on foot-boards and lose their lives because of that. No figures have

[Mr. Muhammad Nauman.]

been given to us so far of such casualties. We have not been told how many people have died because they were knocked down from the foot-boards of the trains. Now, Sir, there exists some imaginary black hole somewhere in Calcutta but does the Honourable the Transport Member know that all the compartments of the trains these days are the real and living black holes of the time. All the compartments are reduced to the position of the black hole where passengers are sandwiched to suffocation and have to travel under conditions which can only be compared with that imaginary black hole referred to. Notwithstanding all these discomforts and inconveniences which the travelling public is suffering from, the Honourable the Transport Member had the courage to come and say that more money was required for providing amenities for 3rd class passengers in some dim and distant future. I know that a plea for increment like this can be made on many grounds, but probably in this particular case the Honourable Member himself feels shy of the statement that he has made so far in view of the deterioration in the service of trains in the present time. I do not want to discuss the different things that are responsible for the cutting down of trains or for the conditions which have been brought about, but I can certainly say that the Railway Board stands condemned when they have not been able to improve the situation and the deterioration has come to a stage when travelling in this country has become a Herculean task for every individual whether he travels in the highest class or in the lowest class.

Now, Sir, I come to the other side of the Railway Board, namely, their establishment. What do we find here? They have been granting extensions in services. These extensions are granted mostly to Europeans and Anglo-Indians who, although spent up forces, are still a great force for the Railway Board. Although they have no energy left in them, yet extensions are granted to them on the plea of "Experience" and all sorts of favouritism is shown to the favoured class. On that score also the Railway Board stands condemned. I need hardly say that we on this side have been very much vexed at the situation and we have been condemning it from the very beginning. All our protests have been ignored as it makes no difference to this Government whether we condemn a certain thing or approve of it. They go on doing what they think is correct according to their standard.

Now, Sir, again referring to the establishment, I should like to know what has been the position of the different communities in the services. From 1934 as compared to 1942, if you see the representation of Muslims in the lower gazetted services and the superior services, you will find that there has been no appreciable improvement of any kind. In spite of promises made by the different Members in charge of railways from time to time, what we see is that the Muslims in the lower gazetted staff are still about 7 to 8 per cent. and in the superior services, they are still worse. In eight years they have been able to make no headway whatsoever. This is the position to which they have been reduced—the Muslims. I do not want to quote figures, because we will do so more elaborately when that particular cut motion of my Party comes before the House. I am only referring to this now in passing to condemn the Railway Board for reducing the position of Muslims to a hopeless condition. As partners or sharers in the so-called commercial concern worth about 800 crores, we have every right to demand a division of that booty or spoil which is given to different persons as salaries. The share of Muslim employees does not even come to ten per cent. of the total of about 36 crores, which the Railways pay towards salaries.

Another point which I want to refer is that within recent years there has been a lot of corruption creeping in in that department, much more than in any other Department. If any one wants to book goods from one station to another, the Railway staff would not do it without receiving bribes and they are encouraged to take bribes by the way in which the rules and regulations are framed by the Railway Board. The rules are not always clear and the staff interprets the rules

in a manner that suits them for squeezing bribes. Corruption is now much more rampant in Railways than it was before these restriction rules came into existence. I heard that some corruption committees were set up. I do not know as yet what has been the improvement on that side. Was any report received from those committees? Were corruption committees set up by different railways? I came across a report in Calcutta that such corruption committees were set up but I do not know what they have done. What has been the result of the enquiries by those committees? Is the Railway Board aware of the results?

Next, Sir, I would say a word or two about the Railway Board's management of these grain shops. There is a lot of dissatisfaction among the employees of railways that these grain shops have not been of much use to them as it was intended to be. In the Railway Standing Finance Committee sanction was taken from us on the ground that these grain shops were intended for the employees who were drawing a small salary up to about Rs. 200 or Rs. 300. Advantage was taken of these shops by higher officers as well. It was also said that in the matter of purchase, the contractors supplied rotten grains which were not eatable, and in that way the contractors made a lot of money through the patronage of some of the big railway officials on E. I. and B. & A. Railways. The Railway Board stands condemned on this ground also. The Railway Board do not keep a watch, they do not call for any report of what was going on, what arrangements were made for the distribution of these grains which were being procured.

These are the few remarks which I want to make on the ground of which we want to say that the Railway Board has not done its duty and therefore it should be condemned and censured in the manner in which my Honourable friend has sought to do by moving his cut motion. I am not now prepared to traverse the different parts of the Board's administration but what little I have said will convince the House that the Railway Board stands condemned. With these words, I support the motion.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai (Sind: Non-Muhammadan Rural): Sir, we just now debated a motion in the House and on that motion, we defeated the Government. The Government do not seem to be satisfied with it and they are heading for another defeat. In the former cut motion the intention was to reduce the Budget by the amount which covered the 25 per cent. increase in railway fares. It was considered that that was not a direct censure motion in such a manner that they would not levy this fare and also return it to the reserve fund. Here is a direct censure motion in which supplies are refused, except one rupee. That would be certainly a direct method of censure in order to show that this raising of fares as well as many other acts of mismanagement and maladministration cannot be tolerated any longer by this side of the House. To begin with I should like to call the Honourable Member, Member for Railways, instead of the War Transport Member, because his main concern is with the railways in India, the war work connected with railways is, as it were, a carriage attached to the train to carry military people. I submit his main business should be that the railways are managed properly, that there is no maladministration, that there is no harassment of the travelling public, that no burden which they cannot bear is placed on them. The first item of maladministration which I would refer to is this. There is so much rise in receipts, as I will presently show, not from the military side but from the civil side; it does not stand to reason or commonsense that the fares should be increased still further. The working of the railways from the military side also is such that there is mismanagement there also. First of all it is admitted by the Honourable Member on page 5 of the speech :

"Separate statistics are not available of the number of military passengers, but an examination of the earnings from civilian traffic and of the military passengers other than those travelling in military specials shows that although military traffic has more than doubled, the bulk of the increase is in civilian travel."

It is, however, forgotten that in civilian travel also there is partly military travel. Labourers, for instance, who are taken through contractors, often travel

[Mr. Lalchand Navalrai.]

long distances; they may be thought to travel for social functions like marriages or visits to friends, but it is not so; it is all military travel. Therefore you will find that there is more travel on the military side than on the civil. Then the Honourable Member has tried to prove by figures that civilian passengers have increased in number during the year, but the census does not include people like these labourers who travel on military work.

Then it is said that there is growing expense. I claim that that is also on the military side. For instance, a large number of special trains, about 2,000 a month, are run for the military. Then, the earning from military traffic is small compared with the civil traffic. If the carrying capacity of the carriage is 100 for the public, it is 33 for European military personnel and 66 for Indian military personnel. Therefore the earnings from this military traffic are not commensurate with the expenditure. Even in public trains when compartments are reserved for the military it is a common feature that the full carrying capacity is not used; some of them run empty or with an insufficient number of occupants. I have said that the civilian population, specially the lower class passengers, travel in overcrowded conditions, not like these military people. They go even on the foot-boards; in a carriage with a capacity of 40, more than 100 are taken, which gives thrice the ordinary income from the traffic. The excuse given that you are unable to give separate figures for military and civil traffic, as you have said in your report, is therefore easily understood. You do not want to give us your statistics because we might challenge the correctness of your figures.

Then it is also clear that your accounting is not thorough, specially in regard to the items debitable to the military, nor is it favourable to Indian finances. After the war when there will be adjustment of the war expenditure between Britain and India you will greatly suffer for not having included the proper items in the military expenditure. You must, therefore, have elaborate and thorough accounting. We know these things. During the last war joint expenses were incurred as they are done now. We say that all this in the Budget is not war expenditure for which India should be liable; it is the British Government which should be liable. These adjustments will have to be made; otherwise your exchequer will suffer and you will suffer. Therefore, this increase of fares is wrong. But what are the amenities you are giving to the travelling public? I find in these explanatory notes that you have provided only one thousand rupees for amenities on the North Western Railway.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: No, Sir, we provided 10 crores.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: The statement on page 17 shows against each railway the expenditure proposed on this item, and against the North Western Railway the sum shown is one thousand. Therefore, it is futile to say that you are going to provide amenities; you have provided no amenities up till now; you have only taxed the people and done nothing. The Honourable Member has something to do with the war because he is the War Transport Member; he should, therefore, give better advice to the Finance Member as to the method of raising money for the war. It is not by this raising of fares and other things that wars are won; they are won with money and that money comes mostly by borrowing. You are not borrowing at all; only you are squeezing the people.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The Honourable Member has one minute more.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: The important amenities to be provided at once are many. The present proposal to increase fares should go, the railways should be made popular and that will make you also popular. We expected that when the Honourable Member came here from public life he would work for the public, but it is an irony of fate that by his association he has also been contaminated. Overcrowding should be removed. It is said that people should not travel. Are people in other civilised countries told not to travel? (Cries of "Yes".) How do you know that these people are travelling unnecessarily?

Mr. President (The Honourable, Sir Abdur Rahim): The Honourable Member's time is up.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: It is not unnecessary travel. You are putting obstacles in the way of these people for which you will ultimately suffer.

Mr. Muhammad Azhar Ali (Lucknow and Fyzabad Divisions: Muhammadan Rural): Sir, I have heard today the speech of the Honourable the War Transport Member and the replies that he gave. He asked Dr. Zia Uddin on this side to explain why there was too much of overcrowding and too much of travel last year. Sir Cowasjee and Mr. Jamnadas Mehta have explained that. My Honourable friend, the War Transport Member, when he travels in his saloon, cannot possibly know the conditions prevailing in the country itself. When he compares the income of Rs. 10 of the Indian farmer in the old days—whom he calls 'farmer', but which is the word which is not so very much applicable to India as it may be applicable to European farmers—with his present income of Rs. 40, he is obsessed with the idea of European farms. Our farmers, whom we know, are not generally very big farmers, but they are peasants. Their holdings are not so very large and their holdings are not so very paying as the Honourable Member perhaps seems to consider. Sir, he says that the income of the 'Indian farmer' has increased from Rs. 10 to Rs. 40. It may sound as income to him, but I would like to inform the Honourable Member that this income has a burden on it. He has debts which he has not been able to liquidate so far. Then, he is burdened by taxes, war loans; he is made to subscribe a certain percentage every year to war loans. He is made to pay cesses which are imposed by the Government. At the same time, it is a pity that the other Members on the Treasury Benches too do not realize the condition of the peasantry of India. They have to pay for litigation as well. If the Honourable the Finance Member and the Honourable the War Transport Member were to take all these items into consideration, they will realize that this is no income but a bare means of livelihood.

Now, Sir, I come to the list of demands made by the Honourable the War Transport Member. Demands No. 6A to H are so cleverly bungled that one cannot deduce the actual position of the general Railway Administration and their staff, as not a single number is given of their strength in the manner it is given in Demands Nos. 1 to 3. From a cursory reading of these documents within the short period at our disposal, Sir, you will wonder how the Railway Board has allowed the masquerading of the railway finances. When we see the Red Book, that is volume II of the Report of the Railway Board, we find that the statement showing the total number and cost of Gazetted and Non-Gazetted staff in Appendix C-III (pages 250 to 255) of the Volume, shows a nominal decrease in the number of the Gazetted Staff during 1942-43 on the East Indian Railway against the unparalleled increase in their pay and leave salary in comparison with the decrease in their pay and leave salary against the increase in number of the Gazetted Staff during 1942-43 on the Bombay, Baroda and Central India Railway. Similar is the case of non-Gazetted staff; that is the number of staff is increased but the pay and leave salary are decreased during the year 1942-43.

Sir, the summary of accidents and casualties, given in Appendix D (pages 272-273) of Volume II of the said report indicates the increase in some cases to cent per cent. in the year 1942-43 against the preceding four years. There is nothing to show what preventive measures were adopted by the Railway Administrations or by the Railway Board to minimise them. The General Manager of the East Indian Railway in a message dated the 29th December, 1942, which has been printed on the fly-page of the East Indian Railway Gazette No. 26 of 1943, has correctly described "that there has been a noticeable falling off in efficiency in our working". The causes for it may be known to the Honourable the Transport Member, but it appears to me that the first and the foremost cause is favouritism and nepotism encircled with corruption, which is so conspicuously

[Mr. Muhammad Azhar Ali.]

rampant all round, in addition to other causes. Abuse of position amongst the low paid staff below Rs. 25 p. m. at the present time is natural, as they are the persons who are hit hard by the rise in prices and due to the fact that Government have denied them a living wage. The boastful claim of distribution of grains and other foodstuff along with a meagre allowance for dearness is no remedy at all, but, on the contrary, this has imported more corruption amongst the purchasing and distributing staff.

Sir, abuse of power is another kind of corruption. There is no justification of corruption amongst the Gazetted staff. Had the Gazetted staff itself not indulged in abuse of their power, they would have been able to check, if not totally eradicate, corruption in the low-paid staff. But unfortunately this enthusiasm is lacking in them. In case the Honourable the Transport Member is inclined to differ from what I have said, I am prepared to quote particular instances on the floor of this House to prove the truth of these allegations. I will take the liberty of quoting just a few instances:

Increase in the tariff rates from 15 to 25 per cent., irrespective of whether it is rural or urban area, in the case of Messrs. Ballabhdas Eshwardas, Catering Contractors, East Indian Railway, (as stated in the reply to unstarred question No. 11 asked on the 22nd of September, 1942) and denial of the rates of dearness allowance admissible to Delhi City to the N. W. R. staff at Delhi Shahdara which is in the Imperial enclave.

Another case is of permitting Messrs. G. F. Kellner & Co., Ltd., to abolish second class tariff rates of refreshments on the East Indian Railway, whereas other Railways still retain second class tariff rates for European refreshments.

Then, permitting Mr. A. J. Doran, Superintendent, Commercial, Moradabad Division, the use of Inspection Carriage No. 4901 during his absence from duty on leave in May, June and July, 1943, and denying the same concession to others.

Again permission to return to duty from 1st May, 1941, given to Mr. Alfred John Doran on the East Indian Railway after he has retired from service on the 23rd November, 1940, and computing the period from 23rd November, 1940, to 30th April, 1941, into leave without allowance and paying him Rs. 1,300 per month in the old scales against the reply given by the Honourable the Finance Member to starred question No. 239 asked on the 6th August, 1943 (page 482 of the Debates). In that question the dates and particulars given will be found on page 219 of the History of Services of the Officers of the Indian State Railways corrected up to 1st July, 1941, relating to Mr. Alfred John Doran and denying the permission to return to duty to other officers.

Again, Sir, retaining in service the special ticket examiner No. DT228 after the frauds committed by him have been brought to the notice of the administration. The friendship was broken and the dealer has sued him for the supply of birds. The Court at Karnal has passed a decree against the special ticket examiner DT228 but the railway administration on being informed never asked him the manner in which he carried the birds and the particulars of the parcel way bills under which the freight was paid. He is given house accommodation at Moresarai, Delhi, whereas the other entitled staff is denied the accommodation.

The following staff have been removed from service against the assurance given in reply to unstarred question No. 408 asked on the 20th March, 1936 (page 2946 of the Debates).

Sir, I have given so many instances to the Honourable Member and if he is inclined to do justice to the public against the administration of the railway then he might look earnestly into these cases and then he will find how the administration is working.

Again, Mr. W. E. Millar instituted a suit on the 20th September, 1941, for the recovery of the difference in pay. While the suit was pending and awaiting the filing of the written statement, the Chief Operating Superintendent, East Indian Railway, Calcutta, by Notice No. AE 1174/192, dated the 21st October 1941, removed Mr. Millar from the Service.

Then, Sir, one Mr. Abdul Latif reported sick and submitted the certificates from medical attendant according to rules. The railway authorities were not satisfied with them and directed him to produce the certificate from the railway doctor to which he replied that as there is no railway doctor within the vicinity he is unable to produce one but if the railway authorities direct a railway doctor to visit him he is prepared to bear the expenses of his visit. Thereupon the Divisional Personnel Officer, Lahore, has removed him from service by Notice No. 921-E/2462, dated the 14th August, 1942, without making any enquiry.

If these instances that I have quoted are not enough, I do not know what the House wants nor what the Honourable Member wants. I have given substantial evidence to prove that the administration of the railways is bad.

Mr. K. S. Gupta (Ganjam *cum* Vizagapatam: Non-Muhammadan Rural): If the Railway War Lord is to be condemned, he stands self-condemned with regard to the overcrowding of trains. He can defend himself against any argument, against any complaint, but this stands so unique that it is impossible for him to say a word to defend himself because overcrowding is throughout all the railways a daily happening. Several accidents are due to this overcrowding. People are suffering. People have had contamination and have had epidemics which are prevalent in India on account of this overcrowding in the trains. I know, Sir, even in a compartment reserved for women—it was intended for 24—I saw 50 of them there. They could not have an inch of space to stand. They were so over-crowded that there were cries, there were appeals, there were screams from people. Still children were shoved in and shoved out through the windows. It was a horrible sight. It was a monstrous sight. It does not give you any solace. It does not add to your credit of being here for so many years. Now you say that you have handed over the Assam Bengal Railway or some other railway to the military authorities of America and that without any consultation of this House. You may do anything any day, at any moment. There is none to check you, and that is why I call you a war lord. You may ask this House to get away and you would even say that all of us should be militarised.

At the Waltair railway station people were so overcrowded that one military man, a sepoy, shoved in his big luggage through the window which fell on a woman who was carrying (seven months), and what happened? She was crushed and there was almost flickering life. She was removed out of the compartment through a window and was taken away to the hospital. Then the husband wanted to complain to the Station Master. What happened? As soon as he saw the military dress of the Station Master he began to shake. He could not speak to him. He could not make a complaint. That is why this war lord has militarised even the railway officials from the porter to the station master. That is what is happening on the Bengal Nagpur Railway and the Madras and South Mahratta Railway. I do not know about the other railways.

Then again, the lavatories of the third class compartments are not clean. Even the compartments are most unclean, because the children who cannot get into the lavatories spoil the seats or the places where they ought to stand. Leave alone that, there is not even space to stretch their legs. Even for standing there is no place. When such is the case you say overcrowding is inevitable in a country where there is war! I tell you there is no war here. This war is forced upon us. It is unwanted and still you have imposed it upon us, and these difficulties, uncalled for and unjust.

If you had had a heart something could be done. But it is thoughtlessness and heartlessness on the part of the British Government to allow such a thing to be done. It is akin to the thick skin of a rhinoceros. The beast will only yield if its stomach is pierced. God alone knows who can do it. No man on earth could do it. The third class passenger would not bestow a benediction on your heads for the amenities promised in the land to come, the paradise to be created, after the war. Everything is to be after the war. Do you live after the war, we shall see; But how are we to live now? How are those people who are travelling third class to get on?

[Mr. K. S. Gupta.]

You know, Sir, years ago we raised a hue and cry with regard to your decision to remove the rails, to remove the locomotives, to remove the wagons out of the Indian borders. What have you done? You never care for the cries of the people. You never care for the advice of the representatives of the people here. Since you are most unrepresentative and irresponsible you would not hear a word of advice or heed a warning from us. You are not here to learn lessons by your failures, and you would not profit by the advice given by the elected representatives of the people. You care a tuppence for this House, it is absolutely true. Churchill has said that in the West the Americans who outnumber must have the lead and should issue directives for the war arrangements, similarly you say, because Americans are here at our invitation to save us, we hand over this or that railway to the American military. God won't save such people. God will certainly punish you. No benediction will be your lot, but condemnation you deserve to the greatest extent. You have encouraged one thing. You have succeeded in that one thing. I congratulate you on that, namely, ticketless travelling; if you deserve any congratulations. I put it on that account because in many trains you know for want of space third class booking is stopped in certain stations, intermediate class booking is stopped in certain other stations, second class booking is stopped in some stations: and even those who are prepared to pay higher rates for higher classes, or even prepared to pay anything to secure a ticket, cannot get any ticket, but they have got to travel and do so without tickets. In these days of stress and strain it is not for luxury, it is not for leisure that these people travel. It is sheer necessity and it is a question of 'must'. You have to understand it, or at least try to understand it.

An Honourable Member: If they can.

Mr. K. S. Gupta: I know they cannot.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: How does the Honourable Member account for the ten per cent. of passengers out of the 13 lakhs whom we interrogated, who admitted that they were travelling for pleasure?

Mr. K. S. Gupta: I am not here to answer questions put by the Railway. The Railway interprets in its own manner, it has got its own mis-interpretation, and explanation and as well has its own way of questioning and answering things. But I am here to ventilate the grievances of the third class passengers. The blood, toil and sweat of the third class passengers will visit on you as a curse and see that your war effort will be good for nothing and will be nullified.

Mr. Ananga Mohan Dam (Surma Valley *cum* Shillong: Non-Muhammadan): Sir, in supporting the cut motion I shall briefly refer to the amenities of third class passengers. Fares have already been increased and the number of trains has been reduced, not to speak of any other area,—I speak of the Assam Bengal zone of the Bengal and Assam Railway. On that section there is so much overcrowding in the trains that people generally hang on outside and squat on the footboards. On other railways not only there is no light in bath-rooms, but there is no light in any compartment of the train on this section from start to finish. You can easily imagine the inconvenience of the passengers of the female compartments and owing to overcrowding accidents happen. I know of an old lady who tumbled upon a trunk without being able to see that it was on her way. These things are happening every day. In the Statement I see that nothing under the head amenities for passengers has been provided for the Bengal and Assam Railway. My Honourable friend of the European Group has just mentioned that they are so much in need of it on the Assam side of it. Sir, nothing, not a pie, has been provided for the Assam Bengal zone. The grievances of third class passengers are of long standing. There is inadequate water supply, there is inadequate food supply, there is inadequate waiting room accommodation not to speak of the insanitary condition of third class carriages. It is a very old question which was discussed by a committee in 1921-22, and they expressed the hope that these grievances would be redressed, but even now,

after about a quarter of a century, these amenities of the third class passengers have not been cared for. It shows that like a metaphysical abstraction, these amenities for third class passengers are ever to be approached but never to be attained. The difficulties on the Assam zone are due more to want of transport. The foodstuffs of the province of Assam come from Bihar and Bengal and they are always selling at a higher rate in Assam. Sugar, atta, flour, all these things which are controlled are sold there at higher rates, about 2 or 3 annas more per seer than in Bengal. This is all due to wagon difficulties. My Honourable friend, Mr. Nauman, referred to the cases of corruption on railways. Merchants are not getting wagons at the proper time or in the proper manner. The last committee also desired that these cases of corruption should be stopped. Sir, the bribes do not stick to the hands of the subordinates to whom they are paid but percolate much higher up through the railway service, and that is the reason why no drastic steps have been taken. I do not see why these things should not be stopped even now. The fact is that the railway administration do not realise the magnitude of the evil, the trouble that people are subjected to for want of wagon arrangement. I must ask the Railway Board to immediately put a stop to this evil so that the food difficulties of the people and other difficulties of our countrymen can be removed.

Assam is a place where there is oil mine and there is kerosene. But we do not get kerosene for want of proper transport. Kerosene was selling in the district of Sylhet at the rate of Rs. 3 per seer. Can you imagine that? In the harvesting season the ordinary agriculturists cannot do without light. These men have to work for long hours in the night, and therefore they had to procure kerosene at such a high rate.

Again there are other difficulties in the railways. My Honourable friend the mover of the cut motion has referred to the shortage of coal and shortage of other things, which is all due to the maladministration of the railway people. Crores of rupees are shown in the revenue side of the statement but the Government are not spending them in the proper manner for providing facilities to the people who are the contributors to the enormous profits of the railways. Again, railways are a public utility concern and money acquired by the Railway Board on this account should be spent properly for the benefit of the people. The Honourable the War Transport Member has given reasons for increasing the railway fares and said that the cultivator who was formerly selling his wheat at Rs. 10 per maund was now selling it at a higher rate, but the railway had been carrying that wheat at the same rate at which it used to do before the war. Sir, very few of these cultivators have profited by the war situation, only a few cultivators who have got surplus wheat or paddy to sell, sell in the market. But more than 85 per cent. of the cultivators have not got anything from these high prices because they have not got sufficient for their annual consumption. A few may have got some surplus but even supposing they have, it does not mean that they should give it lavishly to the transport authorities: the transport authorities are not there to profiteer. It has been said that because the prices of other commodities have risen and people are paying more for other things, they should pay more for transport also. This argument cannot hold good because a public utility concern is not meant for profiteering. Does the Honourable Member mean to say that such a concern should profiteer, like other merchants or trading concerns? No; it cannot be. Some agriculturists may have made a little money by selling their agricultural produce but the Government are not justified in asking them to give it to the transport authorities in order to enable them to show more profit in your books. My Honourable friend, Mr. Jamnadas Mehta, has shown that the railways are getting more on their capital than ordinary merchants do: in ordinary public companies the people are satisfied with 6 or 7 or even 8 per cent. profit; but the railways are making more than 12 per cent. That shows that they should spend more for the amenities of the people and for the development of the transport system. But they are taking more and reserving more but not giving us anything more; they say they will give after the war; but that is no argument; because we are paying now we must have the benefit now. If we go to a shop and pay

[Mr. Ananga Mohan Dam.]

the price we get the goods on a cash basis; what is the use of saying, 'you pay me now and I will repay you ten years later'. There is no attraction in that. We may have to trust each other; but you must give me a full meal before I can trust you; there is no getting over that . . .

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: Die now and you will get it later!

Mr. Ananga Mohan Dam: That is not for the Railway administration to say so; but if it says so, it will stand condemned by its own words. The railway authorities have got all the mismanagements that any concern can have. It is very difficult for me to enumerate them all in the short time at my disposal; but in every department,—passenger traffic or coaching traffic or wagon allotment and every other—there is something wrong, there is some defect which must be removed and rectified. This railway administration is doing another injustice to us by giving extension to the officers higher up, because they are preventing thereby the promotion of its younger officers who are giving their ungrudging service in the hope that they will also rise to the higher ranks. I think this system must be stopped, it is against any reasonable method of administration. Any European or Indian officer, whoever he may be, I do not make any distinction—if he has attained the age of retirement, he should be retired and he should not stand in the way of the promotion of others. Moreover, these old people have lost their energy and their vigour; and if they stick to their posts they will do no work—rather they will merely pocket their salaries, for which there is no justification.

About the management of the railways, my friend, Mr. Gupta referred to it a few minutes ago. They say they have transferred a portion of the management of the Bengal and Assam Railway to the Americans. Why? If you are efficient and if you can manage, why did you call in the Americans to manage the railways? In this connection I must say this military management has so mismanaged our railways from our stand point . . .

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: They have not taken over?

Mr. Ananga Mohan Dam: Whatever rule it may be, military or American, our difficulties are there . . .

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh (Nagpur Division: Non-Muhammadan): In spite of the Americans helping them?

Mr. Ananga Mohan Dam: The difficulties continue inspite of the American help, though they expected that everything would be set right with American help. In the Assam Bengal zone, every day, whenever you go to any railway station, you will always see one or two instances of the military ill-treating the civilian passengers. They are pushed back whenever they try to get in, by the military, even if they wish to travel for one or two stations only. He is not allowed to get in. I say these things should be stopped. The military there are simply lording it over the civilians. . . .

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim). The Honourable Member has one minute more.

Mr. Ananga Mohan Dam: Sir, I shall finish. There are other things also which I have no time to describe. I shall mention only one other matter. Mr. Stokes also mentioned it. The Government should try to give more amenities to the passengers of the Assam Bengal Zone where the trains are all overcrowded and there is great difficulty in transport of foodstuffs and other articles. If the Honourable the War Transport Member goes there and sees things personally, he will be convinced of all that I have said against the railways. With these few words, Sir, I support the cut motion.

Honourable Members: The question may now be put.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: Sir, after listening to the catalogue of abuses which has fallen from my Honourable friends, I cannot help feeling that it is really remarkable that the wheels turn round at all; and yet, in spite of the abuses, the Railway Board and the administrations under them have succeeded in a remarkable extent in carrying a vastly increased number of passengers, in keeping the industries of the country going, in moving the

necessary foodstuffs, and above all in providing for the necessities of the war. With this record of achievement behind it, I cannot really believe that Honourable Members sincerely believe that the record of the Board is as bad as some of them make out.

Dr. P. N. Banerjee: The Members are very insincere?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: I am afraid some of them, if not insincere, do not think very much about what they are saying. Such a large number of subjects have been covered that it is very difficult for me to go over the whole ground again, and I will just select a few of them. One Honourable Member said that foodstuffs were being held up at stations and he wanted to know what were the priorities arrangements made for the movement of food grains. Generally speaking, food grains are put in a category of railway priorities which ordinarily ensures their free movement. But if there is any hitch or urgency in the movement of foodgrains, a special priority is given. A great deal of the food that moves intra-provincially moves under the orders of the Central or the Provincial Governments and moves under programme. Generally speaking those programmes have progressed very satisfactorily. It is not correct to say that very large quantities of foodstuffs are piled up, awaiting rail transport.

Incidentally, our despatches from the 15th July to the 3rd of February to Bengal have been 304 thousand odd tons and the movements of rice into Bengal have been 66 thousand tons during that period. They are very substantial quantities. There are good stocks in Calcutta and it is incorrect to say that any deficiencies in Bengal are due to shortage of wagons for the movement of food into Bengal.

Another member mentioned the question of corruption and one member, I think it was Mr. Azhar Ali, said that there was no excuse for corruption among gazetted staff, which I thought was a remarkable statement, as if there was an excuse in other categories. We have had, as Honourable Members know, an Anti-Corruption Department operating and it operates over a number of departments. As far as the Railways are concerned 151 cases have been taken up, up to the end of 1943. 82 cases were sent up for trial. There were 45 convictions, 14 acquittals and 33 cases were referred to the Administrations for departmental action. 14 employees were discharged and among these cases there were 12 gazetted officers involved.

Mr. Muhammad Nauman: May I know if the Railway Board receives any weekly or monthly reports from each Administration regarding the activities of this Anti-Corruption Department?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: There are quarterly progress reports. I do not know whether they are received more often.

The activities of the Central Advisory Council have been mentioned on several occasions and I have been asked what we are doing to meet their recommendations. As I said in the last debate, we are taking action on practically every one of their recommendations.

As regards the suggestion that flying squads of highly paid staff should be appointed to combat ticketless travel, letters were sent some time ago to all Class I Railways, suggesting the appointment of such squads and also suggesting that officers should work in conjunction with these squads in order to stop ticketless travel and so help to prevent overcrowding. On a number of Railways, there are Railway Magistrates who take summary action against ticketless travel and to my knowledge some of the railways are trying to increase the number.

So far as military travel is concerned, we have already taken this question up with the Military authorities. We are doing our best to get them to extend the principle of zoning leave travel and to alter the leave rules with the same objective and we have also suggested that instead of officers travelling long distances to hill stations we might instal a system of holiday camps. Generally

[Sir Edward Benthall.]

speaking, we are doing our best to curtail military travel but obviously, with increasing numbers of military in the country, it is difficult to cut down the total of military travel.

A suggestion has been made that we might instal a system of priorities for passengers. That is almost impossible in big cities. It is impossible administratively to introduce it. It is impossible, even in the upper classes, to decide, for instance, whether it is more important that an officer should travel or a business man and to decide, as between two business men, whose journey is the more important. However, in certain restricted areas, I am carrying the investigation a bit further.

Another suggestion made is that we might limit the booking from various stations, for instance, from Howrah. But the difficulty there is that the passengers will simply move out to the next station and board the train there. Or, they will get on the train as it is moving slowly. Taking steps to prevent that would mean an enormous army to police the railways and an enormous increase of the railway staff. In fact, I think it is administratively impossible. What we are doing is to carry out the intensive propaganda campaign which the Central Advisory Council mentioned and that is now in the hands of the Information and Broadcasting Department.

An Honourable Member: Have more trains.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: One other question raised was about the percentage of ticketless travel. I wish I knew. But the percentage that is detected is about 5 per cent—I think under 5 per cent or about 2½ million passengers a year.

I must refer again to what Mr. Maitra referred to as the scandal of the cheap grain shops. I cannot make out what that scandal is—whether it is a scandal that 10 crores should be spent on alleviating the conditions of living of the railway men. I think what he really had in mind was that highly paid officers and men were entitled to this concession of cheap food. The concession, of course, amounts to Rs. 8 per month as I quoted in my Budget speech and if all the highly paid officers took their rations, which many of them don't, the total of the cost would be 3 lakhs. In other words, out of a thousand lakhs, 997 lakhs would go to categories other than officers. I do not think there is much in that complaint.

I should like to refer to a point made by Mr. Gupta about the locomotives going out of the country. About 200 metre gauge locomotives were sent out to the Middle East to help the war situation. They did extremely good work and they are now proceeding to come back. I think I am correct in saying that 84 are due to come back now and some of them have already been received in this country.

I would not touch on the question of Muslim percentages or of locomotive construction, as there are cut motions dealing with them.

Finally, one of the things which struck me most about these debates is the absence of reference to the fact that war is being carried on on India's frontiers and yet nobody seems to relate the present conditions seriously to the fact that we have an enemy at our very door steps. **One Honourable Member**—I think it was Mr. Navalrai—referred to the war as if that might be an extra carriage on the train, but I can assure you that the burden of moving this war traffic is a very heavy one indeed on the Railway Board and the Administrations. It takes up a great deal of our time. Mr. Dam complained of the conditions in Assam. Conditions are certainly bad there and we are fully aware of it. But I would point out to Mr. Dam that this cut motion has the effect of reducing the Railway Board grant to Rupee one. He suggested that all the things to which he had referred might be put to the Railway Board for correction. But if he supports this motion, there will, of course, be only such a Board as you can raise by spending one rupee. I personally shan't welcome that, because I have myself been very hard worked and with a one rupee Board only I would be even more hard worked, unless

I can get volunteers to assist! I suggest, therefore, that in spite of what the Honourable Members have said, the Board has achieved a very remarkable feat in the last year or so in moving the traffic which has been thrust upon it. As it is impossible for the country to do without a Railway Board, I appeal to the House to turn down this cut motion.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The question is:

“That the demand under the head ‘Railway Board’ be reduced to Re. 1.”

The motion was negatived.

As there is no time for any further motion to be moved, the House is adjourned till 11 O'clock tomorrow.

The Assembly then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Friday, the 25th February, 1944.