

22nd February 1946

# THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY DEBATES

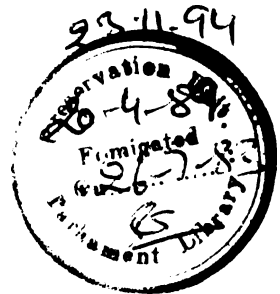
Official Report

Volume II, 1946

( 12th February to 27th February, 1946 )

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FIRST SESSION  
OF THE  
SIXTH LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,  
1946



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1947

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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SARDAR MANGAL SINGH, M.L.A.

## CONTENTS

Volume II—12th February to 27th February 1946

<b>Tuesday, 12th February, 1946,</b>	
Starred Questions and Answers . . . . .	813—49
Unstarred Questions and Answers . . . . .	849
Short Notice Questions and Answers . . . . .	849—55
<b>Motions for Adjournment re—</b>	
Government Statement on Polytechnic Institute Students' Strike—Withdrawn . . . . .	855—56
Failure of the Government of India to instruct delegate to U.N.O. to convey to the Security Council strong views of the Assembly regarding Anglo-Dutch operations against Indonesia—Adopted . . . . .	856—58, 873—88
Papers laid on the Table re Notifications under Central Excises and Salt Act . . . . .	858—72
Hindu Marriage Disabilities Removal Bill—Introduced . . . . .	872
Hindu Married Women's Right to Separate Residence and Maintenance Bill—Introduced . . . . .	872
The Special Marriage (Amendment) Bill—Introduced . . . . .	873
Delhi Sikh Gurdwaras and Religious Endowments Bill—Introduced . . . . .	873
Committee on Petitions . . . . .	878
<b>Wednesday, 13th February, 1946,—</b>	
Member Sworn . . . . .	889
Starred Questions and Answers . . . . .	889—914
Unstarred Question and Answer . . . . .	914—19
<b>Motions for Adjournment re—</b>	
Cloth Famine in North West Frontier Province—Disallowed . . . . .	921—22
Disbandment of W.A.C.(1)—Disallowed . . . . .	922—23
Racial discrimination in the W.A.C.(1)—Disallowed . . . . .	923—24
Indiscriminate Arrest of Muslim League Workers and other Demonstrators and wanton use of Handcuffs and chains by Delhi Police—Adopted . . . . .	924—25, 957—71
Amendment of the Indian Aircraft Rules . . . . .	925—84
Election of Members to the Court of Delhi University . . . . .	935
Election of Members to the Standing Committee for the Education Department . . . . .	935—37
Pharmacy Bill—Circulated . . . . .	937—39
Wseeds Committee Bill—Referred to Select Committee . . . . .	939—51
Code of Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Bill—Passed . . . . .	951—55
Insurance (Amendment) Bill—Presentation of Report of Select Committee . . . . .	955
Code of Criminal Procedure (Second Amendment) Bill—Passed as amended . . . . .	956—56
<b>Thursday, 14th February, 1946, —</b>	
Starred Questions and Answers . . . . .	973—1005
Short Notice Question and Answer . . . . .	1006
Declaration Directing certain Budget Heads of Expenditure open to Discussion by the Legislative Assembly . . . . .	1006
Appointment of the Honourable Sir Edward Southall to perform functions of the Finance Member at Railway Budget General Discussion . . . . .	1007
Election of Members to Standing Committee for Commerce Deptt. . . . .	1007
Election of Members to Standing Committee for Industries and Supplies Department . . . . .	1007
Election of Members to All-India Council for Technical Education . . . . .	1008—09
Factories (Amendment) Bill—Introduced . . . . .	1010
Transfer of Property and Succession (Amendment) Bill—Referred to Select Committee . . . . .	1010—19
Professions Tax Limitation (Amendment) Bill—Passed . . . . .	1019—20
Provident Funds (Amendment) Bill—Referred to Select Committee . . . . .	1020—22

Committee re Rail-Road Co-ordination Scheme—Presentation of the Report of the Committee—Postponed till 18th February 1946 . . . . .	1022
Statement of Business . . . . .	1022—25
<b>Monday, 18th February, 1946,—</b>	
Members Sworn . . . . .	1027
Starred Questions and Answers . . . . .	1027—35
Unstarred Questions and Answers . . . . .	1065
Statements laid on the Table . . . . .	1065—68
<b>Motions for Adjournment re—</b>	
Failure to Repatriate Indian Prisoners undergoing Trial in Malaya—Ruled out of Order . . . . .	1068—69
Burning of Places of Worship and Insulting of Women during recent Calcutta Disturbances—Disallowed . . . . .	1069—70
Election of Members to Imperial Council of Agricultural Research and its Governing Body . . . . .	1070
Election of Members to Standing Committee for Information and Broadcasting Department . . . . .	1070
Road-Rail Co-ordination Scheme—Presentation of the Report of the Committee . . . . .	1070—72
Presentation of the Railway Budget for 1946-47 . . . . .	1072—80
Indian Coinage (Amendment) Bill—Introduced . . . . .	1081
Election of Members to Standing Committee for External Affairs Department . . . . .	1081—83
Statement of Business . . . . .	1083
<b>Tuesday, 19th February, 1946,—</b>	
Starred Questions and Answers . . . . .	1085—1126
Unstarred Questions and Answers . . . . .	1126—30
Curtailment of Oral Answers to Absentee Members' Questions . . . . .	1130—32
Report of the Committee on Bretton Woods Agreement . . . . .	1132—34
Motion for Adjournment re Refusal to increase Price of Foodgrains offered to Agriculturists—Ruled out of Order . . . . .	1134—36
Election of Members to Standing Committee for Health Department . . . . .	1137
Election of Members to Indian Central Tobacco Committee . . . . .	1137
Election of Members to Standing Committee for Home Department . . . . .	1137
Election of Members to Standing Committee on Pilgrimage to Mejas . . . . .	1137
The Insurance (Amendment) Bill—Discussion on Motion to consider not concluded . . . . .	1137—69
<b>Wednesday, 20th February, 1946, —</b>	
Starred Questions and Answers . . . . .	1171—1214
Unstarred Questions and Answer . . . . .	1214
Motion for Adjournment re Rioting in Bombay by Naval Ratings—Postponed . . . . .	1215—16
Election of Members to Court of Delhi University . . . . .	1216
Election of Members to Standing Committee for Education Department . . . . .	1216
Instrument for the Amendment of the Constitution of the International Labour Organisation . . . . .	1216—21
The Railway Budget—General Discussion . . . . .	1222—58
<b>Thursday, 21st February, 1946,—</b>	
Starred Questions and Answers . . . . .	1259—38
Unstarred Questions and Answers . . . . .	1266
Report of the Committee on Bretton-Woods Agreement . . . . .	1289—92
Merchant Seamen (Litigation) Bill—Introduced . . . . .	1292
Indian Trade Unions (Amendment) Bill—Introduced . . . . .	1292
Insurance (Amendment) Bill—Discussion on the motion to consider not concluded . . . . .	1292—1300
Election of Members to Defence Consultative Committee . . . . .	1300—03
Factories (Amendment) Bill—Referred to Select Committee . . . . .	1304—18
<b>Friday, 22nd February, 1946,—</b>	
Dispensing with Question Hour . . . . .	1319
Starred Questions and Answers . . . . .	1319—40
Unstarred Question and Answer . . . . .	1340—42

Short Notice Questions and Answers	1343—52
Motion for Adjournment <i>re</i> Situation <i>re</i> Strike at Bombay and Karachi by R.I.N. Ratings—Postponed	1352—56
The Railway Budget—List of Demands	1356—89
Demand No. 1—Railway Board	1356—89
Enquiry into present system of management of Railways	1357—74
Attitude of Railway Board on Staff matters especially those relating to wages, allowances, working hours, leave arrangements and securities of staff	1374—89
Situation <i>re</i> Strike at Bombay and Karachi by R.I.N. Ratings	1389—95
Saturday, 23 February, 1946,—	
Situation <i>re</i> Strike at Bombay and Karachi by R. I. N Ratings.	1397—1405
Motion for Adjournment <i>re</i> Situation <i>re</i> Strike at Bombay and Karachi by R. I. N. Ratings—Adopted	1405—25
Monday, 25th February, 1946,—	
Member Sworn	1427—1472
Starred Questions and Answers	1427—48
Indian Glaciers Committee Bill—Presentation of the Report of the Select Committee	1448
The Railway Budget—List of Demands— <i>Contd.</i>	1448—95
Demand No.1—Railway Board— <i>Contd.</i> Financial Position and Policy of Railways	1448—65
Manufacture of Locomotives and Wagons	1466—78
Inconvenience to Passengers	1476—80
Demand No. 11.—New Construction	1490—95
Want of Policy in New Construction	1490—95
Tuesday, 26th February, 1946,—	
Starred Questions and Answers	1497—1526
Election of Members to Defence Consultative Committee	1526—28, 1549—50
Bretton Woods Conference Agreement—Presentation of the Interim Report of the Committee	1528—29
Railway Budget—List of Demands— <i>Contd.</i>	1529—49, 1550—72
Demand No. 12—Open Line Works	1529—49, 1550—72
Refusal of Supplies for investment in Road Services	1529—49, 1550—53
Policy of Government <i>re</i> Cash and Pay Departments on Contractual basis on B. B. and C. I. and N. W. Railways	1558—55
Reduction in Muslim Representation due to Retrenchment	1555—60

Extensions to Superannuated Staff	1561—68
Non-Observance of Muslim Quota in Railway Services	1563—73
Appendix	1573
Wednesday, 27th February, 1946,—	
Starred Questions and Answers	1573—95
Unstarred Questions and Answers	1595—99
Short Notice Question and Answer	1599—1601
Election of Additional Members to the Defence Consultative Committee	1622
Railway Budget—List of Demands— <i>Contd.</i>	1601—23, 1622—49
Demand No. 1.—Railway Board — <i>Contd.</i>	1601—1622 1622—47
Pilferage and Delays in settling Claims	1601—18
Ways and Means for meeting the increased Operating Costs	1618—23, 1622—37
Inadequate Representation of Sikhs in Railway Services	1637—41
Need for granting a minimum wage of Rs. 60 per mensem to Railway employees in the lower cadre	1641—47
Demand No. 2.—Audit	1647
Demand No. 3—Miscellaneous Expenditure	1647
Demand No. 5—Payments to Indian States and Companies	1647
Demand No. 6.—A—Working expenses—	1647
Maintenance of structural works	
Demand No. 6—B—Working expenses—Maintenance and supply of Locomotive Power	1647
Demand No. 6—C—Working expenses—Maintenance of carriage and Wagon stock	1648
Demand No. 6—D—Working expenses—Maintenance and working of ferry steamers and harbours	1648
Demand No. 6—E—Working expenses—Expenses of Traffic Department	1648
Demand No. 6—F—Working expenses—Expenses of General Departments	1648
Demand No. 6—G—Working expenses—Miscellaneous expenses	1648
Demand No. 6—H—Working expenses—Expenses of Electrical Department	1648
Demand No. 7—Working expenses—Appropriation to Depreciation Fund	1648
Demand No. 8—Interest charges	1649
Demand No. 9—Appropriation to Betterment Fund	1649
Demand No. 10—Appropriation to Reserve	1649
Demand No. 10—A—Withdrawal from Reserve	1649
Demand No. 11—New Construction	1649
Demand No. 12—Open Line Works	1649

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Friday, 22nd February, 1946

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

## DISPENSING WITH QUESTION HOUR

**Mr. M. Asaf Ali** (Delhi: General): Sir, there is a general sense of agreement in the House that on the next four days when we shall have the Railway Demands the question hour should be suspended. This has been the practice in the past not only in connection with the Railway demands but also the General Budget Demands. So if there is no objection from any side of the House I would request you to suspend the question hour.

**Seth Yusuf Abdoola Haroon** (Sind Muhammadan Rural): What happens to short notice questions?

**Mr. M. Asaf Ali:** They stand in a different category.

**Mr. President:** The request that has been made is only with regard to the ordinary questions. Short notice questions are taken after those are finished.

**Seth Yusuf Abdoola Haroon:** Are these questions which are fixed for these four days to be held over till next week?

**Mr. President:** They will be treated like unstarred questions and answers and printed in the proceedings. But I should like to know if Honourable Members who have put down questions are agreeable to this, in which case I can suspend the question hour.

**Several Honourable Members:** Yes, Sir.

**Mr. President:** Then we will dispense with the question hour.

## STARRED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS†

### WRITTEN ANSWERS

#### COAL PRODUCTION BEFORE AND AFTER WAR

**435. \*Mr. Manu Subedar:** (a) Will the Honourable Member for Industries and Supplies please state the production of coal in India before the war and in subsequent years?

(b) What steps did Government take to increase this production?

(c) How much of the machinery promised by the Hydari Mission for the increased production of coal has arrived, and what effect did such machinery have on production generally?

(d) What were the scales of wages of coal miners before the war, during the war and at present?

(e) What was the price of coal at pit's mouth before the war, during the war and at present?

**The Honourable Mr. A. A. Waugh:** (a) A statement showing the coal production in India for each year from 1938 to 1945 is laid on the table.

(b) The main measures taken by Government to improve coal production were:

(1) *Financial inducements to Colliery Owners.*—These included (i) E.P.T.—free bonuses on increased production over targets fixed for each colliery. (ii) bonuses on total output, (iii) loans for capital expenditure, (iv) accelerated depreciation allowance at 50 per cent. on the written-down value of specified coal mining machinery.

(2) *Provision and stabilisation of colliery labour.*—This includes (i) the provision of labour from Gorakhpur, both in quarries and underground, (ii) restrictions

†The question hour for the day having been dispensed with, the answers were laid on the table of the House.—*Ed. of D.*

on the employment of miners on other work, and (iii) welfare measures, e.g., provision of consumer goods and food grains at concessional prices, and the grant of bonuses to miners based on attendance.

(3) *Operation of collieries by Government.*—This includes (i) the organisation of Open Cut Coal Mining, (ii) increased production from railway collieries, (iii) the working of certain market collieries under Government control.

(4) *Assistance to colliery owners in the procurement of machinery from abroad.*—Bulk indents were placed by Government on the U. K. in 1944 and on U. S. A. for the supply of urgently required mining equipment, in advance of trade orders, procurement and distribution being arranged by the Coal Commissioner's Organisation according to priority requirements of the collieries.

(c) The Honourable Member probably refers to the bulk indents placed by the Coal Commissioner on U. K. in 1944, which were subsequently progressed by the Hydari Mission. Most of the machinery ordered under these indents has arrived and is now in use. It is not possible to assess the exact effect on raisings attributable to this machinery in particular, but total raisings in 1945 were 2.6 million tons more than those of 1944, and 3.2 million tons more than those of 1943.

(d) and (e). Statements giving the necessary information are laid on the table.

STATEMENT IN REPLY TO PART (a)

Year	Total Coal Production in India (Tons)
1938 . . . . .	28,342,906
1939 . . . . .	27,769,112
1940 . . . . .	29,388,494
1941 . . . . .	29,463,742
1942 . . . . .	29,433,253
1943 . . . . .	25,511,909
1944 . . . . .	26,124,155
1945 . . . . .	28,746,678

STATEMENT IN REPLY TO PART (d)

*Average daily earnings—Jharia Coalfield*

Year	Underground		Open Workings	
	Miners	Loaders	Miners	Loaders
	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.
1936	0 7 6	0 6 3	0 8 0	0 7 3
1937	0 9 3	0 8 0	0 8 6	0 6 9
1938	0 9 6	0 8 3	0 8 9	0 7 0
1939	0 9 9	0 8 9	0 9 0	0 7 3
1940	0 9 6	0 8 6	0 9 9	0 6 6
1941	0 10 0	0 9 0	0 9 3	0 8 0
1942	0 11 0	0 10 0	0 10 9	0 8 6
1943	0 13 9	0 12 9	0 13 6	0 12 0
1944	1 1 6	1 0 6	1 2 3	1 0 3
1945	1 1 6	1 0 6	1 2 3	1 0 3

STARRED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS  
Average daily earnings—Raniganj Coalfield

1321

Year	Underground		Open Workings	
	Miners	Loaders	Miners	Loaders
	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.
1936	0 7 3	0 6 9	0 4 3	0 3 9
1937	0 9 0	0 7 9	0 8 9	0 6 6
1938	0 9 3	0 7 9	0 8 6	0 5 9
1939	0 9 0	0 7 9	0 8 6	0 6 3
1940	0 8 9	0 7 6	0 7 0	0 7 3
1941	0 9 3	0 8 0	0 8 6	0 7 9
1942	0 10 9	0 9 3	0 11 9	0 6 9
1943	0 14 3	0 12 6	0 14 0	0 12 0
1944	1 2 9	1 1 3	0 15 3	0 15 3
1945	1 2 9	1 1 3	0 15 3	0 15 3

Average daily earnings—Punjab Coalfield

1936	0 13 3	0 10 6	1 1 9	0 15 6
1937	0 15 9	0 14 0	1 0 0	
1938	1 0 6	1 0 9	..	
1939	0 14 0	0 13 3	0 6 0	
1940	0 14 3	0 14 3		..
1941	0 14 3	0 14 3		..
1942	1 5 0	1 3 6		1 3 9
1943	2 0 9	1 15 9	..	..
1944	2 13 3	2 15 0	1 8 0	2 7 9
1945	2 13 3	2 15 0	1 8 0	2 7 9

Average daily earnings—Baluchistan Coalfield

1936	0 9 3	0 9 3	..	0 8 0
1937	0 10 3	0 10 6		..
1938	0 10 9	0 10 9		0 9 0
1939	0 9 9	0 10 6	..	
1940	0 9 9	0 11 6	0 14 3	
1941	0 10 6	0 9 9		..
1942	1 10 9	1 10 6		
1943	2 6 0	2 1 9		
1944	2 4 0	2 1 9		
1945	2 4 0	2 1 9	..	..

*Average daily earnings—Giridih Coalfield*

Year	Underground		Open Workings	
	Miners	Loaders	Miners	Loaders
	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.
1936	0 9 0	0 7 3		
1937	0 10 3	0 9 0	..	
1938	0 9 9	0 11 6	0 3 0	
1939	0 10 0	0 11 9		
1940	0 9 3	0 10 9	0 6 0	
1941	0 9 3	0 10 6	0 5 9	
1942	0 13 0	0 10 9	0 6 0	..
1943	0 14 6	0 11 3	0 8 0	0 9 0
1944	0 10 6	0 11 9	0 14 6	0 12 6
1945	0 14 6	0 11 9	0 14 6	0 12 6

*Average daily earnings Assam Coalfield*

1936	1 0 0	0 15 9	..	..
1937	1 1 0	1 0 0	0 15 0	0 10 0
1938	1 0 0	1 0 0	1 0 0	0 11 0
1939	1 0 6	1 0 3	1 1 0	0 12 9
1940	1 2 6	1 1 0	1 3 0	0 14 9
1941	1 0 6	1 0 0	1 3 6	0 15 0
1942	1 3 6	1 2 9	..	1 1 0
1943	1 7 6	1 10 6		1 8 6
1944	2 5 9	1 14 6		1 11 0
1945	2 5 9	1 14 6	..	1 11 0

*Average daily earnings Pench Valley Coalfield—(Central Provinces)*

1936	0 12 0	0 6 9	0 10 3	0 7 3
1937	0 11 9	0 7 3	0 9 3	0 5 0
1938	0 13 0	0 7 3	0 9 9	0 6 0
1939	0 12 0	0 7 6	0 10 0	0 6 3
1940	0 14 0	0 7 6	0 11 0	0 5 9
1941	0 14 3	0 7 9	0 10 3	0 7 3
1942	0 15 9	0 9 9	0 12 9	0 7 9
1943	1 1 3	0 10 3	0 14 3	0 8 0
1944	1 2 6	0 11 0	0 15 6	0 10 9
1945	1 2 6	0 11 0	0 15 6	0 10 9



*Price per ton of Coal at Pithead.*

Year	Assam	Baluchistan	Bengal (Raniganj Coalfields)	Bihar (Jharia Coalfields)	C.P. (Pench Valley Coalfields)	Punjab
	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.	Rs. A. P.
1938	8 15 0	6 6 0	4 0 0	3 7 0	3 11 0	5 9 0
1939	8 1 0	6 10 0	3 12 0	3 4 0	3 10 0	5 0 0
1940	8 14 0	6 7 0	3 11 0	3 5 0	3 12 0	5 4 0
1941	9 5 0	7 7 0	3 13 0	3 6 0	3 4 0	5 15 0
1942	9 15 0	13 11 0	4 8 0	4 0 0	5 8 0	13 4 0
1943	12 12 0	17 7 0	6 14 0	6 5 0	6 13 0	24 6 0
1944	20 0 0	17 12 0	9 8 0	9 8 0	10 4 0	20 0 0
	to	to	to	to	to	to
	30 0 0	29 12 0	13 4 0	13 4 0	14 0 0	22 0 0
1945	20 0 0	17 12 0	9 5 0	9 5 0	10 1 0	20 0 0
	to	to	to	to	to	to
	30 0 0	29 12 0	13 5 0	13 5 0	14 1 0	22 0 0

DISPOSAL OF AMERICAN SURPLUSES

**436. \*Mr. Manu Subedar:** (a) Did the Honourable Member for Industries and Supplies ask for the surplus of American goods in India, or did the U.S.A. Government make this offer?

(b) Who initiated these negotiations, and what was the object?

(c) What was the amount involved?

(d) By what methods are these goods to be disposed off?

(e) Do Government propose to circulate to the Indian Chamber of Commerce the list of the materials available so as to enable producers and manufacturers in India to avail themselves of such equipment as may be useful to them?

(f) What is the organization for the disposal set up by the Government of India, and what will be its general policy?

**The Honourable Mr. A. A. Waugh:** (a) and (b). No, Sir; the United States Government, through their Deputy Foreign Liquidation Commissioner, made the offer. The objects were:

(1) to enable the Government of India to exercise systematic control over the distribution and sale of all surplus articles located in India of whatever origin;

(2) to enable both Governments to further the joint aim of making the surplus serve the general welfare of India;

(3) to accelerate the evacuation of U. S. troops.

(c) The value of the surpluses has not yet been determined.

(d) Goods will be sold in accordance with the policy described in (f) below, either by transfer to Departments of Governments and States or by sale by auction, advertised tender, limited tender, or by negotiation.

(e) Yes.

(f) The Directorate General of Disposals will deal with all surplus property located in India of whatever origin. The main principles of disposals policy are:

(i) To release stocks at a rate which, while fast enough to get the goods into the hands of consumers where they are most needed, will not cause the internal

market to be so flooded that there are adverse effects on internal economy or production;

(ii) to ensure that the goods are sold to the ultimate consumer at prices which are reasonable in comparison with current prices of similar articles, and to prevent an unnecessary number of intermediaries or profiteering by middlemen;

(iii) as far as possible, to use the normal trade channels for distribution, with a view to ensure that the usual traders or manufacturers as well as the ultimate consumers in different parts of the country get their fair share of the quantities available; and

(iv) to consider the requirements of the Government of India, the Provincial Governments, and of States for their own use before releasing goods to the civil market.

#### HIGH PRICES OF CEMENT

**437. \*Mr. Manu Subedar:** (a) What steps have been taken by the Honourable Member for Industries and Supplies to release cement for civilian purposes?

(b) What was the price of cement before the war, during the war and at present?

(c) Is it a fact that cement prices in India are fixed by the A.C.C. and Dalmia Group and are in the nature of a monopoly? If so, what steps have Government taken to increase the supply and to bring down the monopolistic prices which are rigged up against the consumer?

(d) Are Government aware that, while the cement prices are high, building operations cannot start and a large number of men expected to be employed on such operations cannot find employment?

**The Honourable Mr. A. A. Waugh:** (a) Since the last few months, approximately 90 per cent. of the entire output of cement has been made available for civil use, of which rather more than half is for the public, and the rest is for Civil Government purposes.

(b) The average price of cement in 1937 was, Rs. 40 at Bombay, Madras and Karachi, Rs. 43 at Calcutta, Rs. 47-8-0 at Delhi, Cawnpore and Coimbatore and Rs. 58-8-0 at Lahore. Just before the War the price ranged from Rs. 26 to Rs. 47. The price of civil cement was first controlled in March, 1944 at Rs. 70 per ton f.o.r. any destination. Subsequently the price was revised to Rs. 68-12-0 from 1st December 1944, and to Rs. 63-12-0 from 1st November, 1945.

(c) No, Sir. Since March, 1944, civil cement prices have been controlled by Government.

(d) There has been a general rise in the cost of building materials and the rise in the cost of cement does not compare unfavourably with the rise in costs of other materials.

#### SUPPLY OF CEMENT TO CIVILIANS

**438. \*Mr. Manu Subedar:** (a) Will the Honourable Member for Industries and Supplies please state the total amount of cement produced in India before the war, during the war and at present?

(b) Is it a fact that the supply of cement for the civil population was heavily curtailed during the war period and continues to be curtailed even now?

(c) Is it a fact that even now military requirements consume a considerable portion of the output? If so, for what purposes are military buildings still continued to be built?

(d) How much stock of cement do the cement companies carry, and how much unused stock have Government got?

**The Honourable Mr. A. A. Waugh:** (a) In 1935, roundly 0.8 million tons; in 1939, 1.5 million tons; in 1945, 2.1 million tons.

(b) The answer to the first part is that civil supplies were heavily curtailed from the middle of 1942 in the interests of military requirements. The answer to the second part is that since the last few months military requirements have greatly declined, and are about the pre-war level.

(c) No, Sir. Military requirements are consuming approximately ten per cent. of the output. The second part of the question does not arise.

(d) About 90,000 tons, or roughly two weeks production are carried by the cement Companies. Accurate information as to the stocks held by Government Departments is not available but the quantity is not believed to be large.

#### PRODUCTION AND IMPORT OF PAPER

**439. \*Mr. Manu Subedar:** (a) Will the Honourable Member for Industries and Supplies please state the total production of paper in India before the war, and how much is the production now?

(b) What was the total import of paper before the war?

(c) How much has been the import of paper during the last twelve months for which figures are available?

(d) What was the price of paper before the war, and what is the price of paper now, both for Indian production and for the imported article of like nature?

(e) What special measures are Government taking to improve the production of paper in India and the supply from overseas?

(f) What special measures are Government taking to supply coal, transport for moving the raw material and the finished article, and generally to ease the paper situation in India?

**The Honourable Mr. A. A. Waugh:** (a) to (c). I lay on the table a statement giving the required information in respect of the production and imports of paper other than newsprint.

(d) A statement showing the prices of certain broad categories of indigenous and of imported paper immediately before the war and at present is laid on the table of the House. The qualities of indigenous and imported paper differ, and the categories are not fully comparable. Reliable statistics of pre-war prices of paper whether imported or indigenous are not available, and the figures given are approximate. The present controlled prices of indigenous and imported papers are given in the schedules appended to the Paper Price Control Order 1945 and the Paper (Prices of Imported Paper) Control Order 1944, copies of which are available in the Library.

(e) A Paper Production Commissioner was appointed, in November, 1942. He was replaced in April, 1944 by the Establishment of a Paper Directorate for promoting production as well as obtaining better supplies from abroad. The Directorate has assisted Paper Mills in securing raw materials and chemicals, in the import of essential maintenance parts of machinery, and of pulp and other raw materials, in the distribution of supplies of coal, in zoning raw materials and securing transport priorities, and with technical advice. Under the Paper Control (Production) Order issued in August, 1944, the production of paper by Indian Paper mills has been restricted to certain specified varieties so as to secure the maximum output. All these steps have resulted in increasing the production of paper, excluding strawboards and mill boards from 54,000 tons in the 8 years preceding the War to 108,000 tons in 1945. India is now almost self-sufficient in strawboards and mill boards.

Side by side with expansion of indigenous production, Government endeavoured to obtain larger imports of paper from abroad. The Director of Paper was sent to the U. S. A., Canada and U. K. in the summer of 1945 to endeavour to secure shipments of paper required by Government and by civilian consumers against pending indents and orders on the U. S. A. Through his efforts Government were successful in obtaining an allocation of paper from Scandinavia for supply in the months ending June, 1946.

(f) The allocation of coal to the paper industry is reviewed every month. The allocation has risen from 90,000 tons a month in January, 1944 to 38,000 tons a month in January 1946. The coal supplies are distributed to all units in proportion to their requirements. Every effort is made to provide transport facilities for moving essential raw materials to Mills. In order to avoid cross-haulage and wasteful use of transport, a movement and allocation programme of paper from the Mills to different Provinces and areas is drawn up every quarter and high priority in despatch has been allotted to paper.

Statement showing the pre-war and present production and imports of paper other than newspaper

1	Average Annual Production of paper on the basis of the figures of the three pre-war years 1936-37 to 1938-39 2	Production during the year 1945 3	Annual average imports of paper on the basis of the figures of the three pre-war years 1936-37 to 1938-39 4	Imports during the year 1945* 5
(1) Paper other than Kraft and Board,	Tons 53,600	Tons 84,250	37,300	21,900
(2) Kraft	Nil	9,550	10,300	250
(3) Boards other than strawboards,	200	14,200	11,900	3,870
(4) Strawboards	Nil	16,100	15,800	negligible
Total	53,800	124,100	75,300	*26,020

\* These imports were on commercial account, In addition, a quantity of about 3,000 tons was imported during the year 1945 on behalf of the Department of Industries and Civil Supplies for non-Government Civilian consumption,

Statement showing the pre-war and present prices of paper both indigenous and imported

S, No,	Description	Pre-War Prices per lb. 1938-39		Present Controlled price per lb,	
		Indigenous paper	Imported paper	Indigenous paper	Imported paper
1	Bleached Printing Paper	Rs. a. p. 0 3 4	Rs. a. p. 0 3 4	Rs. a. p. 0 7 10½	Rs. a. p. 0 11 1
		to 0 3 9			to 0 15 8
2	Bleached Writing Paper	0 3 5	0 3 7	0 7 10½	0 10 9
		to 0 3 9			
	(a) Cream wove or laid	0 3 10	0 5 8	0 7 10½	0 12 9
		to 0 4 0		to 0 11 10½	to 1 8 10
	(b) Bonds and Ledgers	0 2 8	...	0 7 3½	...
3	Badami	0 3 3	0 4 0	0 7 10½	0 14 11
		to 0 3 5			
4	White Cartridge	...	0 2 10	0 7 8	0 11 8
			to 0 3 3		
5	Kraft Paper	0 2 4	0 2 1	0 7 1½	...
		to 0 2 7			
6	Brown Wrapping	0 4 4	0 3 11½	0 12 4½	0 10 10
		to 0 4 9			to 1 6 4
7	White Blotting	0 3 2	0 2 4	0 6 0	0 7 7
		to 0 3 3		to 0 8 6	to 0 12 7
8	Boards other than Straw-board,				

## INDIAN NATIONALS INTEREST IN FRENCH INDO-CHINA

**440. \*Sri T. A. Ramalingam Othettiar and Sri V. C. Vellingiri Gounder:** Will the Foreign Secretary be pleased to state:

(a) the arrangements made for the safety of the properties of the Indian Nationals in Indo-China, and the facilities given to those persons to return to India;

(b) whether representation was made to the Government of India to that effect; and

(c) whether instructions were given to the British representative in Indo-China to negotiate with the French Authorities to secure all facilities in the interest of the Indian Nationals since the occupation of the French Government is completed?

**Mr. H. Weightman:** (a) During the war, the interests of Indians in French Indo-China, as of other British subjects, were in the charge of the Swiss Consular authorities in that country, and since the surrender of Japan have reverted to the care of the Representative of His Majesty's Government at Saigon. During the Annamites disturbances damage was done to property, including property belonging to Indians, and claims for this are being registered with the French authorities.

The question of the repatriation of Indians now in French Indo-China and in other territories in South East Asia is receiving the urgent attention of the Government of India, and S. E. A. C. Headquarters have been addressed on the provision of shipping for this purpose.

(b) Letters have been received from persons in India expressing concern about their property in French Indo-China.

(c) In the normal discharge of his functions, His Majesty's Government's Representative at Saigon takes all steps necessary to ensure that Indians receive fair treatment in all respects. Matters affecting the Indian community were discussed with His Majesty's Government's Representative by Mr. Aney during his recent visit to Saigon.

## EXCHANGE FACILITIES TO INDIAN NATIONALS IN FRENCH INDO-CHINA TO SEND MONEY TO THEIR FAMILIES IN INDIA

**441. \*Sri T. A. Ramalingam Othettiar and Sri V. C. Vellingiri Gounder:** Will the Foreign Secretary be pleased to state:

(a) if it is a fact that the French Authorities in Indo-China refused to allow Indian Nationals to send money to their families in India on account of the blockade imposed during the war by the Government of India;

(b) if so, whether the Government of India is prepared to cancel the blockade and to take immediate steps to impress upon the French authorities to have exchange rates and to allow remittances to India in the interest of the Indian nationals and their families in India;

(c) whether any representation was made by any individual and by the then member of the Assembly, Mr. T. T. Krishnamachariar, on the above points; and if any information is forthcoming whether the same will be placed on the table of the House for the information of the public; and

(d) the arrangements made by the Government of India for securing priority in passage facilities for the Indian nationals stuck up in Indo-China to come to India and for persons in India owning properties there to go there to look after the same?

**Mr. H. Weightman:** (a) and (b). On the capitulation of France in 1940 (when French Indo-China fell under hostile domination) the balances of the Indo-China Bank in India became vested in the British Indian Custodian and operation on these balances was stopped. As a retaliatory measure the Inspector General of the Bank of Indo-China forbade remittances by Indians in Indo-China to India. On the occupation of Indo-China by the Japanese, French Indo-China became

an enemy territory under rule 2(2)(a) of the D. I. R. and all normal remittances between that country and India were suspended. In a few individual cases, however, small remittances were allowed through the agency of the Swiss representative at Saigon. Though French Indo-China is no longer regarded as enemy territory remittances through frozen balances in India cannot be permitted pending the conclusion of a debt settlement agreement between India and France which is now under consideration of the Government. In the meantime, it is expected that as a result of representations made by His Majesty's Representative at Saigon provisional arrangements will shortly be made for remittances of limited amount in India.

(c) Enquiries on matters relating to Indians in French Indo-China have been received from various parties including Mr. T. T. Krishnamachariar. Information on the points raised is contained in the reply to parts (a) and (b) of this question and in the reply to question No. 440.

(d) The question of the repatriation of Indian nationals now in French Indo-China and in other territories in South East Asia is receiving the urgent attention of the Government of India, and S. E. A. C. Headquarters have been addressed on the provision of shipping for the purpose. Steps are also being taken, in consultation with Headquarters, Allied Land Forces, South East Asia, to arrange passages for Indians desirous of going to liberated countries in the Far East. A copy of a press note issued on the subject is laid on the table of the House.

#### NOTIFICATION

##### *Passages from India to the Far East and Burma for Civilian Personnel*

In order to meet the urgent desire of evacuees now in India to return to their homes, or others to rejoin families and of businessmen to proceed to Far Eastern countries, it is necessary, till such time as shipping conditions return to normal, that all passages to the Far East should be controlled by the Government of India.

2. To this end, a bid for shipping has been made by the Government of India to ALFSEA, and it is hoped that, very shortly, a certain number of ships will be made available.

3. In the meantime, in order to bring all intending passengers on to one central list, persons wishing to proceed to the Far East should, if they have not already done so, make application as shown in detail below :—

##### (a) *Evacuees from Far Eastern British possessions (Malaya, Hong Kong, etc.),*

Such evacuees, if they have not already done so, should register themselves for repatriation with C. D. Ahearne, Esq., C.M.G., Malayan Representative's Office, Monkwa Building, Outram Road, Bombay.

##### (b) *Evacuees from Far Eastern Countries other than British possessions*

Applications should be made to the Secretary to the Government of India, External Affairs Department, New Delhi.

##### (c) *Persons other than evacuees wishing to proceed to British possessions in the Far East for business or other valid reasons*

Applications by such persons should be made to the Controller of Priority Passages for the Far East, Government of India, Commonwealth Relations Department, New Delhi.

##### (d) *Persons other than evacuees desiring to proceed to non-British possessions in the Far East.*

Such persons should apply to the Secretary to the Government of India, External Affairs Department, New Delhi.

##### (e) *Evacuees from Burma,*

Registration of evacuees wishing to return to Burma is now proceeding, and registered persons will, in due course, be called up when shipping and other conditions permit.

##### (f) *Persons other than evacuees wishing to proceed to Burma.*

Such persons should apply in the first instance to the Secretary to the Government of India, Commonwealth Relations Department (Burma Repatriation Section), New Delhi.

##### (g) *Released Civilian Internees from the Far East desirous of returning to countries in the Far East, whether British possessions or not*

Released civilian internees who are not resident in the Malayan Transit Camp, Bombay, should make immediate application to the Controller of Priority Passages for the Far East, Government of India, Commonwealth Relations Department, New Delhi.

## COAL PRODUCTION

442. \*Mr. Vadilal Lalubhai: Will the Honourable Member for Industries and Supplies be pleased to state:

(a) the figures of our total coal production ever since 1939 onwards, year by year;

(b) whether any new coal mines were started during this period; if so, the percentage of their production to the total coal production;

(c) if the reply to (b) be in the affirmative, whether the quality of coal produced from the new mines is inferior to that of the old ones; if so, to what extent; and

(d) the actual extent of the shortage of coal, in view of the coal requirements of various industries, and the figures of the total loss of production due to shortage of coal as per different industries and as per different industrial centres?

The Honourable Mr. A. A. Waugh: (a) The attention of the Honourable Member is invited to the reply given to part (a) of starred question No. 435, answered today.

(b) Yes, Sir. A statement giving the necessary information is laid on the table.

(c) The quality of the coal produced from the new mines is generally inferior, chiefly Grades III-A and III-B.

(d) From November 1943, when the coal rationing scheme came into force, to January 1946 against a target of 57.6 million tons, 53.4 million tons, or 92.7 per cent. of the target, were despatched to all consumers. It is not possible to assess the total loss of production due to the shortage in greater detail or to specify the industries or industrial centres concerned. The shortage was spread over all consumers and over the whole country.

*Statement*

Year	Number of new coal mines opened	Percentage of output of new mines to total output
1939	7	0.05
1940	10	0.01
1941	20	0.06
1942	101	0.76
1943	31	0.15
1944	57	0.6
1945	95	0.6

## PETROL RATIONING

443. \*Mr. Manu Subedar: (a) Will the Honourable Member for War Transport please state how much petrol was imported into India during the nine months of 1945/46 ending the 31st December, 1945, in comparison with similar import during the nine months of the years 1938/39?

(b) How much of this petrol has been reserved for, or used in connection with, defence purposes?

(c) Why have Government found it difficult to make a more substantial increase in the basic ration than they have done, or to restore the cut in the supplementary ration which was made?

(d) Is the policy in the matter of petrol rationing for civil population laid down Centrally, or is it independently evolved by the Provincial Governments?

(e) Do Government propose to give some facts about the present position and some assurance about relief to motorists in the matter of petrol in the near future?

**The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall:** (a) and (b). It is not in the public interest to furnish the information asked for.

(c) The position has already been explained in a Press communique issued on January 1st, 1946, and I have further explained it in replies to previous questions in this House. The reference to the cut in the supplementary ration is not understood.

(d) The policy is laid down centrally, but administered provincially.

(e) As I have already stated in reply to a similar question in this House, the supply of petrol to India, as to other countries in the sterling area, is regulated by the availability of supplies and tankers both of which are restricted by the need for the conservation of dollars, and I regret I cannot give any assurance about relief to motorists in the near future. The Honourable Member may, however, rest assured that our demands are being pressed and that relaxation or complete withdrawal of the control will be effected as soon as the supply position permits.

#### GRIEVANCES OF PERMANENT STAFF OF LATE SUPPLY DEPARTMENT

**444. \*Mr. Gauri Shankar Saran Singh:** (a) Will the Honourable Member for Industries and Supplies please state if it is a fact that a number of Superintendents of the Purchase Branch of the Department of Supply holding permanent service under the Government of India were promoted to the rank of Purchase Officers during the war time;

(b) if it is fact that the work allotted to them was the same and in no way inferior to that given to the temporary Purchase Officers recruited direct for the duration of the war;

(c) if it is a fact that selection of Permanent Officers for the Procurement, Development and other Branches of the Directorate-General of Industries and Supplies are being made almost entirely from among the temporary officers recruited direct in preference to the officers selected from among the Superintendents;

(d) if it is fact that there is disappointment and dissatisfaction among the permanent employees of the Purchase Branch of the late Supply Department due to their rightful claims having been thus overlooked; and

(e) in view of (d) above, do Government propose to review the case and in consideration of the long and satisfactory service put forward by them, allocate a fair percentage of officer posts in the Directorate-General of Industries and Supplies to the permanent staff of the Purchase Branch of the late Department of Supply?

**The Honourable Mr. A. A. Waugh:** (a) Yes, Sir. Sixteen Superintendents were temporarily promoted.

(b) Yes.

(c) No, Sir. Selection has been made on merits and suitability.

(d) No.

(e) Does not arise.

#### WAR ORDERS PLACED WITH INDIAN FIRMS

**445. \*Mr. Vadilal Lalubhai:** (a) Will the Honourable Member for Industries and Supplies please state the aggregate cost of total war orders placed with firms in India (commercial and industrial) separately, on behalf of the Government of India, His Majesty's Government and the U.S.A. Government?



(b) What is the cost of goods so ordered, separately, according to categories, namely (i) manufacture of goods in Indian factories etc. (ii) supply of raw materials, (iii) goods that could be procured without recourse to factory production, and (iv) imported goods?

(c) What is the proportion of these orders as expressed in terms of value placed with Indian firms to those placed with non-Indian firms?

(d) What is the share in the supply of these orders of (i) Government factories, (ii) industries established during pre-war period, and (iii) new industries, if any?

(e) Were any of such orders responsible for setting up altogether new industries? If so, will he please state the particulars about these new industries? Do the Government of India propose to safeguard the interests of these new industries in future? If so, in what way?

(f) Are there any instances of war orders which could have been executed in India for the forces stationed here but which were diverted to other countries? If so, why were they not accepted by Government for Indian firms?

**The Honourable Mr. A. A. Waugh:** (a), (b), (c) and (d). A statement of war supplies obtained in India is being prepared and will be laid on the table in due course. I am afraid, however, that it will not be possible in that statement to analyse the figures exactly in the form desired by the Honourable Member.

(e) Yes, Sir. The Honourable Member's attention is invited to the answer I gave on the 19th to his question No. 350. War orders were largely responsible for the growth of the industries mentioned in that answer.

(f) Yes, Sir. The object of Government in diverting certain war orders to other countries was to enable Indian firms to produce civil goods which were in short supply.

#### INDUSTRIAL CONTROLS DURING WAR

**446. \*Mr. Vadlal Lalubhai:** (a) Will the Honourable Member for Industries and Supplies please give a list of various industrial controls issued during the war time?

(b) How many of these, if any, are cancelled subsequently, and what are they?

(c) What will be the probable duration of the controls which are retained?

(d) Do the Government of India propose to reduce these controls to the minimum at an early date?

**The Honourable Mr. A. A. Waugh:** (a) and (b). I place a statement on the table.

(c) Most of the controls will be withdrawn within seven or eight months. It will be necessary to retain a few for a longer period, but it is not possible at present to say for how long.

(d) Yes, Sir. The position is being constantly reviewed with that object.

#### List of Industrial Controls

S. No.	Nature of Control	When Introduced	When Abolished
1	2	3	4
1	Control over distribution of wattle bark and wattle extract imported at Madras.	1944	...
2	Control over distribution of Crude Tar .	1944	...
3	The Sulphuric Acid Control Order . . .	1942	...
4	The Chromic Compounds Control Order .	1941	...
5	The Coal Tar Products Control Order . . .	1945	...

1	2	3	4
6	Bleaching Powder and Chlorine Control Order .	1945	...
7	Control Over distribution of Road Tar and Bitumen.	1943	...
8	Jute Industry Essential Stores Control Orders .	1943	...
9	Control over Selected Tanneries . . . .	1942	...
10	Control over distribution of Cement . . . .	1942	...
11	Control over distribution of Diesel Oil . . . .	1942	...
12	Control over distribution of Furnace Oil . . . .	1942	...
13	Control over distribution of white spirit . . . .	1942	...
14	Control of Imported Engineering Store Order .	1943	...
15	Factories Control of Production Order . . . .	1942	...
16	Paper (Production) Control Orders . . . .	1944	...
17	Machine Tool Control Order . . . .	1941	...
18	Non-Ferrous Metals Control Order . . . .	1941	...
19	Ferro-Alloy Control Order . . . .	1943	...
20	Iron and Steel (Control of Production and Distribution) Order (including Price Control).	1941	...
21	Steel Import Control . . . .	1940	...
22	Steel Export Control . . . .	1939	...
23	Iron and Steel (Scrap Control) Order (including Price Control).	1943	...
24	Colliery Control Order (including Price Control) .	1944	...
25	The Coal Production Fund Ordinance . . . .	1944	...
26	Factories (Control of Dismantling) Ordinance .	1943	...
27	Cotton Cloth and Yarn (Control) Order . . . .	1945	...
28	Textile Industry (Control of Production) Order .	1945	...
29	Cotton Cloth (Control of Printing) Order . . . .	1945	...
30	Indian Cotton (Control) Order . . . .	1945	...
31	Foreign Cotton Control Order . . . .	1945	...
32	Textile Industry (Miscellaneous Articles) Control Order	1945	...
33	Starch Control Order . . . .	1945	...
34	Cotton Textiles (Dyes and Chemicals) Control Order.	1945	...
35	Zinc Chloride Control Order . . . .	1945	...
36	Hydrosulphite of Soda Control Order . . . .	1945	...
37	Cotton Textile Sizing and Filling Control Order .	1945	...
38	Cotton Movements Control . . . .	1945	...
39	Indian Woollen Goods (Control) Order . . . .	1944	...

1	2	3	4
40	Rubber Control and Production Order . . . .	1942	...
41	The Raw Cinematograph Films (Control of Distribution) Order.	1943	...
42	Control of footage of Cinemat ograph film . . . .	1942	
43	Brass and Copper (Control) Order . . . .	1945	...
44	Aluminium Utensils (Control) Order . . . .	1945	
45	Paper (Prices of Imported Paper) Control Order . . . .	1944	...
46	Essential Drugs (Census) Order . . . .	1941	1945
47	Agar Control Order . . . .	1942	1945
48	Control over certain glass factories . . . .	1944	1945
49	Sulphate of Alumina Control Order . . . .	1943	1945
50	Stearic Acid Control Order . . . .	1944	1945
51	Cement (Movement by Rail) Control Order . . . .	1945	1945
52	Cement (Movement by Water-ways Control Order . . . .	1945	1945
53	Hides (Movement by Rail) Control Order . . . .	1944	1945
54	Timber Control Order (Bombay) . . . .	1945	1945
55	Rubber Manufactures Control Order . . . .	1944	1945
56	Paper (Packing of Cotton Textiles) Control Order . . . .	1945	1945
57	Footwear Control Order . . . .	1944	1946
58	Control Over distribution of sole leather . . . .	1945	1946
59	Control over prices and distribution of grindery . . . .	1944	1945
60	Control over the tanneries producing sole leather in Madras.	1944	1945
61	Control over movement of leather from Vizagapatam to any destination other than Madras.	1945	1945
62	Sisal and Aloe Fibre Control Order . . . .	1943	1945
63	Iron and Steel (Movement by Rail) Order . . . .	1942	1945
64	Iron and Steel (Movement by Road or River) Order . . . .	1942	1945
65	Cotton Baling Hoops (Control of Movement) Order . . . .	1943	1945

## TRANSFER OF CLERKS TO RAILWAY BOARD

447. \*Hafiz Mohammad Abdullah: Will the Honourable the Railway Member please state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a large number of clerks, Class I, grade 1 or 2 were transferred to the office of the Railway Board from the various Railways under their control;

(b) whether it is a fact that these very junior clerks were not selected and recommended by their Railway Administrations on their merits for transfer to the Railway Board;

(c) why the Railway Administrations were not asked to select and recommend suitable clerks for transfer to the Railway Board's Office, keeping in view their order of seniority and suitability;

(d) whether it is a fact that these very junior clerks were promoted to the posts of Assistants in the Railway Board's office raising their emoluments to more than double or treble their substantive pay without holding any selections by competent Selection Boards;

(e) how many of these clerks transferred to the Railway Board's office on promotion as Assistants were Hindus and Muslims; and

(f) whether the Honourable Member proposes to have these cases looked into to see whether the communal proportion fixed for the Muslims was observed?

**The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall:** (a) Yes. 134 clerks of different grades have been transferred to the office of the Railway Board from various railways during the past three years.

(b) Yes as it is not necessary for Railway Administrations to make selections in such cases. Clerks transferred to the Board's Office from Railways are generally those who can be spared from among suitable volunteers.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) Some of these clerks were promoted to posts of Assistants in the Board's Office as a result of selection by a Selection Board and gained a substantial increase in their emoluments.

(e) 74 of whom 49 were Hindus and 18 Muslims.

(f) No, Sir.

#### MISMANAGEMENT ON BROACH-KAVI RAILWAY

**448. \*Mr. Mohammad M. Killedar:** (a) Will the Honourable the Railway Member be pleased to state if it is a fact that the management of the Broach-Kavi Railway, a tributary of the B. B. and C. I. Railway was handed over to the Government of His Highness the Gaekwar of Baroda during the war? If so, why was not public opinion invited before handing over this Railway?

(b) Is it not a fact that the whole territory through which this Railway line runs is a British Indian Territory?

(c) Are Government aware of the resentment created amongst the public affected by this transfer, and the mismanagement and the irregular timings of the said Railway?

(d) Have the Railway Board or the Gaekwar authorities received representations from the public in connection with the Broach-Kavi Railway, and what action has been taken or is proposed to be taken in the matter?

(e) Are Government aware that, owing to irregular timings and mismanagement of the said Railway, the postal service in the area of Jambusar Taluka of the Broach District is delayed and disorganised and the trade of the district hampered?

(f) Are Government aware that, at present, a Railway passenger from Broach to Kavi takes 12 hours to cover a distance of 46 miles?

(g) When do Government propose to take the Railway Line back?

**The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall:** (a) Yes. The Broach-Jambusar Railway with extensions to Kavi and Dahej was sold to the Baroda Government in October 1942. The Bombay Government were consulted and they agreed with the transfer. The fact of sale was mentioned to the Assembly in my speech introducing the Railway Budget for 1943-44. The reasons for handing over the lines to the Baroda Government were purely administrative. That Government having a N. G. System of over 350 miles in their charge closely linked up with these lines, and workshops and other facilities, are in a more favourable position to work these lines than the B., B. & C. I. Railway (Broad Gauge) is, to work and isolated Narrow-Gauge Section.

(b) It is a fact.

(c) to (f). Information is being sought from the Baroda Government.

(g) The question does not arise.

**449. \*Nawab Siddique Ali Khan:** Will the Secretary for Posts and Air be pleased to state:

- (a) the number of posts in the cadre of Post-Master-General; and
- (b) how many of these posts are now held by Muslims?

**Sir Gurnath Bewoor:** (a) Eleven, *plus* one temporary.  
(b) None at present.

PERMISSION FOR ISSUE OF MONTHLY *AWAZ-I-ABBAS* DELHI

**450. \*Nawab Siddique Ali Khan:** (a) Will the Honourable Member for Industries and Supplies please state whether in the course of war some magazines were stopped for want of sufficient paper?

(b) Is it a fact that some of the papers that were made to cease publication during the course of war were not allowed to be restarted on application?

(c) Do Government propose to grant permission for the issue of Monthly *Awaz-i-Abbas*, Delhi, whose publication has been authorised by Government previously, in view of the fact that the war has now come to an end?

**The Honourable Mr. A. A. Waugh:** (a) Representations to this effect have been made to Government from time to time.

(b) The Honourable Member's attention is invited to clause 9(a) of the Paper Control (Economy) Order 1945 under which, except under the authority in writing of the Central Government, no newspaper or periodical can be published which was not being regularly published during the period immediately preceding the 7th November 1942. Applications for the revival of defunct newspapers and periodicals have been rejected in recent months on account of scarcity of both newsprint and paper, save for exceptional cases.

(c) Government will be prepared to consider the matter afresh if application is made furnished information on the size of the monthly and its anticipated circulation.

HOWRAH AND BENARES CLAIMS OFFICES OF EAST INDIAN RAILWAY

**451. \*Shri Satya Narayan Sinha:** Will the Honourable the Railway Member please state:

(a) if it is a fact that there are two claims offices on the East Indian Railway, namely one at Howrah and the other at Benares under one Deputy Chief Commercial Manager;

(b) the area served by the offices at Howrah and Benares, separately;

(c) are Government aware that the office at Benares is most convenient and serves the public better than the one at Howrah; and

(d) whether Government propose to shift the claims office at Benares to Calcutta; if so, why?

**The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall:** (a) There is only one claims office on the E. I. Railway under the direct control of the Chief Commercial Manager which is at present located at Benares. Two Branches of this office are, however, located at Howrah and Calcutta respectively.

(b) The claims office at Howrah deals with claims arising out of goods consignments booked to Howrah and Calcutta stations. The Benares office deals with claims arising out of traffic booked to stations on the E. I. Railway other than those on the Howrah Division of the E. I. Railway.

(c) No.

(d) Yes. For reasons of general efficiency of the claims office as a whole.

SHIFTING BACK OF CLAIMS OFFICE, EAST INDIAN RAILWAY, HOWRAH

**452. \*Shri Satya Narayan Sinha:** Will the Honourable the Railway Member please state:

(a) if it is a fact that a portion of the East Indian Railway claims office had to be moved out of Calcutta when the city was directly threatened by the Japanese, if not, what the fact is;

(b) if it is a fact that Government propose to bring back that office to Calcutta in March, 1946; if not, what the fact is;

(c) are Government aware that residential accommodation for the non-gazetted staff is not available in Calcutta and will not be available for some time; if not, what the fact is; and

(d) if it is a fact that the Director of Accounts, Railway Board, has issued instructions to the Chief Accounts Officer, East Indian Railway, not to bring back the Accounts Office to Calcutta till such time as the Railway Board have given its approval; if so, whether the said instructions are applicable to the claims office also, if not, why not?

**The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall:** (a) The main claims office originally situated at Calcutta was temporarily evacuated to Benares as a war measure.

(b) It is intended to bring back the main claims office to Calcutta but no date has been fixed as yet.

(c) The position as regards residential accommodation for the staff at Calcutta was very acute during the war but is now generally improving.

(d) No official instructions have been issued by the Board. The second part of the question does not arise.

#### SHIFTING BACK OF CLAIMS OFFICE, EAST INDIAN RAILWAY, HOWRAH

**453. \*Shri Satya Narayan Sinha:** Will the Honourable the Railway Member please state:

(a) the number of the staff in each category of the East Indian Railway Claims Office, who had to be moved out of Calcutta when the city was directly threatened by the Japanese;

(b) the number of the staff in each category who are to be brought back to Calcutta in March 1946;

(c) whether residential accommodation for the staff to be brought back to Calcutta has been arranged; if not, why not?

**The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall:** (a) Detailed information is not readily available, but Government understand that 188 permanent clerks originally transferred from Calcutta to Benares are working in the Claims and Refunds Office and the Transit Section at Benares and that 15 permanent and 85 temporary clerks have been engaged since the moving of the office to Benares.

(b) and (c). The intention is to bring all the existing staff of the office to Calcutta in convenient batches as and when office and housing accommodation becomes available. There is no intention of bringing the office back in March 1946.

#### SHIFTING BACK OF CLAIMS OFFICE, EAST INDIAN RAILWAY, HOWRAH

**454. \*Shri Satya Narayan Sinha:** Will the Honourable the Railway Member please state:

(a) if it is a fact that both the merchants and the public have represented against shifting back to Calcutta of the East Indian Railway claims office at Benares; and

(b) if the reply to (a) be in the affirmative the action taken on the representation; and if no action has been taken, the reasons therefor?

**The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall:** (a) Some members of the local public of Benares and certain sections of the mercantile communities of the U. P. made representations against the return of the E. I. Railway claims office at Benares to Calcutta.

(b) The Government have considered these representations and have decided to return the office to Calcutta in the interests of general efficiency of the claims office as a whole.

## LEGISLATION TO NATIONALIZE INDIAN COAL MINES

**455. \*Sardar Mangal Singh:** Will the Honourable the Member for Industries and Supplies please state whether Government contemplate to take suitable steps to enact necessary legislation to nationalise the Indian coal mines?

**The Honourable Mr. A. A. Waugh:** As the Honourable Member is aware the Government of India have recently set up an "Indian Coalfields Committee" to report on what administrative measures are necessary to deal with problems of Indian coal mines. An examination of the economics of the coal industry is included in their terms of reference, and it is not proposed to consider the question raised before the report has been received by Government.

SCARCITY AND EXPORT OF CLOTH *vis a vis* CONTROL ORDERS

**456. \*Shri Mohan Lal Saksena:** (a) Is the Honourable Member for Industries and Supplies aware of the fact that notwithstanding the Cloth Control Order the people are not getting cloth and a large quantity of cloth finds its way to black markets?

(b) Are the Government aware that the control order instead of helping the consumers has rather added to bribery, corruption and favouritism?

(c) Are the Government aware that there is an incessant demand to abolish the Control Order as it is working at present? If so, what action if any, do Government propose to take on the representations made by the public as well as business community regarding the modification of the Control Order?

(d) Is it a fact that even now about 25 per cent. of the mills production is commandeered by Government to be sent abroad, quite unmindful of the acute shortage of cloth in India?

**The Honourable Mr. A. A. Waugh:** (a) No, Sir. The periodical reports from Provinces and States indicate that the great bulk of cloth sent from producing areas to consuming areas finds its way to the people. Black-marketing is usually in the finer qualities of cloth, which are scarce because India's production of them is small.

(b) This is not the view of Government.

(c) There is pressure by some merchants and other vested interests for the abolition of the Control Order. But it is clear to Government from the mass of innumerable correspondence received that the consuming public as a whole do not wish to have the Control Order abolished in the present circumstances of cloth shortage. The cloth control scheme is administered on the advice of the Textile Control Board, which includes representatives of industrial, commercial, labour and consuming interests. This Board has not so far recommended the abolition of the Control Order. In December last the Government of India enquired from Provinces and States whether it would be possible to introduce some measure of relaxation in the cloth control scheme. The unanimous decision of Provinces and States was that it would be premature to do so at present.

(d) Mill production in the year 1945 was about 4,700 million yards. 600 million yards or rather less than 13 per cent. of mill production were allotted for exports. This year the export quota has been fixed at 250 million yards for the first half of 1946. The quota for the second half of the year will be decided after a review to be made next month.

## MOVEMENT OF CLOTH AND ITS DISTRIBUTION BY PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENTS

**457. \*Shri Mohan Lal Saksena:** (a) Will the Honourable Member for Industries and Supplies please state if it is a fact that cloth, a commodity as essential as food, has been placed in the 5th class for booking purposes, resulting in locking up of goods and interference in free movement causing great hardship to the consuming public?

(b) Is it a fact that the adoption of Rationalisation Scheme has resulted in the production of unmarketable and inferior varieties of cloth?

(c) Is it a fact that the Textile Board is not in favour of the distribution of cloth by a Provincial Government? If so, what steps have Government taken to eliminate distribution by Provincial Governments?

**The Honourable Mr. A. A. Waugh:** (a) It is correct that Class V includes "general movements of cotton piece-goods". But Class II includes "movements under priority orders, general or specific, of cotton piece-goods". This means that, in cases where it is necessary to avoid holding up of goods, Government can declare cloth consignments as "Priority" and get them moved under Class II.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) The control scheme is administered on the advice of the Textile Control Board, and the distribution scheme, which includes distribution of cloth under Provincial Governments' arrangements, is an essential part of that scheme. The Textile Control Board has not recommended that distribution of cloth under Provincial Governments' arrangements should be discontinued.

#### MILL RETAIL SHOPS

**458. \*Shri Mohan Lal Saksena:** (a) Will the Honourable Member for Industries and Supplies please state if it is a fact that there has been a long correspondence between the Central Government and the Punjab Government and other Provincial Governments on the subject of mill retail shops? If so, will Government lay it on the table?

(b) Is it a fact that mills have been prohibited from opening new retail shops?

(c) Is it a fact that at mill retail shops outside mill premises, prices are much below the market rates? If so, why is not permission given for opening more retail shops by mills especially in places where there are complaints of black marketing?

(d) Is it also a fact that a majority of the Members of the Textile Control Board in July, 1944, opined in favour of opening of retail shops by mills?

**The Honourable Mr. A. A. Waugh:** (a) There was correspondence, brief, not long, between the Central Government and the Punjab Government last autumn, as a result of which the Central Government, in agreement with the Punjab Government, passed orders that only mill retail shops which were in operation before the 30th June 1944 should be permitted to continue. The correspondence was demi-official, and I do not propose to lay it on the table.

(b) Only those mill retail shops which were in existence before the 30th June 1944 may operate.

(c) Mill retail shops are permitted to sell cloth at the same price as ordinary retail shops. Sometimes mill retail shops sell their goods at prices below the retail ceiling prices, but it is not the policy of Government to allow an expansion of mill retail shops which might undercut and drive out of business the ordinary retail shop-keeper. The total margin of profit between ex-mill prices and ultimate retail prices fixed by Government, namely 20 per cent., is not excessive.

(d) No, Sir.

#### FACILITIES TO MR. KESHO RAM SABARWAL STRANDED IN PEIPING, CHINA

**459. \*Shri Mohan Lal Saksena:** (a) Will the Foreign Secretary be pleased to state if his attention has been drawn to the editorial note and letters of Mr. Kesho Ram Sabarwal at present stranded in Peiping, China without money and a passport to get back to India, published in the *Frontier Mail* of February 3, 1946?

(b) What action have Government taken or propose to take to help Mr. Sabarwal to return to this country?

(c) Has the Premier of the North West Frontier Province drawn the attention of the Government of India in this respect?

**Mr. H. Weightman:** (a) Yes.

(b) The attention of the Honourable Member is invited to parts (b), (c) and (d) of the answer given to Pandit Mukut Bihari Lal Bhargava's question No. 371, on the 19th February, 1946.

(c) No.



SMALL INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKINGS

460. \*Shri Mohan Lal Saxena: (a) Will the Honourable Member for Industries and Supplies be pleased to state the number of Industrial undertakings: (i) employing less than 20 persons; and (ii) employing more than 20 persons?

(b) Is it a fact that the number of persons engaged in small industries is 70 per cent. of the total number of industrial workers in this country?

(c) What is the extent to which the small industries have developed during the war, and what steps have been taken to maintain their present position as well as to develop them further?

The Honourable Mr. A. A. Waugh: (a) (i) and (ii). The information available relates only to industrial undertakings which are registered as factories under the Factories' Act 1934. At the end of 1944, up to which period figures are available, there were 14,071 such factories employing 2.5 million workers. These factories employed 20 persons or above but the figures include also a very small percentage of registered factories employing 10 per cent or above. Complete information relating to industrial undertakings employing less than 20 persons is not available.

(b) I have no exact information.

(c) The policy of Government in the matter of giving assistance to industries was explained on 19th February, 1946, in reply to Mr. Vadilal Lallubhai's question No. 350. I place another copy\* of that answer on the table. As compared to 1943, there was an increase of 3,500 registered factories in 1944.

DIRECT RECRUITMENT TO SUPERINTENDENTS' POSTS IN DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF INDUSTRIES AND SUPPLIES

461. \*Mr. Gauri Shankar Saran Singh: (a) Will the Honourable Member for Industries and Supplies please state if it is a fact that direct recruitment to the post of a Superintendent in the various Departments of the Government of India Secretariat and Attached Offices is never made, and that the same is always filled by selection from among the Assistants serving in the Department concerned?

(b) Is it a fact that Government are considering to fill some of the posts of Superintendents in the Directorate-General of Industries and Supplies from among officers who have held gazetted rank during the war time, but have had to be or are likely to be retrenched owing to the termination of hostilities?

(c) If answer to (b) above is in the affirmative, will the Honourable Member please state the reason or reasons for making this departure from standing practice?

The Honourable Mr. A. A. Waugh: (a) No, Sir.

(b) No, Sir. Some men from the ministerial staff were allowed to officiate in Gazetted posts during the war, and are now likely to revert to ministerial posts, including that of Superintendents.

(c) Does not arise.

REMARKS ABOUT MAHATMA GANDHI AND CONGRESS BY SIR GIRJA SHANKAR BAJPAI

462. \*Seth Govind Das: (a) Will the Foreign Secretary please state if it is a fact that Sir Girja Shankar Bajpai, Indian Government's Agent-General in the United States of America, had declared that Bengalis had always been dying of famine and there was nothing new or unusual about the famine situation in Bengal and also that there was plenty of food in India at that time?

(b) Is it also a fact that the same gentleman had also depicted Congress as a fascist organisation and its leaders including Mahatma Gandhi as the agents of Japan?

(c) If the answers to (a) and (b) are in the affirmative what arrangements Government propose to make for contradicting these reports by external publicity?

Mr. H. Weightman: (a) and (b). No such statements have been made by the Agent General for India in the United States of America.

(c) Does not arise.

\*See Legislative Assembly Debates, dated the 19th February, 1946.—Ed. of D.

## BROAD GAUGE RAILWAY CONNECTING NAGPUR AND JUBBULPORE

**463. \*Seth Govind Das:** (a) Will the Honourable the Railway Member be pleased to state whether he is aware of the fact that the two biggest and foremost towns in the Central Provinces and Berar, i.e., Nagpur and Jubbulpore are not connected by a short direct Railway route?

(b) Is the Honourable Member prepared to consider the claims of the said Province in post-war planning and development to connect these towns by a broad gauge railway, passing through Seoni as was contemplated and planned after the first world war of 1914 and is recommended by a committee set up by the Central Provinces Government which is carried on under Section 98 Government of India Act?

**The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall:** (a) Yes.

(b) The Government are aware of the recommendations made by the Provincial Industries Committee, C. P. and Berar, 1945. The Local Government have not, however, asked for this line to be included in the post-war plan of railways.

## TRIAL OF RAJA MAHENDRA PRATAP IN JAPAN

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

(a) whether Raja Mahendra Pratap is being tried as a war criminal in Japan;

(b) whether the Government of India was informed of this decision; whether there are any arrangements for his defence; and

(c) whether proper facilities will be given to any of his relations or friends who may wish to go to Japan for his defence?

**Mr. H. Weightman:** With your permission, Sir, I propose to answer questions Nos. 464 and 465 together.

The attention of the Honourable Members is invited to the answers given by me to starred questions Nos. 132 and 238, by Shri Mohan Lal Saksena and Pandit Sri Krishna Dutta Paiwal, on the 8th and 13th February, respectively.

## WHEREABOUTS OF RAJA MAHENDRA PRATAP

†**465. \*Pandit Mukut Bihari Lal Bhargava:** (a) Will the Foreign Secretary be pleased to state if Raja Mahendra Pratap has been brought to India under arrest? If so, where and under what conditions is he being kept at present?

(b) If the reply to (a) is in the negative, do Government propose to disclose his present whereabouts?

(c) Are Government aware that Raja Mahendra Pratap has all along been an advocate of world peace, and has always worked for humanitarian and pacifist policies like the establishment of a World Federation?

(d) If Government have any information that the Aryan Army founded by Raja Mahendra Pratap was not an army to take part in the war but a body of volunteers and pacifists to work against all wars?

(e) In view of the changed political circumstances and public opinion, and particularly, in view of the Government's policy regarding the I.N.A. men, do Government propose to remove restrictions on the free and unhampered movement of Raja Mahendra Pratap in India?

## UNSTARRED QUESTION AND ANSWER

## TOTAL INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION

**47. Mr. Vadilal Lallubhai:** Will the Honourable Member for Industries and Supplies please state the figures of the total industrial production in respect of the major industries, for which the figures are collected by the Government of India for the years 1939-40, 1940-41, 1941-42, 1942-43, 1943-44, 1944-45 and 1945-46 upto date expressed both in terms of value and quantity?

**The Honourable Mr. A. A. Waugh:** I place a statement on the table showing the production quantities of certain selected industries for which figures are compiled by Government. Information for the year 1945-46 is not available, nor is information regarding values of goods.

†For answer to the question, see answer to question No. 464.

*Industrial Production in India*

(April to March)

Description	UNSTARRED QUESTION AND ANSWER					1944-1945
	1939-1940	1940-1941	1941-1942	1942-1943	1943-1944	Tons
I. Jute Manufactures including twist and yarn.	Tons 1,276,909	Tons 1,109,252	Tons 1,278,961	Tons 1,247,231	Tons 1,067,857	Tons 1,097,000
II. Paper . . . . .	Cwts. 1,416,207	Cwts. 1,753,235	Cwts. 1,871,206	Cwts. 1,820,833	Cwts. 1,752,154	Cwts. 2,001,000
III. Distilleries and Breweries— (a) Distilleries (Country Spirit Indian made foreign Spirit Rectified, denatured spirit, etc.)	L. P. gallons. 9,241,386	L. P. gallons 10,586,627	L. P. gallons 12,850,011	L. P. gallons 13,592,712	L. P. gallons 16,028,841	L. P. gallons 16,790,300
(b) Breweries (Beer) Porter, Stout, etc.)	1,310,888	1,889,361	3,463,414	3,608,927	3,331,788	3,555,400
IV. Paints. . . . .	Cwts. 686,943	Cwts. 804,666	Cwts. 1,119,504	Cwts. 990,526	Cwts. 1,149,872	Cwts. 1,129,000
V. Matches . . . . .	Gross 21,970,104	Gross 23,124,788	Gross 16,509,312	Gross 14,831,047	Gross 17,963,932	Gross 17,095,000
VI. Wheat Flour . . . . .	Mds. 16,310,547	Mds. 16,899,640	Mds. 18,176,999	Mds. 13,392,485	Mds. 14,662,663	Mds. 14,892,000
VII. *Sugar (12 months—November to October)	Cwts. 25,840,641	Cwts. 23,148,963	Cwts. 15,901,523	Cwts. 21,713,710	Cwts. 17,042,000	Cwts. 22,037,000
VIII. Iron and Steel Manufactures (i) Pig Iron . . . . .	Tons 1,837,936	Tons 1,963,278	Tons 2,015,221	Tons 1,804,353	Tons 1,686,551	Tons 1,303,000

## Industrial Production in India—contd.

Description	(April to March)					
	1939-1940	1940-1941	1941-1942	1942-1943	1943-1944	1944-1945
(ii) Iron Castings and manufactures	Tons. 129,299	Tons 132,390	Tons 140,461	Tons 125,149	Tons 122,913	Tons 106,000
(iii) Steel Ingots	1,070,355	1,253,805	1,363,307	1,299,327	1,365,510	1,264,000
(iv) Semis	972,169	970,633	1,057,887	972,531	1,042,086	952,000
(v) Finished Steel	804,469	679,875	991,902	906,620	978,373	923,000
IX. Petrol	Gallons 21,965,965	Gallons 21,310,553	Gallons 24,403,031	Gallons 28,616,821	Gallons 29,257,414	Gallons 30,611,000
X. Kerosene Oil	28,176,476	39,926,280	36,115,404	24,660,178	16,919,050	15,936,000
XI. Cement	Tons 1,733,400	Tons 1,727,453	Tons 2,222,418	Tons. 2,182,818	Tons, 2,111,218	Tons 2,044,000
XII. Heavy chemicals (Other than Ammonium Sulphate)	Cwts. 960,397	Cwts. 1,119,646	Cwts. 1,237,879	Cwts. 1,180,069	Cwts. 1,219,650	Cwts. 1,948,000
Ammonium Sulphate—						
(i) Neutral and	Tons. 20,089	Tons 27,633	Tons 29,993	Tons. 25,209	Tons 22,666	Tons 22,405
(ii) Acid						

## SHORT NOTICE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

### NEW DELHI R. I. A. F. AIRMEN'S STRIKE

**Sri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar:** (a) Will the War Secretary please state if a strike of the R.I.A.F. airmen is going on at New Delhi? If so, for how many days past, and how many persons are taking part in it?

(b) How many of the strikers have gone on hunger-strike? If so, for what reason?

(c) Has the military police been called in and are the strikers coerced to resume work?

(d) Have the strikers submitted a memorandum complaining of:

(i) low pay as compared with the total emoluments of similar ranks of British personnel employed which is five times as much;

(ii) difference in quantum of war gratuity, the one offered to an Indian being Rs. 1-12-0 for every month of war service whereas the gratuity per month of war service to British airmen on similar service is about Rs. 10;

(iii) resettlement scheme;

(iv) clothing allowance;

(v) family allowance;

(vi) unemployment pension; and

(vii) conditions of travel, accommodation and food?

(e) Have Government considered the memorandum? If so, with what result? If not, why not?

(f) Have Government already appointed a Committee to inquire into their grievances and will the Government sympathetically consider the elimination of all discriminatory treatments?

**Mr. P. Mason:** (a) Certain airmen were in a state of indiscipline for varying periods from 15th to 21st February. The total personnel involved was 537. They have now resumed duty.

(b) None.

(c) The normal complement of Air Force Service Police established on the stations concerned has been on duty. No special Military Police have been called in nor was any force used.

(d) Yes, Sir.

(e) The memorandum was presented to me personally on the 19th February only. It is now being considered.

(f) Government have appointed no committee to inquire into their alleged grievances which will be considered in the normal manner through service channels. In fact, the Air Officer Commander-in-Chief issued an order to the effect that the men must return to duty by 8-30 hrs. on 21st February, which they have obeyed.

**Sri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar:** Is it a fact that the people who have struck work are not officers but only the subordinate ranks?

**Mr. P. Mason:** Yes, Sir.

**Seth Yusuf Abdoola Haroon:** Is it a fact that eighty of these ratings have been arrested yesterday in Delhi?

**Mr. P. Mason:** No, Sir; "rating" is a term that is applied to the naval service. Their case—if that is what the Honourable Member has in mind—will be dealt with in the next question.

**Sri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar:** Is it a fact that special police were indented upon for the Palam station here?

**Mr. P. Mason:** No, Sir.

**Sri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar:** With regard to part (d), may I know whether these differences do or do not exist between European and Indian similar ranks, in regard to pay, war gratuity, clothing and family allowances, etc.?

**Mr. P. Mason:** Yes, Sir. As I endeavoured to explain in answer to a question on this subject the other day, which I am sorry to say was not reached for oral delivery, there is a very considerable difference between the emoluments of British service airmen and other ranks—and Indian. And I suggested that that was a very important question indeed. If the rates of pay of the Indian airmen, soldiers and naval ratings were raised to the British level it would have an effect, I suppose,—though I am not an economic expert,—on the wage level throughout the country; and it would certainly mean that the size of the armed forces which India can maintain would have to be very considerably reduced. It is not, therefore, a question which can be decided at short notice or in connection with the complaints of individuals, and I suggest that anything which encourages the idea that such an increase could ever be made is very strongly to be deprecated.

**Mr. Manu Subedar:** Have Government ascertained if there is any connection between the strike of the R.A.F. and the strike which we are discussing?

**Mr. P. Mason:** I think there probably is a connection.

**Mr. M. Asaf Ali:** Sir, with reference to the last answer but one I should like to know the view of the Government of India with regard to the strength of the army that India is expected to maintain in case the British personnel is completely withdrawn from India. I take it that in that case more than half the expenditure now incurred on the fighting forces will be saved which we can spread over the rest of the forces that we want to maintain; in fact we can increase that number.

**Mr. P. Mason:** I do not think that question really arises out of the short notice question passed; but the answer really is that the whole problem will be one for the future Government to decide.

**Mr. M. Asaf Ali:** Precisely; I simply want to contest the point which the Honourable Member raised about the strength of the forces. He said that if these questions were considered, the question of a rise in pay and allowances would mean a reduction in the size of the forces. I say there will be nothing of the kind, because if the British forces are withdrawn from India the expenditure incurred on them will be saved to us and we can always readjust the whole thing.

I quite realize that if the Government is going to hand over power after a short time and we are going to take over the entire forces, we can decide the whole thing ourselves—I can understand that. But that is not the answer. The point is if the demands that are made today are conceded, it would mean the reduction of Indian forces. I do not agree with that.

**Mr. P. Mason:** I am not quite sure what the question is.

**Mr. M. Asaf Ali:** My question is very simple. Is the Indian Government now prepared to consider the question of withdrawing the British forces from India altogether and as quickly as possible?

**Mr. P. Mason:** No, Sir. I have already stated more than once in the course of this Session that a definite decision in that respect has to be taken by the future Government.

**Mr. M. Asaf Ali:** If the matter is left to the future Government, then I take it that they are not prepared to consider this matter at all.

**Mr. P. Mason:** That was the answer which I gave to the question.

**Sri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar:** How then he proposes to avoid this racial discrimination between one community and the other?

**Mr. P. Mason:** It cannot be avoided.

**Sri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar:** May I know if the Honourable Member's Department has not induced Graduates, Double Graduates, and M.As., to join Defence Services on a pittance of Rs. 70 a month.

**Mr. P. Mason:** I require notice of that question.

**Sri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar:** May I know if for similar ranks a European is given Rs. 300 a month.

**Mr. P. Mason:** I require notice of that also.

**Mr. M. Asaf Ali:** May I ask another question which I think is intimately connected with the question that has been asked. Is there any news about the strike spreading to other units stationed elsewhere?

**Mr. P. Mason:** Yes, Sir. There is news of a non-violent demonstration—I will not use the word 'strike'—I dislike it very much and I don't think it should be applied to the armed forces—at Lahore this morning, and somewhere else, but I am afraid I have not got it in writing. There are however, further instances that have come in this morning.

**Mr. M. Asaf Ali:** In view of what has happened, and in view of the fact that strike is spreading, is the Honourable Member prepared to appoint a committee immediately to go into the whole question?

**Sri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar:** Including non-officials.

**Mr. P. Mason:** To go into what question? The question of pay?

**Mr. M. Asaf Ali:** Everything concerning these services. Because, after all, the whole thing is assuming large proportions and it appears that the whole thing is being mishandled, and, therefore, I should like to know what exactly the Government of India proposes to do in respect of the epidemic spreading throughout the country?

**Mr. P. Mason:** With regard to pay a committee has already been appointed to consider the matter. They will be collecting evidence of every kind, and enquire into this question, which I may say is one of extreme complication and they will be reporting, I should imagine, sometime during the summer by which time, I hope, that there will be another Government to consider their report.

**Mr. M. Asaf Ali:** May I know whether the Government is prepared to refer the whole of this question to the Defence Consultative Committee which was proposed only yesterday. Let the Defence Consultative Committee consider the whole question in its entirety and advise the Government as to what steps they should take under the circumstances. As the Government is not handling the situation properly, and it is being resented throughout the country as far as I know I want close association of the representatives of the country—of representatives of this House—with the whole of this question. Let the Defence Consultative Committee take up the whole matter and thrash it out.

**Mr. P. Mason:** I agree; it is an excellent idea that the Defence Consultative Committee should discuss this matter thoroughly.

**Sri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar:** May I ask the Honourable Member to give an assurance that none of the strikers will be victimized?

**Mr. P. Mason:** If by 'victimized' the Honourable Member means punished, I could not give such an assurance.

**Diwan Chaman Lall:** As the Honourable Member considers the suggestion made by my Honourable friend, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, to be an excellent one, may I know whether he is prepared to let this House know, and how soon, whether that suggestion has been accepted by Government?

**Mr. P. Mason:** Yes, Sir.

**Diwan Chaman Lall:** How soon?

**Mr. P. Mason:** As soon as I know.

**Mr. President:** The next three questions may be put one by one, and then the War Secretary will answer them together as they deal with the same matter.

## STRIKE ON H. M. I. S. TALWAR AT BOMBAY.

**Seth Yusuf Abdoola Haroon:** Will the War Secretary please state:

- (a) since when the strike started in *H.M.I.S. Talwar* at Bombay;
- (b) whether the Government has made any enquiry into the matter;
- (c) whether the Government contemplate appointing any enquiry committee to find out the reasons for this strike;
- (d) whether it is a fact that the strike in *H.M.I.S. Talwar* was due to some of the ratings being arrested;
- (e) whether it is a fact that these arrests followed because of the trainees shouting political slogans and the I.N.A. slogans;
- (f) whether it is a fact that they were harshly treated and given severe punishment;
- (g) if the answers to (d) to (f) are in the affirmative, what action Government contemplate taking;
- (h) whether the strike in *H.M.I.S. Talwar* was due because of rigorous punishment awarded to some of the ratings on account of their interest in political matters;
- (i) whether it is a fact that the Officers-in-Charge of the Establishment were unduly and unjustly rude to them; and
- (j) what action Government contemplate taking against the officers, in question?

## STRIKE ON H. M. I. S. TALWAR AT BOMBAY.

**Mr. M. R. Masani:** Will the War Secretary be pleased to state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that on the evening of the 17th February, 1946, ratings of the *H.M.I.S. Talwar* of the Royal Indian Navy stopped drawing their rations and on the morning of the 15th struck work;
- (b) whether the cause of their action was the insulting and abusive language used by Commanding Officer King of the *H.M.I.S. Talwar* on the 15th instant;
- (c) whether on and after the 18th instant the ratings in the other units and establishments in Bombay of the Royal Indian Navy also desisted from drawing their rations and joined in the strike;
- (d) whether ratings of ships at sea have also joined in the strike;
- (e) whether the number of strikers now exceeds 15,000;
- (f) whether all the strikers have jointly set up a Central Naval Strike Committee to negotiate with the authorities for the redress of their grievances and the settlement of the dispute;
- (g) whether the grievances include—
  - (i) insulting and abusive language used by Commander King of the *H.M.I.S. Talwar*,
  - (ii) bad treatment generally by officers,
  - (iii) arrest and punishment of two of their members for expressing their political sympathies,
  - (iv) bad quality of food;
  - (v) delays in demobilisation and uncertainty of future employment;
  - (vi) fresh recruitment of British personnel; and
- (h) what measures Government have taken and are taking to remove the grievances of the ratings and to secure an amicable termination of the dispute?

## ROYAL INDIAN NAVY TROUBLE IN BOMBAY AND KARACHI

**Mr. D. P. Karmarkar:** Will the War Secretary please state whether he has any information and, if so, what, regarding the Royal Indian Navy trouble in Bombay and Karachi?



**Mr. P. Mason:** Sir, I have three questions on this subject and two of them are of some length. If you give me permission, Sir, I propose to reply by a lengthy statement in which I will state the information that we have up-to-date on the whole subject.

**Mr. President:** Yes, the Honourable Member may.

**Mr. P. Mason:** On Monday the 19th of February, at 12-00 hours, that is mid-day serious trouble broke out in *H.M.I.S. Talwar*, the R.I.N. Signal School in Bombay. All ratings, except Chief Petty Officers and Petty Officers refused duty and refused to listen to their officers. The establishment includes about 1,100 ratings. The Flag Officer, Bombay at once took over charge of this establishment himself and visited it, but he was unable to find out that day what men's grievances were. The Flag Officer Bombay came to the conclusion however that the Commanding Officer of the *H.M.I.S. Talwar*, should be replaced and he was replaced by a senior and very experienced officer.

On Tuesday 19th February, the trouble spread to the R. I. N. Depot and Castle Barracks, Bombay, and the ships in Bombay Harbour. There was considerable rowdiness in the streets and the civil police made some arrests of ratings involved in acts of violence. During the course of this day, the Flag Officer, Bombay, visited *Talwar* and he met, fourteen ratings who came forward as leaders or spokesmen, and then for the first time he found out, what the demands of the men were. They were as follows:—

- (1) No victimization of the so-called strikers.
- (2) The release of R. K. Singh, telegraphist from Arthur Road prison immediately;
- (3) Speedy demobilization according to age and service groups with reasonable peace-time employment;
- (4) Immediate disciplinary action against Commander King for his behaviour and insulting language used by him to the personnel of *Talwar*.
- (5) The best class of Indian food.
- (6) Royal Navy scales of pay, family allowances and travelling facilities and the use of Navy, Army and Air Force Institute Stores.
- (7) No kit to be taken back from R. I. N. personnel at the time of release.
- (8) Immediate grant of war gratuity and Treasury pay on men being released.
- (9) Good behaviour of officers towards the lower deck men.
- (10) Quicker regular promotion of the lower deck men to officers and all new officers coming from abroad to be stopped.
- (11) A new Commanding Officer for the Signal School. Commander Cole, who had been the previous Commander to be reappointed.
- (12) All demands were to be decided by the authorities concerned through a national leader whose name would be given.

The fourteen ratings also wished to make a protest to the Government of India regarding (a) I. N. A. policy (b) firing on the public in various places and (c) the use of Indian troops in the Middle East and Near East.

On the 19th February some 120 ratings in Calcutta staged, what was described as a sit-down mutiny with somewhat similar demands. During the night 150 ratings led by an officer proceeded from Marve to Bombay and tried to break into the Central Communications office. They were not successful and were locked up on their return to Marve. On Wednesday, 20th February there was no serious rioting during the morning although the streets were crowded with ratings who refused to do their duty or obey orders. The Flag Officer, Bombay, issued a message in the afternoon which was read verbally to all establishments and ships' companies by their Commanding Officers and announced in the harbour by loud hailers. This ordered all ratings to be in their ships or establishments by 15-30 after which any found outside would be liable to be arrested.

[Mr. P. Mason]

By this time the mutiny had spread to other establishments in the neighbourhood of Bombay but in these establishments the ratings were not, and still are not, using violence. It is notable also that the dockyard workmen have refused to join in the trouble.

On the 21st February, at 21-40 hours, ratings who in accordance with the arrangements of the 20th were confined to their barracks, began to try to break out of their barracks and a Guard from the Maharatta Light Infantry who had been posted on the Barracks were compelled to open fire which they did with single shots. The Guard was stoned by the ratings who then obtained rifles and ammunition and returned their fire. Shortly afterwards a report was received that ships in the harbour were raising steam in order to hoist the ammunition for the four-inch guns. Rifle fire from the ships to the shore continued during the morning and a few rounds of light shell fire, I think from Derlikons, which fire small shells, were fired towards the town. One small shell caused injuries to several civilians.

At 14-30 hours, the Flag Officer, Bombay, proceeded to the dockyard and met the leaders of the mutineers to whom he gave a very serious warning, telling them that no conditions other than unconditional surrender would be accepted, that the troops would in no circumstances be withdrawn and that overwhelming force would be brought to bear if the mutineers persisted in their present attitude. The Flag Officer Commanding broadcast about the same time a message, which probably all Members have seen in the newspapers this morning.

**Sri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar:** A threat.

**Mr. M. R. Masani:** It is a disgrace.

**Diwan Chaman Lall:** Offering to blow up the Navy.

**Mr. P. Mason:** After that the cease fire order was hoisted and there was not more firing from the ships during the afternoon but later in the day there were sporadic outbursts of firing in the Castle Barracks area. There are, however, indications that the situation is still very serious. An outbreak of indiscipline of this kind cannot be regarded in the same way as a trade dispute and must be dealt with firmly although not vindictively. Of the demands of the men, that for improvement in the quality of food was met as soon as it was made known, although the standard of rations in this service is already considerably above the Army standard.

**Sri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar:** Wretched quality.

**Mr. P. Mason:** I have seen the food itself.

**Sri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar:** Did you take that food.

**Mr. President:** Order, order; Let the Honourable Member finish.

**Mr. P. Mason:** Of the other demands, those relating to individual officers and men are being enquired into. No one has yet heard what it is that Commander King is supposed to have said. He himself is quite definite that he used no insulting language. The question is however being enquired into. Nor is it known in Delhi what was the charge against R. K. Singh. Telegraphist Dutt was dismissed from service for writing slogans on *H. M. I. S. Talwar*. This is a simple disciplinary action and no service can proceed if the acts of Commanding Officers are to be called in question by ratings. Of the remaining demands those which appear to be the most important relate to rates of pay and gratuity. As I have already explained in connection with the R. I. A. F. the rates of pay in this service as in the Air Force are considerably higher than those in the Indian Army. If you raise the pay of the Navy you would certainly have to raise the pay of the Army with inevitable repercussions on the wage level throughout the country. I put it to the House that it is at present impossible with India's finances for her to accept the proposal that the wages of Indian servicemen should be raised to the level of the British service which are related to the wage levels in the United Kingdom. If such a demand were to be

accepted, it would mean that the size of the armed forces would have to be very considerably reduced.

In the light of this general statement, I turn to the detailed question.

Before that I would like to give some more recent news which has come in this morning.

**Seth Yusuf Abdoola Haroon:** The Honourable Member has not referred to Karachi.

**Mr. P. Mason:** I am going to do that.

Here is a report from Karachi received this morning. *Himalaya*, that is the Gunnery School, *Chamak* that is the Radar School, and *Bahadur* which is one of the two Boys' Training Establishments, and all three of which are on Manora Island, are quiet although they are affected. It remains to be seen if they return to their duties this morning. They were addressed last night and received the address of their Commanding Officer in a reasonable spirit. The sloop *Hindustan* is in the hands of the mutineers. It has a personnel of about 300 ratings. The position regarding this ship was that yesterday a number of ratings from the shore establishments tried to reach the ship. They reached the ship and my information, which is slightly different from that of the press—but I am not quite sure which is right as I have not had my information confirmed—is that military police went to the ship to arrest those who had left the shore establishments to go to the ship and they were fired on from the ship. They then returned the fire of the ship and thereupon the *Hindustan* opened fire with all her guns. The firing lasted about ten minutes. This morning the *Hindustan* is berthed alongside and Commodore Curtis, who is the naval officer in charge, is going to the ship this morning in a final attempt to make them see reason. If they do not, force will have to be used. The shore establishment, *Dilawar*, another boys' training establishment at Karachi, which is on the mainland is unaffected. Another shore establishment *Valsura*, the Torpedo School is also unaffected. All small arms and ammunition have been removed from the Manora establishments and it is expected that these establishments will return to duty today. Commodore Curtis spoke to them last night and he received what is described as an "ovation". That is the position in Karachi.

The latest news from Bombay is that by 8 o'clock last night all available small arms and ammunition at Castle Barracks were surrendered to the naval officers who entered the barracks. The ratings in the dockyard and ships still have arms. There was much talk between the ships by signal during the night. This is a point to which I would draw the particular attention of the House. It appeared from these radio signals between ships that there are two parties among them. The majority of the mutineers were impressed by the warning given to them by the Flag Officer Commanding the Royal Indian Navy and by the Flag Officer, Bombay, and would like today to come to terms. There is, however, a small party, who advocate continued violence. They say that the support of all political parties is behind them: therefore they should proceed in their attempt. They say that the case is going to be discussed today in what they refer to as 'Parliament', which I think may mean the Assembly.

**Mr. M. Asaf Ali (Delhi: General):** When they say 'Parliament', why do you imagine it means the Assembly?

**Mr. P. Mason:** It is only a surmise.

**Mr. M. Asaf Ali:** You would do well to leave that out.

**Mr. P. Mason:** Very well. There was a little rioting in the city during the night, which, I do not think arose out of these disturbances as it does not appear that the ratings were taking part in it. I think the *goondas* of the city were

[Mr. P. Mason]

taking part in it. One sub-lieutenant of the R. I. N. V. R. was killed by a bullet. There was no wide-spread disturbance at Bombay and the ships were flying the 'Cease Fire' flag. In all the shore establishments the situation is that the majority of the men are in the establishments and are quiet but are refusing work.

Karachi, I have given you the position. At Jamnagar, *Valsura* the Torpedo School, is unaffected. Cochin is unaffected. Madras: 80 ratings marched through the streets in sympathy with the Bombay men but returned quietly to their barracks on the advice of their officers. Vizagapatam: The position is the same as in Madras. 150 ratings demonstrated but returned quietly. Calcutta: Four hundred ratings still refuse to work. In Delhi, about which my friend asked, 39 men yesterday refused duty and were arrested. That is the news I have.

Perhaps it would help the House if I read out the whole question part by part and repeat the answer.

*First Question.*—(a) When the strike started?

This has been answered.

(b) Whether Government made any enquiry and (c) whether Government contemplate appointing any enquiry committee.

Answer to (b) and (c): The first thing is for the men to return to duty. When this has been done a full enquiry will be held.

(d) Whether it is a fact that the strike was due to some of the ratings being arrested: (e) whether it is a fact that these arrests followed because of the trainees shouting political slogans and the I. N. A. slogans.

Answer: One of the causes alleged by the men, though I should say I do not believe it, is the punishment of two men, R. K. Singh and P. C. Datta: but this does not appear to be the main cause.

(f) whether it is a fact that they were harshly treated and given severe punishment: (g) and the action Government contemplate taking: (h) whether the strike was due because of rigorous punishment awarded to some of the ratings, (i) whether it is a fact that the officer-in-charge was unduly and unjustly rude to them: and (j) what action Government contemplate taking against the officers in question.

The answer to all these points is that the information is not available at present but the matter will be enquired into fully as soon as the ratings return to work.

*Second Question.*—(a) the date on which the ratings struck work: (b) whether the cause of their action was the insulting and abusive language used by Commander King: (c) whether on and after the 18th instant the ratings in the other units and establishments ceased work—I have answered that—: (d) whether ratings of ships at sea have also joined in the strike.

Answer: No, Sir. As far as is known, none.

(e) Whether the number of strikers now exceeds 15,000.

Answer: It is rather less than 12,000.

(f) Whether all the strikers have jointly set up a Central Naval Strike Committee.

Answer: Yes, Sir.

(g) and (h) refer to grievances, which I have explained at length.

(h) asks what measures Government have taken. To that the answer is that a full enquiry will be made as soon as the men have returned to work.

**Mr. M. B. Masani:** Will the Honourable Member kindly state if it is a fact that, as reported in the *Free Press Journal* of Bombay of February 19th, the language used by Commander King to his ratings included phrases like "sons of coolies" and "sons of bitches"?

**Mr. P. Mason:** I have not seen that report but as I said, the question of what he said will be inquired into and is being inquired into and he himself is quite positive that he used no insulting language.

**Mr. M. Asaf Ali:** I recognise, after the long statement the Honourable the War Secretary, has made on the floor of the House and the information he has given, that the situation is extremely grave. We would therefore be most reluctant to say or do anything which might make the situation, which is already bad, worse. It is not a suitable occasion for questions, quick-firing replies and retorts: it is a matter which requires deep, deliberate and very serious consideration. Therefore, as my suggestion has already been characterised by the War Secretary as an excellent one, my suggestion being that the whole question should be referred immediately to the Defence Consultative Committee, I feel that a definite assurance should be given to us on that point; and pending the determination of these issues under the advice of the Defence Consultative Committee, all other action should be suspended, whether it is in the nature of immediate steps that the Government now propose to take or others. I say so for a very good reason.—I hope I shall be excused for making this statement—I say so because the situation is becoming more and more grave every moment. I see the following reports in the newspapers. The War Secretary has referred to Vice-Admiral Godfrey's broadcast. Let me tell him that but for certain portions of that broadcast, I would not have given notice of the adjournment motion which I have given to him. The words he used were:

"To continue the struggle is the height of folly when you take into account the overwhelming forces at the disposal of the Government at this time and which will be used to their utmost even if it means the destruction of the Navy of which we have been so proud".

I want the House to note the words "even if it means the destruction of the navy of which we have been so proud". On top of that has come another piece of news from London to this effect.

"Certain vessels of the Royal Navy are proceeding towards Bombay, said Mr. C. R. Atlee, Prime Minister in the House of Commons today after Mr. Henderson Stewart had moved adjournment of the House on a matter of urgent public importance, namely, the grave extension of mutiny among a section of the Royal Indian Navy".

The broadcast of Vice Admiral Godfrey and this item of news point to a very serious situation, namely, that the British forces are going to be used to destroy the Indian navy. Is that a situation which we can contemplate with equanimity? We cannot, the army is ours, the navy is ours. The Indian fighting forces are ours; we want to maintain them intact; and therefore the sooner we can bring about a peaceful situation the better. There can be some objection to political parties outside the House interesting themselves in this affair. But there can be no objection to the Defence Consultative Committee, on which would be represented the various parties as well, taking notice of this question and advising the War Department to take proper action in the circumstances. Let us be seized of the whole question; let us go into the whole matter, and let us see how we can bring about what may be both in the interests of the country itself and these three services. After all we want to maintain a good fighting machine, but at the same time we want to maintain a patriotic army; we do not want a purely mercenary army. It may be a good ideal for those who want to use such a machine, a mercenary machine—I do not wish to use that term in any derogatory sense whatsoever, I am using that term in a particular context and with great reluctance. I can assure you that I dislike using that expression. But I want to make it perfectly clear that the country will certainly back its army right down to the last man only if the army is patriotic; and I also make it perfectly clear that I would not like to see the army torn by party politics. That I want to make perfectly clear. That is not our objective. But at the same time I say, do not mishandle the situation. Please let us look into the whole question carefully, and in the meantime do not take any action which may make matters worse.

**Mr. P. Mason:** On behalf of Government I agree to the proposal that the Defence Consultative Committee should consider this as soon as possible. The only point I would make is what exactly is meant by as soon as possible. I

[Mr. P. Mason]

suggest it should be by agreement between the War Department and the representatives on that committee of the parties with the largest number of members or whoever they may like.

**Prof. N. G. Ranga:** And in the meanwhile all reprisals should be stopped.

**Mr. President:** So I understand the position now to be that, in view of what has fallen from the Honourable the Deputy Leader of the Congress Party and also from what has been said by the War Secretary, there is no occasion now to have any supplementary questions over this short notice question. I entirely share that view; and the delicate situation need not be mishandled by any kind of discussion, which may not be, after all, necessarily conducive to a peaceful settlement of the whole question. Then what about the adjournment motions?

#### MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

**Mr. M. Asaf Ali** (Delhi: General): The object of the adjournment motion of which I gave notice was exactly the same. The terms in which I couched it were as follows:

**Miss Maniben Kara** (Nominated: Non-Official): With reference to the

"To discuss a definite matter of urgent public importance, namely: the grave situation that has arisen in respect of the Indian Navy, affecting practically the whole of it, as a result of mishandling by the immediate authorities concerned".

I made a point of putting the adjective "immediate" there—immediate authorities concerned. The statement we have here from the War Secretary makes it perfectly clear that the situation was mishandled in the beginning. Had it not been mishandled in the beginning, the more serious developments would not have taken place. It is perfectly obvious to my mind that the fire of grievances was smouldering, and it is an amazing thing that those who were immediately in charge of the situation did not take notice of those things: it is a matter of two months since a certain arrest took place of R. K. Singh—it was about two months ago that R. K. Singh was arrested and the authorities did not even know of it. They are still waiting to find out why he was arrested, and what were the actual causes of his arrest. That shows how utterly ignorant the immediate authorities were on that occasion; they did not realise. . . . .

**Mr. P. Mason** (Government of India: Nominated Official): May I explain on a point of fact? What I said was that we in Delhi did not know why he was arrested or why he had been punished, because there has been a considerable measure of decentralisation in all these matters affecting the armed forces; otherwise this General Headquarters would have to be even more vast than it is now.

**Mr. M. Asaf Ali:** I accept the explanation of the Honourable Member. What I am trying to point out is that the immediate authorities who were in charge of the navy, particularly of those units, where these incidents took place, were utterly ignorant of the feelings of their men. It is the most amazing thing, and if you ask me it is a monstrously scandalous thing that the authorities ought to know the feelings of their men from moment to moment were not aware of the fact that political feelings were running high, the political feelings of the men who were there, and they took action which set a match to the whole situation; and when the conflagration started they started taking action. What is the meaning of all this? This was followed by another arrest of Datta, the chief telegraphist. . . . .

**Mr. P. Mason:** Ordinary telegraphist.

**Mr. M. Asaf Ali:** Whoever it may be—that took place some time ago. Even that was not quite such a serious grievance, when subsequent events developed.

With regard to the attitude which C. O. King adopted, whatever may be the information of the Government here, our information is that he misbehaved himself in many ways—the way he handled the men, the way he spoke to the men. His language was atrocious and that brought about the beginning of the

strike. Even then it was possible to deal with the situation a little more tactfully and discreetly. It was not done and when the trouble spreads, they suddenly bring down their guns and want to blow up the whole Navy. (Interruption).

I am not thinking in terms of money. I am thinking in terms of feeling, in terms of humanity, in terms of my country. Money is of no consequence to me. I am thinking of the deeper feelings of the country. I am thinking of the general effect it is going to have throughout the East. Do they realise that today we find the whole East absolutely aflame. We know what is happening in Cairo, in Egypt, in Indonesia. Don't they see a family resemblance in all these? These are not of our creation. It is the creation of the last five years of war and we ought to take note of them. Are they so unimaginative that they cannot realise that a new world has arisen. We are going through a travail and it is through this travail that we have got to steer our bark as carefully as possible. This highhanded attitude will not do. We must take note of the new feelings in the world and in view of these facts, I suggest that although I have given notice of this adjournment motion, I will not press it today, provided what I have said is carried out, namely, that a peaceful settlement of the whole thing is decided upon as a matter of principle and in the meanwhile let the Defence Consultative Committee be consulted and let these people be informed that the whole question is being referred to the representatives of the people in consultation with whom the War Department will formulate its policy of the future. Let them be informed about this. I even go to the length of saying, if the House agrees and if the House will allow me, that I am prepared to go and have a talk with these people. I am prepared to do that. I do not lay it down as a condition or anything of that sort. I have already made a suggestion. Let that suggestion be carried out and I hope the whole thing will be controlled in an amicable manner and in these circumstances I shall not move my adjournment motion.

**SITUATION re STRIKE AT BOMBAY AND KARACHI BY R. I. N. RATINGS**  
adjournment motion before the House I feel . . . . .

**Mr. President:** There is no adjournment motion before the House now.

I want to know what the Honourable Member meant by 'not pressing the motion'.

**Mr. M. Asaf Ali:** I shall not move it today, pending what arrangements are going to be made.

**Shri Sarat Chandra Bose** (Calcutta: Non-Muhammadan Urban): After what my Honourable friend Mr. Asaf Ali said, it is hardly necessary for me to say more than a few words. The position is serious beyond words; and we on this side of the House feel that it has been bungled by persons who ought not to have been placed in the positions they have been placed. But I entirely agree with my Honourable friend Mr. Asaf Ali, the Deputy Leader of my Party, that we should not say anything today which might make the situation more difficult. At the same time I feel, Sir, that having regard to the latest news that we have got, that the situation has worsened in Bombay and also in Karachi, we cannot be a party to dropping the adjournment motion altogether. I therefore have a suggestion to make following what Mr. Asaf Ali said just now. It is open to you either to fix a time today or fix a time on Monday next. If you leave the matter open, we shall study the situation carefully and come up before you again with our suggestions as to whether the adjournment motion should be taken up in the House and if so when it should be taken up.

**Mr. P. Mason:** I donot think, it is correct to say that the situation has worsened. I believe by yesterday evening the situation was very much better.

**Prof. N. G. Ranga** (Guntur cum Nellore: Non-Muhammadan Rural): What is the situation now?

**Mr. P. Mason:** It is very much better. I think there is very good hope of a reasonable solution being reached in the course of today. I can quite understand my friend not wanting to withdraw his motion. It might mean that he would be told on Monday, that the matter was no longer urgent; but the Government will not oppose the taking up of the motion on Monday if the matter is considered urgent.

**Mr. President:** Then I understand that the Honourable Member, Mr. Asaf Ali, wants the motion to be admitted but agrees that the consideration may be postponed.

**Mr. M. Asaf Ali:** That is exactly my position.

**Mr. President:** The motion is in order. It has to be admitted. I admit it but the discussion of it will take place on Monday. I think that will satisfy the Honourable Member.

**Mr. M. Asaf Ali:** Thank you.

**Mr. M. R. Masani (Bombay City Non-Muhammadan Urban):** May I know what happens to my adjournment motion?

**Mr. President:** It is the same motion?

**Mr. M. R. Masani:** Before you come to a decision on that, may I be allowed to say something on this matter?

**Mr. President:** So far as admissibility is concerned, I wish to make my position clear. Both of them deal with the same subject. What the Honourable Member wishes to say with reference to his adjournment motion can be said during the course of the discussion of the other adjournment motion.

**Mr. M. R. Masani:** There may be certain circumstances which might make it more desirable that this matter should be brought up again at 4 o'clock today. A suggestion has been made by my Leader and Deputy Leader, and I am naturally in their hands. It was decided that the Consultative Committee would be seized of the matter. The Honourable the War Secretary thought that the matter may be amicably settled by the evening. If that is the case, I should have thought that the more desirable procedure would be to fix the motion of my Honourable friend Mr. Asaf Ali for this afternoon and to request the Consultative Committee to meet in the meanwhile and to come to this House with an agreed solution. I am told that the Committee is not even constituted. I confess I feel very embarrassed at the procedure suggested.

While I naturally defer to the decision of my leaders, I do feel that in view of the threats of force and violence held out against our ratings, it is undesirable that we should keep silent while action is being taken against our men. In this morning's newspaper, I find that the British Parliament is going to be seized of the matter today. If the British Parliament can discuss this matter without insecurity to the Empire or to the armed forces, I find it difficult to understand why the Assembly of this country, to which the Navy in question belongs, should be considered a danger if it discusses this matter. At the same time, the British Parliament is interested in an entirely different point of view. That being the case, I do ask my Leader and Deputy Leader whether some way can not be found of bringing up this matter this afternoon. The motion can be tabled for the evening, but it may or may not be pressed at the time. This procedure will certainly be more in the national interest as well as fairer to these men whose point of view has not been mentioned at all.

My Honourable friend the War Secretary has been very fair. He has given a factual statement and I know he has done his best in an impartial and detached way, but naturally his information is all one-sided and the 12 or 15 thousand men involved have also a say in the matter.

The word 'mutiny' has been used to browbeat us. After all there have been other mutinies in our history and we have come to be proud of them.



**Prof. N. G. Ranga:** There will be many more.

**Mr. M. R. Masani:** I want to urge that there is another side to this question and I trust that an opportunity will be given to representatives in this House to discuss it.

**Mr. President:** I quite appreciate the Honourable Member's point of view.

But there are many hurdles. The first is that his adjournment motion comes next in the order to the adjournment motion of the Honourable the Deputy Leader and no two adjournment motions can be taken up on one single day. That is the first hurdle which it is impossible to cross over. As regards the other point it is not for me to enter into any arguments. But the Honourable Member himself has said that the point of view of the British Parliament in discussing an adjournment motion is entirely different from and perhaps contradictory to the point of view which this House may have. Therefore, it is better not to have a discussion so long as there is a hope of a settlement. The Defence Consultative Committee will be constituted on the 26th and that is also another reason. I suggest that it may be put off for Monday. But consultations may go on informally between Members and, if necessary, it may be put off even after Monday unless something happens in the meanwhile which compels—I shall not say the mover—but the Deputy Leader to press his motion on Monday.

**Mr. M. R. Masani:** If the Defence Consultative Committee meets on the 26th I fail to understand how on Monday we shall be in a better position to discuss the matter.

**Mr. President:** The question need not be argued further.

**Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad** (United Provinces Southern Divisions: Muhammadan Rural): Sir, you have given a ruling and it has been accepted. Where is the need for the Honourable Member to discuss it further?

**Mr. President:** It is therefore that I say that no further discussion is necessary.

**Mr. Manu Subedar** (Indian Merchants Chamber and Bureau: Indian Commerce): Sir, the word "mutineers" should be dropped by the War Secretary in the interests of peaceful settlement. According to himself there is only a small fringe of men who are affected, but he has constantly used in his statement the word "mutineers" for these boys. I suggest that in the interests of peaceful settlement, of which we are all anxious and of which he is himself anxious, the use of the word "mutineers" as applied to these boys may not be made.

**Mr. P. Mason:** I have two points to make on that, Sir. The first point, Sir, is a technical one. Anyone who refuses to do his duty is a mutineer. In regard to the second point, since we are not going to discuss it further, I won't use the word any more today.

**Pandit Govind Malaviya** (Allahabad and Jhansi Divisions: Non-Muhammadan Rural): In view of the whole situation, is it not possible for us to decide that we meet tomorrow morning again instead of on Monday so that, if there be need, we might take this up for discussion?

**Mr. President:** Tomorrow is earmarked for Bretton-Woods, unless it falls through.

**Pandit Govind Malaviya:** It has fallen through.

**Mr. President:** Then we have a holiday.

**Pandit Govind Malaviya:** I do not wish to suggest anything to upset the arrangement which has been agreed to. But in view of the urgency and the importance of the matter, is it not possible that we should forego our holiday tomorrow and meet here so that, if the situation is such that something has to be done immediately, we might discuss it? Otherwise we might adjourn.

**Mr. President:** The House does not seem to be inclined to sit on Saturday.

[Mr. President]

Moreover it is better to take it on Monday as, in the meanwhile, more information will be available as to how far the negotiations have progressed and what the facts are. There need not be any further discussion or point of order. Is it certain that we are not meeting tomorrow for discussing Bretton-Woods?

**The Honourable Sir Archibald Rowlands** (Finance Member): No. We have agreed that Saturday should be a holiday and we need not determine today as to when the Bretton-Woods discussion is to take place.

## THE RAILWAY BUDGET—LIST OF DEMANDS SECOND STAGE

### DEMAND NO. I—RAILWAY BOARD

**The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall** (Member for Railways and War Transport): I propose to move Demand No. 1. Sir, I move:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 33,74,000 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, 1947, in respect of 'Railway Board'."

**Mr. President:** Motion moved:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 33,74,000 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, 1947, in respect of 'Railway Board'."

Before the cut motion is formally moved, I should like to know as to whether Honourable Members would not like to have a time-limit for each cut motion. There are, I understand, six cut motions and two days are allotted according to the agreement of parties. Is it the desire of the House not to have any time-limit at all about any particular cut motion? I am not referring to the time-limit for speeches; that is a different matter.

**Shri Satya Narayan Sinha** (Darbhanga *cum* Saran: Non-Muhammadan): We have got six cut motions. We will manage to have these cut motions go through.

**Sir Mohammad Yamin Khan** (Agra Division: Muhammadan Rural): It has been the practice in this House that when the time is given to a particular party and they move their cut motions, then they arrange for themselves as to when to ask for closure. They should be allowed a free hand to ask for the closure whenever they like.

**Mr. President:** The point is when once a cut motion is moved the whole House is in possession of it. Therefore I wanted to know as to what procedure was to be followed. Otherwise the position may be that only one cut motion will be discussed. But if parties are willing to arrange it themselves, then it is all right.

**Shri Satya Narayan Sinha:** We shall see that the cut motions which are allotted to our party are gone through.

**Mr. President:** I am not anxious that they should be all gone through. I merely raised the point.

The House will now discuss the Demands for Grants in respect of Railways.

I understand that the time-table agreed to by all the Parties and Unattached Members in regard to the moving of Cut Motions has been circulated to Honourable Members.

As regards time limit for speeches, the usual practice has been to fix a limit of 15 minutes for all speakers including movers of the cut motions and 20 minutes for the Government Member replying. I trust this suits Honourable Members. The Congress Party will now move their cut motions.

**Mr. Leslie Gwilt** (Bombay: European): Sir, before Mr. Neogy moves his cut motion, as questions were dispensed with this morning, may I know whether this convention is going to be followed for the remainder of the days during which the cut motions will be taken up?

**Mr. President:** Technically speaking, it cannot be decided today for the remaining three days. I am using the word "technically speaking" because,

unless all Honourable Members who have put questions are agreeable, we do not drop the question hour. But this morning, that point was considered and it was decided to drop the question hour for all the four days, and the House seemed to be agreeable for all the four days. For all practical purposes, it may be taken that all Honourable Members will agree; and on each day I do not propose to put that question again unless some Member raises any objection.

*Enquiry into present system of management of Railways.*

**Mr. K. C. Neogy** (Dacca Division: Non-Muhammadan Rural): Sir, in the tense atmosphere that prevails in the House, I venture to ask for its indulgence for a few minutes in order to enable me to place before it the cut Motion that stands in my name. Sir, I move:

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

I have sought to indicate the points that I propose to raise in moving this cut motion and they are as follows:

"Enquiry into the present system of management of Railways in its principal aspects, such as Control of the Legislature, Indianisation of the Railway Board and Railway Services, Railway Finances, Relations between the Railways and their customers, Railway policy regarding development of the country, including Rates policy, and development of Railway industries."

Sir, it is not possible for me to do justice to all the various points that I have indicated, in the few minutes at my disposal. State management was decided upon at the instance of this legislature about 20 years ago, not without some amount of opposition from the government of the day. Those of us who proposed the adoption of State management and state ownership of railways as a national policy, had before their minds eye, the vision of a vast co-operative organisation, exclusively owned, controlled and manned by the children of the soil and run exclusively for the benefit of the people. Let me make the confession that we have failed to realise this dream. Now that we are assured that a popular Government is just round the corner, I call upon the Government to render accounts of British stewardship of our railways. It is with that view that I have ventured to occupy the attention of the House this morning. Sir, the first point that naturally arises is as regards control exercised by this House as representing the interests of the people for the running of the railway system. We have been allotted four days, and we are expected to vote about 200 crores in the course of about 16 or 18 hours, and this amount is spread over nearly twenty different demands. It is impossible therefore to claim that the legislature is doing justice to its responsibilities in this matter. It is true that the Standing Finance Committee has considered the various items; but judging from my own personal experience in the past, it cannot be said that the Standing Finance Committee that goes into details of railway expenditure can possibly do justice to the responsibilities of its task. Sir, the present system is mainly based upon certain recommendations made by what is known as the Acworth Committee which reported in 1920-21. While the Acworth Committee stated that it would be for the Legislative Assembly to issue orders to the Railway Department—I think the words used are: give orders to the railway executive—they also provided for detailed and effective influence being exercised over railway policy and railway management through different Advisory Councils. One such, the principal one, namely, the Central Advisory Council, which has been constituted under a convention of this House, differs materially from the composition as also the functions that were contemplated by the Acworth Committee. I have no time to develop this point any further, but I do maintain that the usefulness of this body has been materially affected by the departure so made. Likewise, the composition and powers contemplated for the Local Advisory Committees are nothing like what they were contemplated by the Acworth Committee. The Acworth Committee on the analogy of such bodies in Prussia and Poland said that they would be serving as a vital link between the people and the Railway administration, and would bring to bear upon the Railway administration the view point of the public in regard to all important matters of railway administration. Referring to the bodies on the Continent, they said they had no powers,

[Mr. K. C. Neogy]

but really they had great power. I should like to know from those Honourable Members who are on the Central Advisory Council, who may have sat on that body for more than a year or so, as to whether they answer that description. Sir, intimately connected with the question of the control of the legislature is the question of Indianisation of control. Honourable Members are aware that this is covered by the financial convention, the convention under which railway finances were separated from general finances, and this is the clause relating to this matter:

"This Assembly further recommends that the railway services should be rapidly Indianised and further that Indians should be appointed as Members of the Railway Board as early as possible."

I should like the House to note that the word 'members' is used in the plural. This was laid down on 20th September 1924, more than 20 years ago, not because the children of the soil has a natural right to man these high offices, but also because, those who had anything to do with the shaping of this Resolution (and I claim a very humble share in that) those of us who had any hand in this matter, felt that the success of State management of Railways was dependent upon the spirit in which the controlling authorities went about their business. It is an irony of fate that we had to entrust State management to those who did not believe in it. They had no community of interests with us. There is thus a vital link between Indianisation of the Railway Board and the higher services, and the separation of railway finances from general finance on which is based the entire system under which the State management is being worked.

Sir, I understand the Honourable Member in charge said in the other House yesterday that the question of seniority has got to be considered. When were questions of seniority considered in the past? I remember that about six Indian officers have occupied the position of Members of Railway Board in the past, only one of whom actually served the full term, the others being more or less stop gaps. I remember that in most of these cases, the question of seniority did not arise. But I understand that is the plea on which the all-white character of the present Railway Board is sought to be justified. Sir, I am told by my Honourable friends from Behar that the present General Manager of the Bengal Nagpur Railway owes his present position to the policy of supersession, supersession over Indians. I understand that he was considered specially fit for this appointment because of the exploits in which he indulged after the August disturbances of 1942 in shooting down Indians indiscriminately. That is the technical qualification which I understand this Officer specially possessed. . . .

**The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall:** That is quite inaccurate.

**Mr. K. C. Neogy:** . . . . . to justify the supersession of Indian officers. Sir, this is the spirit in which Indianisation has been proceeding. "Where there is a will, there is a way", is a saying that applies not merely to the people, but also to Viceroys and Governments.

Sir, I have to run through the various other points that arise. The utility of the railway services would primarily consist in the contribution that they might make towards the development of the country; and when the railway system is completely State-owned and State-managed that responsibility is very much increased. We have heard about the necessity of revising the financial Convention. Before any revision of the Convention has to take place, we have first of all to determine what is to be the policy of the railways in India in future. And in this connection might I draw attention to the declaration of policy of the South African Railways, which lays great stress upon the development of the country, special mention being made of agriculture? It is on the basis of the policy which is to govern the Indian railway administration that the details of the future financial settlement have to be worked out. Sir, it is a well-known fact that, far from helping in the development of the country, the railways by the adoption of an anti-Indian rates policy favoured in the past the exportation of raw materials from India and the importation of manufactured goods from abroad. My Honourable friend in his statement said that the rate structure was

under careful examination. It is not the structure that should determine the policy. What I say is that the railways must adopt a national rates policy, and it is on that policy that the structure should be based. In that connection, I must give expression to my regret that the Railway Rates Tribunal as contemplated by the Acworth Committee has been truncated in such a fashion as to lose all its utility. Now that the railways are State-owned and State-managed, the question of converting the so-called Rates Advisory Committee into a full-fledged tribunal should be taken up without any further delay.

Sir, I shall briefly refer to the question of railway industries before I conclude.

**Mr. President:** The Honourable Member has only two minutes more.

**Mr. K. O. Neogy:** I will try to finish within two minutes. The very first Legislative Assembly in 1921 stressed the necessity of making the railways self-sufficient in the matter of all the essential articles that they required, including railway engines; and it is an irony of fate that after a quarter of a century we have to depend upon foreign countries for the supply of these essentials,—foreign countries including Australia which developed her heavy industries during the last five war years. And what is the position about the locomotive industry? My Honourable friend the Member in charge in his speech last year had assured the House that the lay-out and equipment for the manufacture of locomotives at Kanchrapara were being finalised, and so on. Now, just after one year had elapsed, the Chief Commissioner of Railways, speaking on the railway budget in the other House, said very much the same thing.

"Progress is being made with finalising the plans and estimates of the new locomotive building workshop in Kanchrapara."

But something more mysterious I have yet to place before the House, and that is this. This is what I find in the report of the Standing Finance Committee for Railways of this year, page 65, in which in a memorandum it is stated that finalising of plans cannot proceed. Here is a situation where the progress cannot proceed,—very typical of the Railway Department's activities in many ways. Sir, let the Honourable Member remember that the *bona-fide* of the railway administration are in question, and let him also remember that if really there is going to be a change-over of Government, and if Government are going to hand over this great national asset to popular representatives, they are entitled to ask for a review of the past administration; and it is with that object that I move this cut motion, and my suggestion is that a committee of this House should be appointed to go into all these various aspects of railway administration under State-management with the help of experts, if necessary, and then let us have a complete picture of how things have fared under British management.

**Mr. President:** Cut motion moved:

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

**Sir Mohammad Yamin Khan:** Sir, I support this motion and I agree with the Honourable Mover on at least two points. One is that a committee should be appointed at once to go into the whole question of railway administration and railway finance. As I hinted the other day in course of the general discussion, the picture looks very gloomy to me and a warning should be given to the House and to the railway administration before it is too late. I think the matter requires serious attention and that attention could be given not by the Standing Finance Committee but by an *ad-hoc* committee with the help of experts, if necessary, as suggested by my Honourable friend Mr. Neogy, to go into the question of future policy and future annual expenditure. Unfortunately, as the House knows very well, the Standing Finance Committee have not got any power at all to initiate anything. They only deal with matters which are placed before them and can make no suggestions about new matters to be taken up. Their power relates only to things brought up before them, and to those new items of expenditure which are placed before them. The other items of expenditure which have been sanctioned in previous years are taken for granted and only new additional expenditure can be scrutinised by the committee. In past

[Sir Mohammad Yamin Khan]

years our expenditure has been going very high and we do not know whether it is necessary at present to have that expenditure or not. The Standing Finance Committee cannot say anything about this and so a committee of this House assisted by experts should go into this whole question. I think, Sir, before it is too late a policy should be devised by which we could make our railways quite independent of the foreign countries and build our own engines, locomotives, rolling stock and everything else, instead of importing them from outside. This was emphasised by me in a railway debate about ten years ago, and at that time the Railway Member Sir Muhammad Zafarullah Khan pooh-poohed the idea. But he did not know that this necessity will arise soon. At that time he thought that my suggestion for building engines and so on in this country was too much of an exaggerated idea. I warned him at that time that if the war broke out, the Indian Railways would not be able to meet their requirements from abroad, but he thought that I was talking about something which was not likely to happen. But it did happen within two or three years, and we found that our existing stock of engines became too old and either we could not get fresh stocks from abroad or we had to pay an exorbitant price for it. Naturally the prices on account of war conditions went up as they did in this country. But it was not so much the question of price as it was of availability; we could not get the rolling stock when we required it. We had to export a lot of our rolling stock and engines for war needs, and we could not replace them. If at that time we had our own factories where we could build engines and rolling stock, we would have been independent altogether. Not only that, but we could have supplied to other countries; India would have become a market for these things instead of Europe and America being the markets. Sir, if we require engines to a limited degree, there are many other countries which are building new railways—countries like Burma, Indo-China, probably China, Persia, and others—and they will require so many locomotives every year which we can supply at competitive prices. At the same time we can employ a large number of labourers. Skilled labour will be available in this country and at a much cheaper rate than it is available in Europe or in America. Therefore, I say that this policy of making the Indian railways independent of European countries and America in respect of engines and rolling stock, must be supported by everyone.

Sir, I agree with my Honourable friend, Mr. Neogy, that the Advisory Committees are not allowed that hand which was contemplated by my Honourable friend in 1924. The Provincial Advisory Committees, with the exception of one or two, have been practically monopolized by trade interest, and they had no idea of what facilities should be provided for the travelling public, but mostly they were concerned with the particular trade in which they were interested, and they have been always advocating the cause of or getting the maximum benefits for the trade in which they were interested. So far as the development of Railways was concerned, neither were they consulted nor were they keen to give any advice. For the last few years, the Central Advisory Committee has started sending its representative to the Local Advisory Committees, and since then the atmosphere has changed. I had the honour to sit in many Provincial Advisory Committees, and wherever I went I found that they were sticking to the old ideas. I had to change their procedure and methods and tried to bring them into line with the Central Advisory Committee and the Railway Board. Even now there is a great deal of scope for improvement in this direction. The Central Advisory Committee deals, as the Honourable Member knows, with very limited questions, and they cannot use their initiative. I think Members of the Central Advisory Committee should be given the power to bring forward any points and to make any suggestions that they wish to.

The Standing Finance Committee should also have more powers, and their powers should not be limited to deal with the items which are new but it should extend to the budget as a whole. Although it is said that the Committee passes the budget, but may I tell you when they receive it? Only a night before it is presented to the House. It is impossible to go through all those books and

“literature” within a few hours. And the whole thing is so complicated that I will bow before them if even members of the Railway Board can tell me what is contained in the Budget; they will not be able to explain where the item is to be found. They have to refer to many other books, which will not take days but weeks to go through before one can understand the idea of the Railway Budget. As you know, Sir, the budget includes many items, and how can the Standing Finance Committee deal with them all in a day or in two hours time; this is practically impossible. Then, Sir, it is taken for granted that because the Standing Finance Committee ten years ago agreed to a certain item, that it must find its place in the Budget this year also. My Honourable friend, Mr. Neogy, was very ably advocating that we should not under the changing circumstances, let the time pass, but we should take cognizance of all the factors in order to develop our Railways in the best manner possible. I think the Railway Board has been failing in their duty in this respect, and they have not been taking the Indians into their confidence.

Sir, I do not want to take any further time of the House. With these few observations which I have made, I fully agree with my Honourable friend, and I give him my support.

**Babu Ram Narayan Singh** (Chota Nagpur Division: Non-Muhammadan): Sir, I rise to support the cut motion so ably moved by my worthy colleague, Mr. Neogy. Sir, it is an irony of fate that when all the world is resounding with the words, sounds, echos, and re-echos, of freedom and independence, we Indians, in this country, are talking of Indianization, this reform, and that reform in this department or in that department of the Government, because these departments, especially the Railway Board, are almost monopolized by the Britishers.

Sir, this Railway Board came into existence in 1908. In 1901, one Mr. Thomas Robertson was asked by the Secretary of State for India to enquire into and report on the administration and working of Indian railways and also to suggest ways and means for their better management. He made extensive tours in the country and studied the question very minutely. In this connection he visited also Canada and the United States of America to study the railways there and as the result of all these investigations, he submitted a report to the British Parliament in 1903. In that he suggested that a Board consisting of three Members ought to be established with full power to administer the railways of the country, subject, of course, to the control of the Governor General in Council. Sir, he said that to begin with, the Board should consist of men of home training. He had given his reasons, right or wrong—but to my mind wrong for this his suggestion. But he admitted that there was no want of Indians qualified for membership of this Board. Now forty-three years have passed. Several changes have come over the country. Even the number of the Members of the Railway Board have increased from three to five. But up till now no Indian has got any access to this Board.

**The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall:** Question.

**Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad** (United Provinces Southern Divisions: Muhammadan Rural): At present there is none.

**Babu Ram Narayan Singh:** The obstinacy with which the Britishers stick to the Railway Department reminds me of an incident which I witnessed in my boyhood. One day, along with other companions I went to a river side to catch fish. As soon as we entered the water and began fishing, one of my companions jumped out of the water crying, “Leech, leech”. After he was out of the water, it was discovered that a leech had caught hold of one of his feet. It was difficult to get rid of this leech. In any way with difficulty it was removed from the foot but when the fellow began to throw it out, it was found that the leech had already got a hold on his right hand. When the right hand was freed, he found that the left hand was also caught. This process of riddance continued for some time. Then other people came to his help, the leech was thrown away.

**Shri Sri Prakasa** (Benares and Gorakhpur Divisions: Non-Muhammadan Rural): What about the fish?

**Babu Ram Narayan Singh:** Every one was confused with the trouble over the leech. In the same way, let every Member in this House and all our countrymen outside it know that it is not a very easy task to get rid of the Britishers. We may get self-government, all the places on the Treasury Benches may be occupied by Indian representatives, but like the leech they will stick to other departments and it will be difficult for us to get rid of these people from there.

**The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall:** Put salt on their tails!

**Mr. President:** Order, order. The Honourable Member is perhaps now going to another point. It is time for the House to adjourn. The Honourable Member may continue his speech after lunch.

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

The Assembly re-assembled after Lunch at Quarter Past Two of the Clock, Mr. President (The Honourable Mr. G. V. Mavalankar) in the Chair.

**Babu Ram Narayan Singh:** Sir, before the House dispersed for Lunch I was referring to the obstinacy with which the Britishers are sticking to the Railway Board. This Railway Board is the watchdog to take care of British commercial interests in this country. The underlying policy in constructing the railways in this country was already framed and this Railway Board was meant only to follow the policy strictly. The first policy, so far as I understand and think, in constructing the Indian railways was to connect all parts of the country by a network of railways, so that British troops may be easily and speedily moved from one part of the country to another and the people may be kept in perfect and permanent subjection. At that time there was anxiety in British circles as to the outlets for the investment of British capital. The construction of railways was regarded as a profitable outlet for the investment of British capital. These railways were also meant to carry British goods into the interior of the country. Sir, had the Railway Board meant to serve the country, they might have manufactured engines, wagons and all other railway materials long ago in this country. But this is not the case. Even now, after so many years of British rule, the position is that all materials necessary for the railways have to be purchased from their British cousins at home. If you analyse the situation critically, you will find that railways are administered and worked simply to help the British interests and in no way to help the interests of India. In the construction of railways they do not care for the local interests of the people. Every where imperial purposes prevail. In order to make this clear I may give the example of Chota Nagpur, a part of the province of Bihar. There is no direct railway to connect Chota Nagpur with other parts of Bihar. There are railway lines which pass through Chota Nagpur but they are all meant for imperial purposes. Even matters of ordinary local interest, are not attended to. In North Bihar, Sitamarhi is an important sub-divisional town. There up and down trains come in the afternoon and are of very little use to the litigants and the general public. For the good of the public some trains at least might be allowed to run in the morning.

Besides, the B. N. W. R., now called the O. T. Railway has for the last six years been managed by the Railway Board but all the corruptions, mis-managements and other disadvantages which were prevailing in the days of the company are still prevailing there. This is the railway of which it can be very well said and it has been said many times, that in the trains there is no water, no light and no latrines. So far as the workers on the O. T. Railway are concerned, every thing which prevailed in the time of the company is continuing. All the stations are rotten and even the station masters who were notorious for corruption and other things are there. Even though this railway has been taken under the direct management of the Government there has been no improvement.



There are many other things which can be said as regards this Railway Department. In short, I can say, as I have already said, that this Railway Board must go. The administrative heads as well as all other posts must be manned by men of the country, who have been born and brought up in the country and who are permanently interested in the welfare of the country. But these people who man the Railway Board now, and are administering the Railway Department are all foreigners and as I have said, they are the watch-dogs of British interests. These are the matters which ought to be considered by the House and so far as I understand, no Indian member of this House will vote against the cut motion and I think even the Honourable the Railway Member also, who has taken the salt of this country so long, will support the cut-motion and will not challenge it. With these words, Sir, I resume my seat.

**Mr. Muhammad Nauman** (Patna and Chota Nagpur *cum* Orissa: Muhammadan): Sir, the scope of the motion is wide enough but I do not propose to traverse on all aspects of the question that can be brought under this motion. The mover has very ably expressed the anxiety of the Indian representatives to see that the Railway Board and the whole railway is Indianised, which will mean that it will be then only that we can really call it a national asset of this country. We had this idea in our mind when we thought of nationalising the railways and as the Mover has pointed out, we feel disappointed up till now in this part. But on this subject I want to say something more. It is true that as Indians we have that grievance, but as a Muslim representative my grievance is probably more than the others. Unfortunately even as regards that much share in the Railway Board or in the higher services which has gone to the Indians the position of the Muslims remains most miserable. You will notice from the figures supplied by the Railway Member that the percentage of the gazetted service Muslims is not more than 5 per cent., although promises were made that we would get at least 25 per cent. share in Railway Services.

**Mr. President:** Order, order. I would point out to the Honourable Member that that discussion will be more appropriate under cut motion No. 9: the specific issue to be discussed there, is the non-observance of giving employment to Muslims in different categories and classes of Railway services according to the quota fixed for them. He will then have an opportunity of specifically referring to these points in detail.

**Mr. Muhammad Nauman:** Yes, Sir. I only wanted to refer to this particularly as the Mover suggested that Railways should be nationalised. By nationalisation I mean that it should be nationalised on lines where the interests of the Muslims would be 33-1/3 per cent. It has been noticed that Hindu officers are more prejudiced against Muslim interests than the Britishers; and sometimes, although it may be with all possible repugnance and reluctance, we have to prefer a British officer in the Railway Board and elsewhere to a Hindu officer as we fear we would not get the right and just treatment from Hindu national. I am just referring to this position and say nothing more.

I would now discuss the question of priority movements which the Honourable Member said was still being continued. In this connection I want to stress the fact that no facilities were provided for the movement of raw cow-hides and goat skins, and in this particular matter I think the Railway Board has failed miserably. They placed this particular commodity in class 6, which meant that the movement was much restricted and that the Muslim nationals lost heavily on this trade all along.

**The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall:** I do not wish to interrupt but that is the action of the War Transport Department, not of the Railway Department.

**Mr. Muhammad Nauman:** Yes, but now the War Transport Department has not got any control and the railway priorities arrangement is being continued under the railway scheme of better movements; and I would ask the

[Mr. Muhammad Nauman]

Honourable Member to see what has been the position of movements of other classes of priorities in this country. I am told by the railway priority authorities that hides and skins have been placed in class 4. This is not a very satisfactory situation because the Honourable Member should realise that this is one of those commodities which are perishable, I explained to him and to the railway authorities that in last November many thousands of hides were allowed to rot and perish because no facilities were offered for bringing them to the markets to which they used to go, I mean to Calcutta particularly. Our association, the Hides and Skins Association of Calcutta is of 100 years' standing and they pointed this out to the different controllers of railway priorities there and sent the correspondence to the Honourable Member here but the situation did not improve to any great extent. I want to impress this upon the Honourable Member, that this priority system is maintained for facility of movements, and he should see his way to give higher priority to commodities which are perishable, and hides is one of those commodities. I hope the Honourable Member will appreciate my point. He should also note that sometimes the booking staff, in spite of orders, do not act upon them, particularly for this commodity as he knows Hindus are trying to ruin their trade. I would like to tell certain sections of the House that a certain class of Hindus do not like to offer facilities for the merchants who are engaged in the hide trade. This matter has to be carefully looked into.

The third point I want to make is the one to which my friend referred, about these advisory committees. Not on one occasion, but on many occasions the opinion of this House has been flouted. In the matter of catering this House passed a resolution that immediate action should be taken and that no contractor should be allowed to have more than two divisions. This was as early as 1939. The matter was taken to the C. A. C. and at that time the C. A. C. gave the same advice; but it could not be acted upon and then we were in the thick of the war and in the situation it was considered necessary not to disturb things till the war ended. Now I want to impress this much, that this House gave a verdict a number of times that the catering arrangement is hopelessly bad on all railways in the country. We want that it should be taken up by the department and worked departmentally, without caring whether they lose any money over it or gain any money out of it, because this being a utility service it should provide a sufficient amount of comfort on the lines when people travel. The system of giving the contract to the highest bidder is another mischievous system which eventually increases the rate and reflects on the passengers liabilities. Recently they have been trying to stop contracts which have been in existence for 60 years or more and giving satisfactory service, whereas they have brought in new unprofessional contractors for certain classes of commodities; and when that has been censured in this House they would not act upon it and the only reply is that this is within the discretion of the general manager. The Honourable Mover made it perfectly clear when he said "we are anxious what influence or what hold the legislature has on the management of railways, and under management lie all those things to which I am referring. I do not want to indulge in individual names or give individual instances. I only want to impress that this position has long been existing and the Honourable Members in charge of this portfolio have not taken note of the feeling of the House and they adopted ways and means to put us off to a day when probably things might come to their own way of thinking. I strongly resent this thing and in future I would request the member in charge to consider the possibility of accepting the views of this House as much as practicable—not only as much as is possible, but as much as is practicable; and as the Honourable Mr. Neogy said, where there is a will there is a way; everything is practicable and probably what we suggest is always practicable, provided the Honourable Member makes up his mind to do so. I do not want to indulge in other matters now, with regard to the other amenities to passengers, because I will have occasion to discuss it on other cut motions. I certainly do appreciate the point of view given out

by the Mover and supported by my friend, Sir Muhammad Yamin Khan that there should be a committee of enquiry who should go into the whole matter *de novo*, once again, and see what suggestions they can make in matters about which this motion has been brought before this House. With these few words I support the motion.

**Mr. M. A. F. Hirtzel** (Bengal: European): Mr. President, Sir, we on this side of the House are, I am afraid, finding this debate a little disappointing and it would not surprise me if the Honourable the Railway Member also perhaps complained that he was not receiving as much assistance from the House on this particular issue as he might expect. If I remember correctly, in reply to the general discussion the Honourable the Railway Member threw out a challenge to the House and said that since there was no criticism of the financial position of the railways, he must assume that we members found great difficulty in picking holes in it. We on this side of the House have no desire to pick holes, but we have some constructive remarks to offer. When we saw a motion standing in the Honourable Mr. Neogy's name, we had hoped for a constructive contribution from his side also. If he will excuse me, I must say that he made a less impressive speech than usual. His motion is framed in very broad terms and that is my principal criticism of it. The terms are in fact much too broad, particularly having regard to the time which is normally occupied in inquiries in this country. I think perhaps the Honourable Member would agree that an inquiry of the kind he suggests would require a portentous amount of time; and that, we suggest, is not what is really required at the present time. Such an inquiry perhaps may one day be put in progress in relation to yet larger topics; but at the present time we feel that there is no ground for complaining that India's national aspirations have not been sufficiently protected by the Railway Board. I think I am correct in saying that over Rs. 800 crores of railway indebtedness have been brought back to this country. In addition India's Railways have accumulated reserves of something like Rs. 181 crores. That is without taking into account the very large contributions which have been made to the general revenues. That is a picture on which all concerned deserve congratulation rather than condemnation. It is perfectly true that one might suggest measures by which the total might have been increased by a crore here or half a crore there. I am prepared to suggest one or two points myself but taking the picture as a whole I think there can be no doubt that all concerned must be congratulated.

What we are concerned about is the immediate future. There is certainly great cause for concern and we certainly are not disposed to view the future with complacency or to accept that the position as it has been so far will continue unchanged. Honourable Members for instance will have seen in the Explanatory Memorandum the enormous increase there has been under the head of staff wages. Points of that sort certainly do justify Honourable Members in saying that there should be a review of the position but I submit on behalf of this party that it should be a review not of such long term and so broad in its scope that it will never be completed. What we really need to be satisfied is that the Railway Board are directing their immediate attention in a very practical way to the immediate problems. I hope, Sir, that they are directing their attention in a more practical way than what the Honourable members of this House are perhaps doing. If one looks through the list of cut motions, there is plenty to be seen about the amenities demanded but very little indeed about who is to pay for them. Now, Sir, I am not suggesting that the Railways should be operated on a purely commercial basis. That is a matter for decision by this House as to what the policy should be. But I am suggesting that in order to arrive at a correct picture we need a strictly commercial picture. We need to be told in plain unvarnished terms and in a balanced manner exactly what our financial position is today. The Honourable the Railway Member would doubtless explain that he has in fact done that. Perhaps as these debates go on, there will be an opportunity of elaborating our views and saying a little more precisely what we mean. If the Honourable

[Mr. M. A. F. Hirtzel]

Mover of this cut motion had suggested an immediate practical inquiry, conducted by the personnel of the Railway Board, into what the immediate future holds out. I think we might have supported him but I do not think we can support at this stage the formation of a committee with this enormous scope. Sir, I oppose the motion.

**Mr. A. C. Turner** (Government of India: Nominated Official): I shall confine my remarks to the question of the control of the legislature. First of all there is the Standing Finance Committee for Railways. I may say that this committee was appointed under the Resolution regarding the separation of railway from general finances and that Resolution of course was a Resolution of this House and the Resolution itself laid down the duties of that committee. They read as follows:

"The Railway Department shall place the estimate of railway expenditure before the Standing Finance Committee for Railways on some date prior to the date for the discussion of the demand for grants for railways and shall, as far as possible, instead of the expenditure programme revenue show the expenditure under a depreciation fund created as per the new rules for charge to capital and revenue."

That was a fairly restricted scope; but I may say that in subsequent years the Chairmen of that committee have extended the scope very considerably and now we place before the committee all proposals for the construction of new lines, all proposals of purchase of railway lines, of projects of open line works the expenditure on which exceeds 20 lakhs, the works, rolling stock and machinery programmes for the railways and all proposals for the creation of permanent gazetted posts on railways. In addition it has been the general rule for the Chairman to keep the Committee in touch informally with all major problems of railway finances as they occur from time to time. I would here like to correct a wrong impression which may have been created this morning by the Deputy President of the House when he said that old expenditure is not put before the Committee, and it is only items of new expenditure that are put before the Committee. That Sir, I may say, is quite incorrect. The whole budget is put before it and discussion on the budget grants is by no means limited to items of new expenditure.

Now, I heard it voiced that as this Committee has to go into all the manifold items of the Budget and consider them in detail, they are not given enough time to discuss these matters. In 1943-44 the Standing Finance Committee met fourteen times during the year, and in the year 1944-45 they met eight times. If members of that Committee feel that they are not getting sufficient time for discussing these matters I should be perfectly willing to have additional meetings at any time they wish to have them and allow the meetings to go on for any length of time they want. I have no desire to restrict the amount of discussion which the Standing Finance Committee can indulge in.

**Prof. N. G. Ranga** (Guntur *cum* Nellore: Non-Muhammadan Rural): Do they indulge in discussions or do they carry on discussions?

**Mr. A. C. Turner**: Whichever term is preferred. Some people indulge in discussion and others carry on discussion. So much for the Standing Finance Committee. This House exercises further control through its Public Accounts Committee. As Members are aware, the Public Accounts Committee scrutinises the Appropriation accounts every year and reports to the House to what extent money voted by the Assembly has been spent within the scope of the grant. Finally, a very important and powerful way in which this House can control expenditure on railways is the voting of Demands for Grants. That, I think every one will agree, is a very potent manner of control. It was suggested by my Honourable friend, Mr. Neogy, that insufficient time is being allowed for the general discussion and for the voting of Demands for Grants. Well, Sir, we are now having as much time for this purpose as we have ever had, namely, one day for the general discussion and four days for the Demands for Grants. I have no doubt that if this House feels that it wants more time than the future Government will consider the matter and may be willing to increase

the period allowed in future years. That is all I have to say on this subject

**Sri T. A. Ramalingam Othettiar** (Madras: Indian Commerce): Mr. President, Sir, I have been looking forward to a statement from the Honourable Member in charge as regards the policy he is going to adopt in the general scheme of planning and development about which we have been hearing so much, both in the press and on the platform. Well, Sir, there is not a word said about any change of policy that they are going to adopt. The old policy with which they started, namely to have lines connecting the ports for helping imports and exports and having strategic railways, when the East India Company ceased to exist and the Imperial Government came into existence, is continuing. These are the two classes of cases for which the railways have been built and worked. The development of the country as a whole found no place in their programme except where they expected very large profits probably as in the case of the Gangetic Plains. In other places the country's vast areas have been utterly neglected. For instance, the southern portions of the country, the Madras Province and some portions of Bombay, have no sort of railway connection whatever. Until recently there was only one line passing from Madras right up to Mangalore. There were no connecting links on either side, a distance of three to four hundred miles comprised in the Province. That was the sort of thing that was going on. Well, Sir, we protested. "We did our best. We made representations to the Government of India. They would not move. Then we undertook a novel procedure. We said that we would tax ourselves by a cess on the land and would construct railways with the cess or by getting money on the security of the cess. That was half-heartedly sanctioned by the Government of India in 1912-13. That was thirty years back. Even then there was this complaint that the Government of India never cared for places in the interior and they never cared to develop areas which required development. From 1913 onwards we taxed ourselves in the Madras Province. We constructed certain railways. Altogether there were about three hundred miles constructed by the District Boards. But there comes the order from the Government of India "Stop all this construction. We do not want any more." We in the district of Coimbatore first started with a line from Podanur to Pollachi. We wanted to take up the other line to which reference was made by the Honourable Member for the Plantation Districts of the European Community the other day, namely, the Mysore-Satyamangalam railway. Everything was ready. The objection came from the M. & S. M. Railway. Because the S. I. Railway was going to start it they objected on the score of short circuiting. For the last 25 to 30 years that scheme, which was adumbrated about the year 1920 or 1921, has been waiting sanction and being taken up. I tried to do something for this. I asked the Dewan of the Mysore State whether he would come to our help and construct the line up to the foot of the hill so that we could take the line from that point to Tiruppur which was expected to become a junction in those days. The Dewan said that there were legal difficulties. He could not take it up. So, the whole thing has been held up. What is the position now? I want to know whether the Government have been considering this and whether they are going to take up questions of development. They are talking so big about developments. They want land development. They want agricultural improvement. They want industrial improvement. They want electricity to be generated everywhere. How can all this be done and how can all this be utilised if we have not got the means by which they can be reached? In the Tennessee Valley scheme which has been quoted times without number by the Government of India in their communications, I find that one of the first proposals is to run a railway right through. That is the way other countries consider as the means for development of their countries. But here in India we find an utterly different tale. We have got every railway going to a port, taking exports and bringing imports to market places. The other areas are left in the lurch. That has been the position. We hoped, Sir, when the Railway Board came into existence that they would

[Sri T. A. Ramalingam Chettiar]

pay more attention to the requirements of the country. But nothing of the sort happened. They have been thinking more of the old theory of the returns. They said about 5 per cent. ought to be the return on the capital that is spent on each railway from the very start. They forgot for a moment that the railway is an agency for development and that if the country was developed they will get a better income as time goes on.

There were also indirect benefits about which they never bothered themselves. Probably that could be justified at a time when these railways were owned by private companies. Now that the Government of India has taken over most of the big lines, it is up to the Government of India to consider not only this question arithmetically but also the real interests of the country and see how they can develop the country as a whole, how they can help industry and agriculture about which they are talking so much and how people can really be helped. That is what they will have to consider. My complaint is that they have not done so. As I said, I expected two days back an announcement from the Government Benches that they have changed their policy, that they were following the lead of countries like U.S.A. and that they were going to have railway communications wherever they think that development was possible or wherever they think they were going to develop the country themselves. Such a policy has not been announced here and I censure the Government for not considering this very important question which is much more important than several other questions which have been raised both in the Honourable Member's speech the other day and elsewhere.

The other question is that the administration is run on very costly lines. If there was a Government which was responsible to the people, then such a costly administration would not have been possible. They will always be examining whether there is room for economy in any field. For instance, the question of making locomotives, wagons and other things has been referred to by the speakers already. There is another important question, for instance the question of electrification of railways which will release a large quantity of good coal for other purposes. Mr. Ginwala, who was for some time the Chairman of the Tariff Board has published a brochure in which he has examined the whole question at great length. I do not know whether the Government has considered his proposal and have gone into the suggestions made by him and if so, what conclusions they have arrived at. He says, "we are now using high grade coal for locomotives which is unnecessary. Even as it is inferior coal will be enough". He goes further and says, if the trains are electrified and the coal is used for a thermal unit for generating electricity, there will be very much larger saving and we can use very much inferior coal, and the coal that is being wasted in several places,—and he mentions a number of places where they are being wasted at the present moment—they can be utilised for the purpose of generating electricity and for the traction of the railways. Such questions never enter into the minds of the Railway Board. They thought that whenever anything was required, give an order either to America or England or to Australia. We are getting goods from all over and no attempt is made to manufacture what we can manufacture in the country itself.

There has been the other question about Indianisation of services. That, Sir, is not merely replacing one person by another. It means a lot. The European sits there with an outlook of his own, and as I said, he is looking at everything from an export and import point of view. He thinks which rate will give a greater impetus for export of articles from a long distance to a port and so on. He will argue with some show of plausibility that the agriculturist is thereby helped. But as a matter of fact his idea is not the agriculturist, but he has in mind the exporter at the other end. If Indians are there, this sort of outlook will cease. Besides, the European is always costly. There are these two things. If we want any progress, either on the industrial side or on the traffic side of the railway, then the Indian can be depended upon to take the view that is advantageous to the public rather than that of either the

commercial interests or the profit making motive or looking to the interests of exports and imports. So, Sir, for all these reasons, Indianisation that has been going on is anything but satisfactory. It has been referred to that at the present moment the Railway Board consists of all outsiders and not a single Indian is there on it and many of the higher paid officers are also non-Indians. I believe among General Managers, only one is an Indian and all the other General Managers are Europeans. That is the sort of administration that is going on. Is it the way to help us to govern ourselves, to look after our own interests? What is all this talk of handing over the Government to our hands? What is this talk of putting us in charge of our resources and helping us to go forward? Is that since, I ask? These are matters which should be seriously considered. The proposal has been made for the appointment of an *ad hoc* committee to survey the whole administration of this Railway Department from the time probably the Railway Board was brought into existence. If that is done, probably it would be in a position to say what exactly it has not done. I see very little has been done by way of improvement is drafted in very wide terms and the debate in consequence has rather Sir, I do not want to take up more of the time of the House. I support the cut motion of my Honourable friend Mr. Neogy.

**The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall:** Sir, it is rather difficult in the time at my disposal to deal with all the subjects that have been raised. The cut motion is drafted in very wide terms and the debate in consequence has rather tended to be a general discussion. In replying, I shall adhere as far as possible to the main points raised by the Mover. I would just like to make one or two brief remarks about the points raised by my Honourable friend Mr. Muhammad Nauman who spoke of the Muslim percentages, of priority for perishables and of catering. The last question of catering will, as I have said, come up before the Central Advisory Council. The question of Muslim percentages comes up on a cut motion further on in the course of these debates, and the question of priority of perishables is one which is the primary concern of the War Transport Department. He made the point that the Government did not accept the findings of the House in the shape of recommendations of the Standing Finance Committee and the Central Advisory Council, but that I do not think is really a very fair criticism. I think if an examination is made it will be found that with very rare exceptions, we do accommodate ourselves to the views of these Committees. But the Government is responsible for seeing through the policy and there are occasions when it feels it cannot accept the responsibilities of implementing something which those Committees recommend. But I think it is not very often so.

The last speaker referred to the unfriendly attitude of the present administration to the development of undeveloped areas, in particular he referred to the Mysore-Satyamangalam line. I have not the time to go into the question of particular lines, and that again will I think come up before the House under cut motion No. 6. But I would just like to say in that connection that we have developed what is really a new policy in the last year or two, and that is to develop our railway programmes in close consultation with the provincial administrations,—in much closer consultation than in the past,—partly with the object of co-ordinating our railway development with road development and partly also because we feel that the people in the best position to judge what development of transport the province wants is the provincial administration. We think that they are in a better position to judge than we sitting up in Delhi.

Now Sir, I would just like to say a few words, as I did yesterday in another place, on the subject of Indianisation. The Honourable Mover suggested that we paid too much attention to seniority, arising out of the report of some remarks that I made in another place yesterday. I pointed out then that the position that we find ourselves in today is a historical position. By that I mean that we inherit a position which arose not in the recent past but as long ago as 20 or 30 years. I had taken out the percentage of European and Indian officers back to 1924, and in 1924 I find that out of 1888 officers

[Sir Edward Benthall]

there were then 1510 Europeans,—in other words, 80 per cent. And ten years before that, for the same historical reasons, *viz.*, that the railways in those days were mainly officered by Europeans, he would probably find that in 1914, 90 per cent. of the officers were Europeans. Many of those officers are still on the railways; and naturally the officers of 1914 to 1924 are now at the end of their service and therefore at the top of the tree. And it therefore follows that when we have to look at the claims of different officers and the experience of the different officers, it is perfectly natural that 4/5th or 9/10th of the officers at the top are in fact Europeans, and we cannot just rule them out without doing injustice. But I can assure the House that no Indian ever suffers from lack of the fullest consideration.

I must take exception to my Honourable friend Mr. Ram Narayan Singh saying that we Europeans in the Railway Department and the Railway Board have not got the welfare of the country at heart. The Honourable Member knows himself that we are only too ready at any time to look into any complaints; and in fact it was only yesterday that he was expressing his appreciation of our having looked into one of them. As regards railways in Bihar there is, as he probably knows now, quite a substantial programme of railway development which will meet most of his personal wishes. It is also most unfair to suggest that European officers on the railways have their eyes on nothing but exports, as the last speaker suggested. Officers on the railways have their eyes on their job and try to do it to the best of their ability and render the best service they can to the railways and the country.

Coming to the Railway Board it is of course a fact that at the present moment it is entirely European, but it is not quite fair to judge the position exactly as it is today without looking to the past year. In the recent past we have had, for the first time in the history of the Indian railways, an Indian Member for Engineering, and if he had not voluntarily retired he would probably have been in the post still. That same officer held, for the first time in the history of the Indian railways, the post of Chief Commissioner during the course of the year. An Indian officer was acting as Member for Staff and until fairly recently also the Financial Commissioner was an Indian and would still have been an Indian had that officer not elected to choose a post elsewhere in an Indian State. And during my regime also the post of Secretary of the Board has become Indianised. My Honourable friend Mr. Ram Narayan Singh said that Europeans getting these posts stick there like leeches. Well, three of the Members of the Board are not leeches; they will be going in the course of the year and Government will be able to make further selections. I venture to suggest that in the years to come when the service which European officers have rendered to the Indian railways is reviewed calmly and in times of passionate political excitement, it will be generally agreed that they have rendered good services to the country. They need have no hesitation, in my opinion, in feeling that they have rendered a good account of their stewardship; and when the time comes for them to go, 95 or 99 per cent. of them can go with a very good conscience that they have done their best for this country.

Then, Sir, a suggestion was made by the Honourable Mover that we adopt an anti-Indian rates policy and do not adopt what he or somebody else called a national rates policy. I must deal with this extremely quickly. I think the origin of this allegation lies in the special rates which were quoted many years ago when industrial conditions were not as well advanced as they are today, when only a relatively small part of India's requirements were manufactured in this country. In those days India's trade was characterised by large movements of raw materials to the ports for export because they could not be made up in this country and large imports of finished goods which at that stage could not be made in this country. But, Sir, tariffs have been adjusted to meet the changed conditions of Indian industrialisation, and if there are special rates quoted for the ports it is mainly because the ports are the chief distributing centres of India and because the ports are also the chief manufacturing centres



of India. And if Honourable Members will care to look at the Acworth Committee's report of 1920-21 they will find that they effectively disposed of the charge that the Indian railways had adopted a non-national policy. They said:

"Indian railways had in one respect at least refrained from following accepted railway practice in other countries, which is to concede for export traffic through a sea port rates which are not available to that sea port for local traffic and *vice versa*. Bombay received from up-country large quantities of raw cotton, part of which was worked up on the spot and part exported. Similarly Bombay disposed of to up-country towns large quantities of cotton cloth, part of which was local manufacture and part imported. The raw cotton rates to Bombay port and to Bombay town are the same and so are the manufactured cotton rates upwards. The same principle, we understand, is applied elsewhere in the case, for instance, of the great Calcutta jute trade."

Special rates to the ports are still occasionally quoted, and I would instance the special low rate for the export of manganese to Bombay, Calcutta, Vizagapatam, and for chrome ore from Baluchistan, because if they had not got those special rates they could not compete in the world's markets with manganese from other countries.

As regards the development of industries I think it is generally known that the railways frequently have quoted special rates, appreciably lower than that applicable from the ports, and in particular I can think of the case of sugar and of iron and steel at Tatanagar, the rates given for which materially assisted the early development of the steel industry in India. The Honourable Member dwelt on the development of railway industries and both he and the Deputy President pressed that we should become self-supporting. I entirely agree; there is no difference of opinion there. I want to express my views on the manufacture of locomotives and wagons, but I will not do so now because that question comes up on cut No. 4, when we will have an opportunity of discussing that fully. I will answer his point about finalising plans on that occasion. But, Sir, I would like to point out the very big strides made in getting our stores from this country, a policy which has been accelerated as a result of the war. In the course of the war, we started industries for making wheels, tyres and axles, vacuum brake cylinders and fire-box plates. In addition to that there is a greatly increased activity in such industries as train lighting bulbs, train lighting belting, cotton canvas and rubber hose, cotton and jute hessian substitutes for flax canvas, nails, split pins, rivets, bolts and nuts. Imports of paints have been almost excluded for railway purposes. The railway workshops have been following a rationalized policy to ensure that their output is used to the greatest general benefit of the railways and is co-ordinated to the maximum possible extent, and as a result of it India has become largely self-supporting in bolts and nuts. Other industries which have been started or developed as a result of railway help are electrode manufacture, grinding wheels and abrasive manufacture, manufacture of high tensile stranded wires for railway signalling purposes, the development of tool steels, the reconditioning of non-ferrous metals and the rerolling of bars from arsenical copper scrap.

In other words, it is the policy of the Board to do all they can to develop these industries, and that has been effectively shown by the fact that whereas the total purchase of stores of Indian manufacture or Indian origin just before the war was 9 crores, it was 32½ crores in 1945, which allowing for the price rise probably means about 70 per cent. increase.

Finally, I would like to come down to the main suggestion made by my Honourable friend. He said, and the Deputy President supported the suggestion, that the time had come for a review of state management of railways and for that purpose the suggestion was made that a committee should be set up. First of all, Sir, I should like to say that I hope that whatever committees are set up will have their eyes on the future rather than be spending their time on *post-mortems* other than for the purpose of drawing lessons from the past. I do not think the Administration has very much to fear from *post-mortems* on the whole, but it is obviously more profitable at this critical stage of development that we should have our eyes on the future. In one way I consider that

[Sir Edward Benthall]

it is extremely timely that we should consider this question of overhauling the set up of railways in India. In my Budget speech I said that during the next year it would be necessary for Government and the House—I daresay through its committees—to pay attention to such important matters as the revision of the Convention and also to such important matters as the question of rates and fares which again is linked with the question of payments to staff. I consider that committees of the House will have to examine those questions and probably we could deal with many of those points in the way we have dealt with in the past. If the Standing Finance Committee is not suitable for examining this question, we can revive the Convention Committee to go into the whole question of the Convention on which in turn depends the constitution and functions of the Standing Finance Committee and also I think the Central Advisory Council.

We also have other problems in front of us, problems arising out of the new constitution. I have had occasion, Sir, in the past at a meeting of the Indian Railway Conference Association to express surprise that India's leaders had not given more time to such problems as that of the future Federal Railway Authority. A number of questions arise out of that. In the Government of India Act of 1935 it is set out that the Railways should be run on business principles and a certain constitution for running the railways is set out. The House will have to consider whether it wants the Railways to run on business principles or whether it wants to run on any other principles. When I say the House, it is perhaps more a matter for the Constituent Assembly, but these questions will have to be thought out. Similarly, when the constitutional question comes up thought will have to be given to the question of the re-grouping of railways which in turn will depend upon the constitutional settlement. And, Sir, I am inclined to think that some committee is necessary in the near future as a sort of fact-finding committee on all these questions in order to have material ready for the Constituent Assembly. That is purely a personal view. I, therefore, accept the principle of a committee, and I think it is not only desirable but inevitable that there should be such a committee.

Then, Sir, comes the question of what sort of committee it should be. My Honourable friend suggested that it should be a committee of the House with experts. Again, what sort of experts? You want experts from America, or the United Kingdom, or Switzerland, or do you want Indian railwaymen?

**Sir Mohammad Yamin Khan:** Indian railwaymen.

**The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall:** It is a point for consideration and it is very difficult to settle these matters across the floor of the House. Obviously for these heavy tasks which we envisage for the Committee, the Committee must be a whole-time body and it must clearly be also a very high-powered body and it must contain high-powered representatives of commerce, industry and agriculture.

**Prof. N. G. Ranga:** It shall not be a whole-time body.

**The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall:** I suggest that these problems are of such dimensions and seriousness that nobody can do the work in a few odd meetings. You do really need a very high-powered body. But let me finish. I would also say that from the railway angle the timing of it has to be considered. The railway administration at the moment is still recovering from the very severe strain of the war and is facing extremely serious problems of rehabilitation, reconstruction, staff problems, food problems and a thousand and one other things. If you are going to take your Railway Board off these administrative problems and put it on to planning for the future, it is going to add to the stress. I do not see how it can be done. That aspect must be considered. Finally, you come to the question whether a committee of this sort, apart from the Committees of the House should be set up by this Government or the new Government. The suggestion is that it should be this Government. I think, my time being up, that this would be a suitable

point to leave the matter. I accept my Honourable friend's suggestion in principle. I would like to consider further and discuss with him and other Honourable Members who are interested, how best to set about it and I express the hope that in view of what I have said, and the serious attention I have undertaken to give to this problem, my Honourable friend will consider withdrawing his cut motion.

**Mr. K. O. Neogy:** Do I take it that the Honourable Member is prepared to accept my motion in the terms in which I have worded it?

**The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall:** I am sorry. The substantive part of the motion is that the demand under the Railway Board be reduced by Rs. 100. That is a token of censure. Apart from that, I said the Railway Department would appoint a committee to look into these things but I cannot accept a cut of even Rs. 100 because I cannot accept a cut on the Railway Board.

**Shri Satya Narayan Sinha:** The question be now put.

**Mr. President:** I was wondering whether the Honourable Member was thinking of withdrawing. I do not see why a cut is considered necessarily a censure. It is only a method to have an opportunity of discussing a subject. I do not know what the convention of this House is.

**Sir Mohammad Yamin Khan:** If it is a cut of a rupee, it is a token for discussion. But if it is Rs. 100, then, in this House, it has been considered as a censure.

**Mr. President:** It is not an economy cut. It depends on the convention of the House. Personally, I do not think a cut necessarily means a censure. If there is no motion there is no occasion for a debate. So the cut really means an occasion for debating a certain point.

**Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad:** There is a definite motion by Mr. Neogy. He has the right to withdraw or press it to a division.

**Mr. President:** It is not a question of his right of withdrawal.

**The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall:** It is up to the Honourable Member either to be responsive and withdraw or press the motion.

**Mr. K. O. Neogy:** I should like to explain my position. My Honourable friend made it quite clear that the object of the committee should be more to look to the future, and that is the sense in which he is prepared to accept the suggestion of the appointment of a committee. But I made it quite clear that I wanted to find out how the State management system has fared under the existing administration. The two are fundamentally different issues, and therefore I do not think that I should be justified in withdrawing the cut motion.

**The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall:** Well, our views differ on that. I think anyone who is going to decide on the statutory body of the future would naturally have to look into State management in the past.

**Mr. K. O. Neogy:** It may be a separate committee or the same committee. That is a different aspect of the matter.

**The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall:** I have accepted the idea of such a committee in principle. I leaves it to my Honourable friend whether, he wishes to censure me or not.

**Mr. K. O. Neogy:** If the scope of the committee to which my Honourable friend agrees, is to include the examination of the past management of the railway administration, then only am I prepared to withdraw it.

**Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad:** You will spoil the future recommendation if you include the past and hand over both to one committee.

**The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall:** I have agreed in principle to the Committee but I do not know whether this Government or the new Government should set it up.

**Prof. N. G. Ranga:** Mainly a matter of no confidence!

**The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall:** You must look into the operation of the management of the past in order to review the new set-up.

**Mr. K. C. Neogy:** I think the issue should be considered independently.

**Mr. President:** The question is:

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

The motion was adopted.

ATTITUDE OF RAILWAY BOARD ON STAFF MATTERS ESPECIALLY THOSE RELATING TO WAGES, ALLOWANCES, WORKING HOURS, LEAVE ARRANGEMENTS AND SECURITY OF STAFF.

**Sjt. N. V. Gadgil** (Bombay Central Division: Non-Muhammadan Rural):  
Sir, I move:

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

The Honourable Transport Member, while replying to the general debate stated that "if we agreed to the demand made by the All-India Railwaymen's Federation, we should require 57 crores per annum more to meet the scales of pay and another 21 crores to meet the additional dearness allowance which they asked for. Where is it to come from? I do not think that those demands were really serious and certainly if they had been in possession of the figures as they are now, no responsible leader could have put them forward unless he was prepared to demand a substantial increase in rates and fares. If you are going to be generous to the railway staff, then the public have to pay for it either in the form of increased rates or increased fares." It was a clear attempt on the part of the Railway Member to scare away the House in rejecting the reasonable demands made on behalf of the railway workers. Apparently the cue has been taken up both by some Honourable Members in this House and the mercantile community outside. I regret to say, Sir, that in the press note published by the merchants of Bombay, there is not one word about the demands of labourers employed in the railway administration. The criticism is mainly directed against the administration with a view to secure revision in the rate structure and reduction of rates. Here also one Honourable Member from the European Group also complained that the Wage Bill was considerably huge and therefore ought to be reduced. I am not surprised, Sir, that there has been a sort of joint front between the outside merchants and the party of shopkeepers here and the Government. But I want to show and, if possible, convince the House that the railway employees are not really getting a square deal. It has been stated that the wage bill has considerably increased. Two persons in every thousand employed by the railway are gazetted officers and the percentage of wage bill which the gazetted officers receive is 5 per cent.; 50 per cent. of the total employees are workers in the inferior staff but they get only 26 per cent. of the wage bill. If we take into consideration the lower subordinate service, it is 20 per cent. in strength but gets 36 per cent. from the wage bill. The strength of the upper subordinate service is 0.9, but its share in the wage bill is 8 per cent. The daily-rated labour is 27 per cent. in strength but gets only 21 per cent. of the wage bill. If the bill has increased it is due to the fact that there is a top heavy administration. I do not want to suggest anything about its composition, how many are Europeans, how many are Anglo-Indians but the point remains that except for nine persons in every hundred, the payment made to the rest is not adequate nor consistent with the living wage standard.

It has been suggested by the Honourable Railway Member in his speech that it was not possible to say anything or do anything at this stage, because the prices have not yet stabilised, that there is uncertainty of future price level, that revision of scales of pay is an intricate problem. But all these considerations, it seems, have not occurred to many Provincial Governments, for many of these Provincial Governments have revised the scales of pay of

their respective employees and particularly, of the Police Department. If the Honourable Member had really tried hard to do justice, I am sure he would have found out some way. Nobody can accuse the Government of having ever been generous and few will agree that it has ever been just. But whether it is generosity or justice, the employees must get a living wage. If you say that if you concede all the demands, it means nearly an increase of 70 crores, then the fundamental principle has got to be decided once for all: whether this administration is to be run on commercial lines or as a public utility service. If it is a public utility service, then it is the duty of this Government to see that its employees are well paid and according to the living wage standard.

**The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall:** I take it that the Honourable Member would accept that even a public utility undertaking, purely as such, would still have to pay its way and that if therefore. . . .

**Sjt. N. V. Gadgil:** If it is a public utility concern, the men must be paid adequately, whether it is a profitable concern or not. If I want to live, if I want food, I must have it at whatever cost. That is the point. My life is not a commercial thing. I want food and I must have it cost what it may.

**The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall:** Somebody has to pay for that and it will have to be given out of a rise in rates and fares. If you accept a rise in rates and fares, then it is easy.

**Sjt. N. V. Gadgil:** You will see, Sir, that when the low-paid or inferior staff makes a demand for increase such considerations crop up. As regards gazetted officers, the average pay each gets is more than Rs. 1,000. When these 'new poor' were granted recently 17½ per cent. dearness allowance no such consideration was raised! Now the average wage that the lowest paid man gets is Rs. 26·7. It is only in this country that the variation between the lowest and the highest grades is the greatest in the world. In 1937 I had occasion to refer to this subject in the general discussion on the Budget and I had worked out figures then. The variation between the pay of the lowest paid and that of the highest paid Government employee at that time in the case of South Africa was 1 to 11, United Kingdom 1 to 32, India 1 to 133. You will see how topheavy is the administration and how much inequitable is its pay structure. My point is that the labourer, the employee in the Railway department must get a living wage. It is not difficult to ascertain that. The difficulties that have been pointed out by the Honourable Member are difficulties which can be solved if he has a will to solve them.

In the report of the Textile Labour Enquiry Committee Bombay it has been laid down how to work out a living wage standard. It is not difficult for this Government to find out what is a living wage. It means "a sum sufficient for the normal and reasonable needs of the average employee living in the locality, where the work under consideration is done or is to be done". It must be sufficient to maintain a well conducted employee of average health, strength and competence and his wife and a family of three children in a fair and average standard of comfort, having regard to the conditions of living prevailing among employees in the calling in respect of which such basic wage is fixed and provided that in fixing such basic wage the earnings of the children or wife of such employee shall not be taken into consideration. Living wage standard is a generic concept and a general standard for Railways can be laid down. He himself has admitted that owing to the fact that now all the railways are state-owned uniformity is possible. In 1940 the living wage standard was considered by the Textile Enquiry Committee and it was put down at Rs. 52 in Bombay, Rs. 45 in Ahmedabad and about Rs. 42 in Sholapur. The unit taken was a family of man his wife and two children below 14. At that time the index was 112. Today that index of the cost of living of the working class is somewhere about 249. It is not difficult for this Government with a huge staff, with a research bureau, with a statistical department, commercial intelligence department and half a dozen other departments to find out exactly what would be the living wage, the minimum wage below which no man ought to get. If you refer to Railway Reports you will find that the

[Sjt. N. V. Gadgil]

lowest man today gets only Rs. 45 including dearness allowance. The daily-rated labourer, gets including dearness allowance, only Rs. 58. Working on the data given by the Textile Enquiry Committee no man should get today less than Rs. 73 to ensure for him a living wage. Now in Ahmedabad an unskilled labourer gets today not less than Rs. 73 in the textile industry. Here in the Railway Department employees must starve! These railwaymen have been honest, faithful, loyal during the last six years of war and they have suffered innumerable hardships; but gratitude is not a strong point with this government.

The House will like to know what are the main grievances which have been put before this government by the All-India Railwaymen's Federation. One is about retrenchment, the other is about revision of scales of pay and the third is about dearness allowance.

Now, about retrenchment. The Honourable Member has said that:

"Only 8,800 out of a total strength of 8,50,000 have had to be discharged. The Railway Board have been in close touch with the All India Railwaymen's Federation in regard to this question, although they have been unable to accept the claim that no railway servant should be discharged, a claim which it will be impossible for any government department or any other business concern employing large bodies of men to accept."

I do not accept this proposition. This very government only a few days ago, while the food situation was under discussion, stated that it was the duty of this government, or for that matter of any government, to feed every citizen with sufficient food of requisite quality. Now if you are to discharge that duty, am I to understand that you are going to keep men idle and feed them? Unemployment ultimately is more costly to society than employment on howsoever small a scale it may be. If you accept it to be the primary duty of this government to feed every mouth, then surely it will be stupid on your part to allow them to remain idle. The All-India Railwaymen's Federation has not criticised the policy of the government in an irresponsible manner. They have suggested ways and means whereby the present level of employment can be kept up; and not only this, but if your post-war plans are not a ruse but are to be a reality, then it thinks that many more hands will be required and there will be no necessity for retrenchment. So, on the main grievance of retrenchment I do not agree with the Honourable Member's stand that the government cannot accept Federation's claim. It may be that the government may not be able to find employment in this particular department, but it is the duty not merely the moral duty but, by the fact that they have accepted it the other day as their legal duty to feed, it is their legal duty also to find employment provided the man is willing to work.

Now, as regards revision of scales of pay, it is stated by the Honourable Member that a commission has been appointed and that it is a complicated question. I do not know when the commission will come into existence, when it will record evidence, when it will record its conclusions, and who knows whether they will be accepted. As is usual, the commission's report may be pigeon-holed in the secretariat.

Last week the executive of the All-India Railwaymen's Federation met here in Delhi and they have passed certain resolutions and they have decided to take ballot for a strike. This is a serious matter. If you want them to wait till the report of the proposed commission comes, it is only up to you, if you are convinced that what they get today is not sufficient to keep body and soul together, to recommend something immediately. People talk about corruption. Undoubtedly there is corruption. But there are branches in the railway administration where there is no scope for corruption. The porter, the pointsman, the gangsmen working in the interior—they are absolutely immune from bribery. From morning till evening they have to work; they have their own families and their own children to look after. From the very fact that they are away from the cities they cannot put forth their claim with sufficient strength. From the moment of their entrance and to the end that is their exit from the service, they have no companion but poverty, the wretchedest poverty in the world.

With us it is a matter of academic interest, but with them it is a daily experience. They meet it all along their life, and if this House does not come to their rescue; I respectfully submit—and if they take a strong line of action they at any rate cannot be morally blamed. Sir, I move.

**Mr. President:** Cut motion moved:

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

**The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall:** May I just put a question to the Honourable Member? It is this: he said that the textile worker in Ahmedabad now gets a minimum wage of Rs. 88. . .

**Sjt. N. V. Gadgil:** Rs. 78.

**The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall:** Whatever it may be: but he will also agree, I think, that the textile industry has put up its prices by 150 per cent. since the war started.

**Sjt. N. V. Gadgil:** You have increased your passenger fares and other rates in the last five years and have put on a surcharge also.

**The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall:** I have increased the railway fare only by 8 per cent. and not by 150 per cent. If the Honourable Member and his party consider that we should pay a minimum wage up to anything like the Ahmedabad worker's rate, he must concede that rates and fares must go up, not by 8 but by 150 per cent. May I put a straight question to the Honourable Member and his party. “How does he propose to meet the difference, or does the Honourable Member and his party funk facing the issue”?

**Some Honourable Members:** Cut the top expenditure.

**Mr. S. Guruswami** (Nominated: Non-Official): Sir, I rise to support the motion that has been moved by my Honourable friend, Mr. Gadgil. I have already on a different occasion spoken to this House and conveyed to them the primary demands on which there is universal unrest among the railwaymen to-day. I do not propose to cover the same ground. I shall confine myself to the three important aspects which should receive the attention of members of this House and the members who are responsible for the present policy of the government.

Let me first take the question of insecurity of service. It was stated by certain members that there is an undertaking given by the government that reservation of posts for ex-servicemen should continue and it would be immoral to break that undertaking.

[At this stage Mr. President vacated the Chair, which was then occupied by Mr. Deputy President (Sir Mohammad Yamin Khan)].

I am obliged to Sir Yamin Khan when he expressed the other day that he was against the policy of discharging any employee in railway service because the government is unable to provide employment for the ex-servicemen. I am also obliged to leaders of public opinion like Mahatma Gandhi who have unequivocally condemned this threat to the security of service of 70,000 railwaymen in the name of providing employment for ex-servicemen. Not only this, these men numbering 3,86,000 (these are the figures given by the Railway Board to the All-India Railwaymen's Federation as being the numbers of temporary men on the railways) are not eligible for the privileges to which the permanent staff are eligible. These men are liable to be discharged at short notice. The War Transport Member has been telling the House that there is no serious problem of retrenchment. Nobody wants that there should be retrenchment. But in the same breath he indicated that there would be a fall of 48 crores in the revenue. For every three rupees earned by the railways, one rupee goes to the wages bill of the railwaymen. A fall of 48 crores must mean a reduction of the wages to the extent of 16 crores of rupees, unless by some statistical jugglery in which the Honourable Member is an expert, he wants to avoid that situation. Let me tell you

[Mr. S. Guruswami]

that this undertaking to reserve 70 per cent. of the permanent posts was not an undertaking given to the ex-servicemen—it is an interdepartmental resolution arrived at with a view to provide employment for the men who returned after war service. Therefore there is no question of an obligation that they should discharge the men who are already in service and then they should provide employment for those who have returned from the front. What are the terms for the discharge that the Railway Board gives—12 days' pay for each year of service. Most disgraceful. Why cannot they give at least free grain shop concessions until they get some fresh employment. Why do they not realise that they have responsibility as the greatest employer in this country to see that there is no feeling of insecurity of service or that the men who become unemployed are provided with adequate relief. But this Government constituted as it is has no imagination. It cannot take that revolutionary step. I shall not deal with this question any more except to say that you are unnecessarily creating a feeling of insecurity of service by your present policy. Take the example of the South African Government. They have committed themselves to the policy that no ex-service man shall be dumped in the place of men who are already in service. They have committed themselves to a policy by which the rate of demobilisation will be according to the rate of actual vacancies in the industries. Till then it is the duty of the War Department to provide employment and maintain them during unemployment. If the War Department is unable to give them employment themselves, they have no business to dump their men, after the war is over, on other industries and ask the corresponding number of men in those industries to be relieved of service.

Next I shall deal with the question of wages. Sir Edward Benthall drew a lurid picture of what it would cost if the demand of the All-India Railwaymen's Federation was conceded. He calculated that 57 crores of rupees would be required for wages and another 21 crores of rupees for granting relief for dearness allowance. If we have erred, let me say that we have erred in the distinguished company of the Chief Labour Adviser of this Government who was then the President of the All-India Railwaymen's Federation and who formulated its demand at the Moghal Serai convention. We are prepared to examine every demand of ours with regard to its financial implications and to collaborate with the administrations if they really want our co-operation but they are not wanting it. He failed to mention that if the abolition of the new scales of pay is conceded, according to the demands of the All-India Railwaymen's Federation, it would not cost more than 2 or 3 crores of rupees and we are pledged on this thing—to abolish the new scales of pay. There are anomalous scales on the Bengal Assam Railway. In the Bengal Doars Railway Section, the men who are already in service get inferior scales compared to the new entrants. There are different scales for the same job. There is a large number of persons who are blocked on the same pay for years. Daily I receive telegrams from different railways from men who have rendered 25 years service and who are blocked on Rs. 60 and the Honourable Member has no suggestion to make.

**The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall:** I have a suggestion. I should like to put to my Honourable friend the same question as I put to my friends on the opposite side. Does he agree to a corresponding rise in rates and fares?

**Shri Sri Prakasa:** Ask them where they got their money for the war?

**Mr. S. Guruswami:** That is what I was going to ask. Then there is the question of the travelling porters who are given a consolidated travelling allowance of Rs. 3 for spending 20 days out of headquarters and for contingent out of pocket expenses.

**Diwan Ohaman Lall (West Punjab: Non-Muhammadan):** How much does the Honourable Member himself get?



**Mr. S. Guruswami:** He can get what he wants to get. I am only worried about those for whom I speak, the lowest class of people who are most neglected in this country. Well, he was talking about the financial implications. I shall come to it later on but I ask him what is his attitude in regard to the recommendations made by his own technical experts. The General Managers of the Railways said that these railwaymen deserve 3 months' bonus. He could not concede that demand. The I.R.C.A. Conference said that a particular scale should be given to medical officers. He would not concede that demand. Certain General Managers said that the new scales of pay were anomalous and must go. He would not touch it with a pair of tongs. He would not even consider the first demand, that there should be abolition of new scales of pay. What we want is that the standards attained in the last 25 years should not be any more denied to the railwaymen and they should be given the option of choosing the best possible scale that has been already recognised in the last 25 years.

Sir, last year, the Government of India appointed a committee known as the Krishna Prasad Committee. They came to the conclusion that at least Rs. 60 would be required for the lowest paid manual labourer or worker in the department to meet his minimum demands in the present conditions. Would he accept that recommendation of the Krishna Prasad Committee? No. The Labour Department of the Government of India suggested on the lines of the practice followed in regard to the Workmen's Compensation Act that dearness allowance should be treated as part of wages. Well, the conspiracy of employers defeated that. The result is that today the workers lose by that nearly  $1\frac{1}{2}$  crores in the shape of provident fund bonus and gratuity which would have otherwise accrued to them.

Then in regard to dearness allowance, the other day he wanted to point out that the men are getting lot of money as dearness allowance and that could not be ignored. The practice on the railways is that a portion of the dearness allowance is given in kind and that would not enter into the relief of a worker if he dies or meets with an accident while on duty and in regard to wages that are given in cash, there is a new cash system there. Men under 40 get one rate and men above 40 get another rate. This practice was not prevalent on the railways when the dearness allowance was introduced. The Postal Department virtually abolished this practice by giving in the shape of cash allowance and good conduct pay an amount of relief which is equal for all grades of staff.

Then there is the zonal distinction. A Provincial Government abolished the zonal distinction in regard to dearness allowance but the Railway will not do it. It did not have the courage to consider such a demand. He raised the question about the financial implications. He did not raise the question when he gave away 200 crores of rupees in all these years to the general revenues, contrary to the findings of the Wedgwood Committee which said that the railway surpluses should not go to the general revenues. The Wedgwood Committee said that a reserve fund of 50 crores and about 30 crores depreciation fund is all that is necessary. Now he has accumulated 130 crores. He is a very good business man, good at window dressing. He can give a gloomy picture if he wants.

**Mr. Deputy President:** The Honourable Member has two minutes more.

**Mr. S. Guruswami:** The position in regard to the demands that we have made is that we are not so arbitrary as to say—neck or nothing. We are prepared for modifications if an impartial adjudication is arrived at. If they go into the statistics that we produce and into the statistics that will be prepared by the Railway Board and if these are placed before that adjudication authority we shall abide by the findings of that body. The position is that the present machinery for settlement of disputes on the railways is very unsatisfactory. The Whitley Commission recommended that there should be a joint standing machinery. If that had been in existence there would not be the threat to industrial peace that exists today; there would not be the present unsatisfactory conditions where the Labour Member is intimidated by

[Mr. S. Guruswami]

the towering personality of Sir Edward Benthall. The Labour Member is following the attitude of that Laputan philosopher who did not know whether the water in the jug supported the jug or the jug supported the water inside. He is still considering whether there is a justiciable issue or not. It is a most absurd and reactionary attitude that the Labour Department takes in this matter. But under the Trade Disputes Act if there are any differences and any disputes between the employer and the employed and if there is a joint application we do not require the favour of the Labour Department to bring into existence a court of inquiry. May I appeal to the Railway Member that he should join with us in an application and refer to an impartial court of inquiry all the points that are in dispute? Within 15 minutes I cannot give him figures which will show how he can find the revenue for meeting our grievances.

Finally, Sir, I have one thing to say and that is this. In 1938 I was invited by the Mexican Government for the purpose of seeing for myself how the management of the railways was conducted in Mexico. I accepted that invitation and went there; and I found that when the employers said that the workers irresponsible and unreasonable and that any concession to their demands would fall on the poor consumers, President Cardenas made this offer to the Mexican Railwaymen's Federation, "Will you run the railways?" They accepted the challenge, they reduced the rates and fares, they increased the wages bill and the administration was extremely satisfactory under the control of the workers. I will make this offer to the Railway Member. If with all his business acumen he cannot meet the demands of the railwaymen, let him hand over the administration to the workers. They will run the railways much better, to the satisfaction of the people of this country who are the owners of the railways, to the satisfaction of the consumers and to the satisfaction of the workers on the railways.

**The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall:** Sir, can the Honourable Member be given one minute more to answer my question?

**An Honourable Member:** What is the question?

**Mr. S. Guruswami:** I am prepared to answer the question if the Honourable Member accepts adjudication. Fifteen minutes are not enough to find out 78 crores.

**The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall:** I thought the Honourable Member was going to answer it

**Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad:** Sir, two issues have been raised on this motion, namely, retrenchment and wages. I will raise a third issue, namely, tenure of service.

With regard to retrenchment there is already a Bill before the House proposing reduction of working hours per week. If that Bill becomes law and the number of working hours are reduced, not one single person will be retrenched and the problem will be automatically solved.

As regards wages my Honourable friend the Railway Member thinks that an increase of wages will also mean an increase of rates and fares. I take a different view, and that is that when the wages were fixed in terms of rupees they were guaranteed certain comforts. Now the purchasing power of the rupee is reduced and ten rupees do not bring in the same comforts in the way of food and clothing as when the wages were fixed. So my Honourable friend the Railway Member should approach his colleagues the Commerce Member and Finance Members and others to lower the price level and fix the purchasing rupee, in which case the problem about wages will disappear.

I now come to the important issue of tenure of service. On the 24th February, 1934. I raised the question of appeals which, I said, was most defective. A person files an appeal to the Divisional Superintendent who just sends it back to the clerk on whose report the discharge or dismissal took place.

and then he gives an order. When it goes to the General Manager he never reads the appeal; that has been proved on the floor of this House and was admitted by one of the predecessors of the Honourable Member. It is sent back to the Divisional Superintendent, again sent back to the clerk, and then a note is written that agent has no reason to interfere. It comes to the poor man without any one having even read the appeal. When the thing comes to the Railway Board the same thing happens and even when it goes to the Vicary the appeal comes back to the same clerk and he gets the same reply. So it is really decided by one man who is a clerk in the Divisional Superintendent's office. In that debate on the 24th February, 1934, the late Sir Henry Gidney took part and this is what he said:

"My Honourable friend Dr. Ziauddin has immortalised here the ubiquitous clerk in the railway office. This is a daily occurrence. The opportunity of a subordinate to appeal then becomes an absolute farce."

It was suggested in that debate that a person with a judicial mind should be appointed who should be attached to the office of the Agent and the Railway Board to attend to these appeals. I made this suggestion 12 years ago but nothing has yet been done. Six years later this question was again raised in the House and I mentioned a number of cases in which a very curious punishment has been awarded. One case I mentioned was of a man who had joined service as Ahnād Husain and after 20 years he was told that his real name was Husain Ahmad, and so he had been guilty of false personification and was dismissed. Sir Andrew Clow was at that time Railway Member; I told him that when he joined service as Joint Magistrate of Aligarh he was called Kallu Saheb and after that long service he had become Sir Andrew Clow. So according to this dictum he also should be dismissed. But this is the kind of justice done. I appeal to the Honourable Member to look into this and request that he should appoint a person with a judicial mind who should be attached to the Railway Board and to the office of the General Manager, to listen to the appeals of the Railway Staff. The other thing is that appellat authority should not be attached to the Railway Department but to the Labour Department because the man dealing with appeals should not be looking forward to any promotion in his own department. It is very important. In other countries great stress is laid on these appeals, and for the benefit of Honourable Members I will quote the system prevailing in the South African Railways. Here he says, in the system of appeals in South African railways, they have established a Board of Appeal consisting of ten Members, a Police Magistrate appointed by the Governor in Council is the Chairman, four representatives of the employees representing four Divisions of the State, and five Officers, namely, the Chief Mechanical Engineer, the General Traffic Superintendents of three Divisions and the Engineer in charge of maintenance, signal and light. The Police magistrate, an officer not of relevant branch, and a nominee of employees of the same branch to form the quorum.

What I have described just now is quite different from the casual system of listening to appeals. Not a single individual ever reads the appeal of the unfortunate person who has been punished simply on the report of a clerk. This is a thing which requires careful consideration. I again point out to the Honourable Member that this matter has been waiting for the last 12 years and we have had debates in this House several times and nothing happened. I think that this question ought to be taken up by the Labour Department, because they have a Labour Welfare Officer. So I suggest that the hearing of appeals ought to be transferred from the Railway Department to another Department of the Government of India, preferably the Labour Department. They should appoint persons with judicial experience to listen to these appeals, as was suggested by the House 12 years ago. Or, they should follow the example set by South African Government and appoint a special Tribunal of which the President should be a semi police officer and the Tribunal should contain representatives of railway employees as well. If this system of hearing appeals is introduced, then surely there will be better security of tenure in services which does not exist among officials at present. I do not want to lay great stress, but I must point

[Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmed]

out to my Honourable friend representing the Labour Federation that his Federation gave very little assistance in the matter of appeals when special cases went to them. It was for this reason that the Muslim employees were forced to have their own Muslim Railway employees Association. We repeatedly brought the cases of these persons who were ill treated under the system of appeals, but they paid no attention whatsoever. It is one of the grievances I have against the all India Railway Employees Federation, because they really took up the cause of only one class of people about appeals. They did not take up the cause of other classes of people. If my Honourable friend is anxious about these things, he may read my speech which was delivered in the Legislative Assembly when I recited a number of cases of this kind, a good many of them were also quoted by Mr. DeSouza in his report. Probably the Honourable Member might look up those cases as well. We should have security of tenure for these railway employees, to whatever nationality they may belong, they should be convinced that so long as they discharge their duties satisfactorily, their services will be secure and they will not be harassed or dismissed simply on the whims of an officer who did not like the subordinates for one reason or another and punish them because they had not been obedient to him in private life or something of that kind. Sir all the three points raised in the Cut Motion are important. There ought to be no retrenchment and I am sure there will be no retrenchment because we will have new works and also the hours of work will be diminished. On the question of rates and fares, I suggest we should lower the price level and we should make the rupee have the same purchasing power which it had when the scales of salaries were fixed. On the system of appeals, I have already said you should adopt a better system.

**Sardar Sampuran Singh** (West Punjab: Sikh): Sir, I have full sympathy with the Honourable the mover of the motion, but he seems to be taking only two parties into consideration, that is the Government and the railway employees. I think there is a third party to this question, and that is the public, the passengers and the masses for whose benefit the railways are being run. If the general condition of the people in this country, is kept in view, we would not talk about raising the pay and increasing the expenses when we know that the person who has to pay has much less income than the person whom the railway employs. We are too much in the habit of measuring everything with the standard of wages by which we pay to the Englishman in this country. Whenever we think of any Government employee we try to measure his wages by the standard of the emoluments by which we pay to the Europeans in this country. We do not consider what is the income of an average man of our country who pays us who pays the railway employees and who is responsible for meeting all expenses incurred in connection with this top heavy administration. When we compare the income of the railway employees with that of the peasant in this country, I think we would feel that we are not perhaps quite right to demand such high salaries for our railway employees. I have full sympathy with this principle that it is the duty of the Government to see that everybody gets enough wages at least to keep his body and soul together. That is the utmost we can expect in this country of poor people. But that does not mean that we should not provide at least the same comfort for the paymaster. Considering the condition of the people of the country we can not allow high salaries to the railway men.

Next is the question of employing ex-service men in the Railway department. I quite agree that it is the right of everybody that he should get enough work for his living. But this principle should not apply only to railway employees, it should apply to all—ex-service men as well. If you are going to turn out thousands and millions of people from the army and from various other Departments connected with the War, then it is the duty of Government to employ all these people as well whom they are going to demob. On this point, I am not going to gainsay what has been said by others. I would certainly add that when you are thinking of these railway employees, you should also think of

those millions of people, who, as you ought to admit, have joined the army and other services because they were starving here. They joined the army for making their living and now on being demobbed they should be given opportunities and occasions to make their living. I fully agree with my Honourable friend Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad that officers not only in the Railway but also in most of the other Government departments have developed the habit of not going deep into the cases of appeals, I would even say they do not give even proper thought to appeals from subordinates which come before them. Sometimes they pass most ridiculous orders on such appeals. When one reads their orders, one feels that perhaps they did not even go through the files. Perhaps they have to do too much work, but it is a fact that the appellate authorities rarely go carefully through the files—as their predecessors did and consequently rarely justice is done to the petitioners. I think under these circumstances either there should be separate tribunals for hearing these appeals or I think it would be better if the appeals relating to one Department are looked into by another which is likely to know and understand the working of the former Department. So far as the Cut Motion is concerned I generally agree with the principle and I would support it, but it should not be taken in the sense as some Members of the House seem to take it.

**Mr. Nagendranath Mukhopadhyay** (Calcutta Suburbs: Non-Muhammadan Urban): I rise to support the Cut Motion moved by my honourable friend Mr. Gadgil. This budget has been called a victory budget. But I would call it a mechanical budget because it has taken no notice of the human element in it. Do the Railways merely consist of so many engines and trains? Are the employees also to be considered to be machines? That the employees are men, that they have cravings and that they have higher aspirations in life have not been taken into consideration. My submission is this. It is very refreshing to hear that the railways have delivered the goods. It is equally refreshing to hear that 85 millions of passengers have been carried by the railways every month. It is also heartening to be told that profit has accrued to the extent of Rs. 225 crores this year. But when you are to pay these men who have worked day and night, day in and day out, without any rest and brought about this success, when the question of remunerating them comes up, you complain "Where is the money to come from?" That is very funny indeed. I do not like to refer to the Lee Commission which awarded crores of rupees to the superior officers in all branches of the service. I do not object to the payment of dearness allowance to the officers who are drawing over thousand rupees pay. I simply say "Out of the 225 crores of rupees why do you not put aside fifty crores for these human machines?" Now, the days are fast changing. We are going to attain freedom. And these human machines may someday become an asset to the Railway Board. Don't you see how the times are changing? Here we have a Governor who has been a porter. From the rank of a railwayman he rose to the position of President of the Union and now he has occupied the *gadi* of the Governor of Bengal. So, if the best brains in the Railway Department are encouraged and if proper facilities are given to them, some people will come forward and be able to sit by the side of the Members of the Railway Board and will occupy positions by the side of the Honourable Member. Instead of encouraging these men, you say this victory budget means that 8,800 persons are to be discharged. What is their offence? They have worked for the success of the railways and they thought as a reward of their labour that they will have permanent appointments. But these temporary hands are to be discharged. This is funny indeed. After their strenuous labour, after their *bona fide* attempt to make it a success, they are now to be discharged. This ought not to be. Not a single railway man should be discharged. That is my humble submission. If you want to create a tradition that will remain for ever, even when India is free, a tradition that will be followed, it is your duty to follow it now. I simply submit that the *mamooli* statement, the stereotyped method of saying

[Mr. Nagendranath Mukhopadhyay]

that a Commission will be engaged to revise the scales of pay, is certain to put it off. That is not encouraging. I think the whole budget should be recast and a sufficient amount should be provided for giving proper remuneration to the employees—these labourers who have made it a success. If you do that, then you will have the hearty blessings of all people of India and of God. If you fail to do that, then you are damned for ever. So I ask the Honourable Member to reconsider the present situation. The times have changed and these young men who have given their best to the service of the railway should be encouraged and their better brains should be developed. Fuller opportunities should be given for their education and training. They are men. They have their families and their children. They have to look after them. Please therefore consider them as human beings and give them human facilities to rise. That is my humble submission. With these remarks I support the Cut Motion.

**Mr. Frank B. Anthony** (Nominated Non-Official): I rise to support this motion although I do not propose, like the previous speaker, to attempt to damn the Honourable the War Transport Member.

**Mr. Sasanka Sekhar Sanyal** (Presidency Division: Non-Muhammadan Rural): Why not?

**Mr. Frank B. Anthony**: He may deserve it, but I do not propose to do it as in attempting to do so I will have to invoke the services of a bishop in order to make it effective. With regard to my honourable friend, the mover of this motion who has also interrupted me with the question "Why not?"—I am glad he has not pursued a communal hate—I may tell him that I am as much interested in the inferior servant as he is. Do not for a moment allow yourself to labour under a fallacy that the Anglo-Indian is in receipt of munificent scales of pay. There are many scores of Anglo-Indians who are getting twelve rupees a month as a basic wage. That is all they are getting today—six annas a day. I want you to disabuse your mind of this fallacy, that because a person is an Anglo-Indian an Anglo-Indian he automatically is in receipt of a good pay. I am glad therefore that the mover did not pursue any communal issue, although he made an oblique reference to it.

Sir, I do not want to elaborate on this question of wages because I have a separate Cut Motion on which I hope to speak at some length. In that Cut Motion I have asked for a sixty rupee wage to all employees who are in the lower cadre of railway service. But I would ask here, as all the railways have come under State management, that a uniform wage scale should be introduced for all the railways in the lower cadres. These scales and emoluments vary from railway to railway. It is high time, now that there is the same administration, that for men with the same qualifications doing the same work you should pay the same uniform scale of emoluments.

My honourable friend in his Cut Motion referred to the question of working hours but I have not noticed any comments from the speakers. Before I come to that I might make some answer to my honourable friend to my left who rather cut across the requests on behalf of railway labour. I agree with him entirely that this country is abjectly poor, that the man in the street is abjectly poor, but may I suggest to him that labour in this country, when it makes a request for better emoluments for the railway worker, is acting as a spear-head for the general advancement and uplift of the poor man in this country? I am asking for the uplift of the railway worker, but thereby we are not proposing to put an incubus on the peasants in whom my friend is very warmly interested. These increased emoluments need not be made available as a result of increased burdens on the peasant. My friend Mr. Guruswami has told us that if this matter is referred to adjudication he will tell the Honourable the War Transport Member how to secure the 78 crores of rupees which will be involved in giving the lower cadre of railwaymen a decent living wage.

As I said, nobody has commented on this question of working hours. I have raised this matter for the last four years and quite frankly I have got really tired of it; this is a matter on which I cannot evoke the simmering of any response from the Honourable the War Transport Member. For years I have complained of these unduly, inordinately long hours of work. I do not know why even a request of this sort, a very modest request, my Honourable friend figuratively and sometimes literally turns his back on.

**Shri Sri Prakasa:** He works very hard himself.

**Mr. Frank R. Anthony:** Not anything like the Fireman or the Driver who in scores of cases known to me have been required to work—I am prepared to give you figures authenticated by log books—for 20, 25, 30, 32 hours continuously. My Honourable friend, on my left was talking of a 42 hour and 50 hour week. I can produce cases where men have been made to work 32 hours continuously, where men have been made to work 16 hours continuously in the summer months, on the foot plate—the most heartbreaking job—and when they were physically incapable of standing the strain any more and asked to be relieved, they were summarily removed from service. I know one case personally: A man was removed merely because after having worked for 16 hours continuously and when it was physically impossible for him to do any more work, he asked to be relieved, and instead of doing that he was summarily removed from service, after having put in 20 years of service. That is the most unfortunate part of the whole thing . . .

**The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall:** There is a little more in it than that, as the Honourable Member knows. There were other considerations.

**Mr. Frank R. Anthony:** I will come to that later. But I may tell the Honourable the War Transport Member that even now on the B. N. Railway if you will get hold of the log books in certain areas you will find that men are being made to work for 20 and 22 hours. I would ask him to put a stop to this.

On the question of leave, which is another item which occurs in this motion, I have been informed that it is a considerable source of resentment that discrimination prevails very strongly in the matter of leave privileges; that people who take leave overseas are allowed to take a certain period of leave on full pay, while people doing the same work if they want to take leave in this country can only take half the period on full pay or the full period on half pay. This I submit is a discriminatory condition which is very much resented by the men, and quite rightly so.

Finally I come to this question of the security of staff. And here I would endorse completely the views expressed by my Honourable friend, Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad. This is a matter also which I have raised in season and out of season, but so far without any successful results. I do not know whether Members of this House appreciate the fact that of all the Government services this is the one service which insists on perpetuating a system of insecurity of service which is nothing less than a relic from the dark ages. The railwayman today has absolutely no security of service. He enters into what is euphemistically called a contract, but is entirely an unilateral arrangement. The railway can get rid of him, give a notice without assigning any reason. This does not obtain in any other Government department. There is a provision of removal from service as distinct from dismissal. Any railwayman who has put in even 25 years of service, because his appearance—the colour of his hair or the colour of his eyes—does not commend itself to his boss can be removed from service. This is a matter of which I have personal knowledge and which I would say even the Honourable the War Transport Member does not possess.

**The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall:** Has the Honourable Member ever come across a case where some of these railwaymen have been removed from service because of the colour of their eyes or of their hair.

**Mr. Frank R. Anthony:** I do not expect any railway officer of however low degree of intelligence to put down on paper that he is removing a man because

[Mr. Frank R. Anthony]

he does not like the colour of his hair. But they remove him for these motives without assigning any reason. You have this provision which gives the railway authority absolute power which is abused over and over again. A man commits himself under the rules, you can dismiss him provided you substantiate the charge but you won't give him the opportunity of explaining his position. It is a monstrous provision. It is one of the provisions which has led to a considerable feeling of insecurity on the railways.

My Honourable friend said when I referred to the case of a man having been removed for refusing to work after sixteen hours of continuous work, that there were other considerations. The other considerations were these: You have another provision on the Railways—a man can be removed from service for alleged repeated minor offences. Take this phrase into consideration: repeated minor offences. What Government servant in the course of twenty years of service has not fallen from grace and has been fined two rupees or three rupees, but on the railways in pursuance of your old-fashioned, arbitrary, high-handed policy you will get hold of a man whom you don't like, you will rake up his official past, his record of twenty-five years service, and you will find out here and there that he has been fined five rupees for dropping a lead plug or two rupees for running late and you will remove him from service. This is not done in any other department of the Government. These are obvious injustices which I have repeatedly asked you to remove. How will your efficiency suffer if you merely bring the provisions governing conduct, governing enquiries, governing dismissal into line with the provisions obtaining in the other Government services. That is all I am asking you. As my Honourable friend, Sir Zia Uddin Ahmed, has pointed out, your provisions with regard to enquiries and appeals are obsolete, they are more than that—they are farcical. In a Court of law if a man is convicted, he can get copies of the evidence on which he is convicted. You charge-sheet a man as a result of an enquiry and you decide to dismiss him. When that man in order to put in his appeal asks for copies of the evidence which has been led against him, you say that no copies can be given. The commonest felon in this country after he has been convicted has the absolute right to get copies of the evidence on which he has been convicted. But you refuse to supply that evidence. With what result? He puts in an appeal without knowing what evidence has been considered against him. And as my Honourable friend Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmed pointed out the process of appeal is the most farcical of all the processes. It has to go through the authority that has convicted the man, and the appellate authority usually never reads it. If a man is convicted on the railway, in cent per cent cases—I will give you a concession,—in 99·9 per cent cases the appeal is never read. It is only a nominal process of getting a rubber stamp affixed to it. That is all. I am not asking for much. I am only asking you to do away with this obsolete provision. If a man is to be convicted, allow him an enquiry based on judicial procedure.

And, finally, may I ask the Honourable the War Transport Member—he is not listening to me . . . . .

**Mr. Deputy President:** The Honourable Member has one minute more.

**Mr. Frank R. Anthony:** May I make a final reference to this question of reservation of 70 per cent, of vacancies for ex-servicemen. I feel very strongly on this point. Perhaps members of the House look at this matter from opposite points of view. But as I said before Government has an obligation to the ex-soldier. Whether Honourable Members are prepared to accept it or not the ex-soldier was responsible for preventing this country from being overrun by the Japanese. The most ardent Indian patriots who knew the Japanese when they were serving with the Indian National Army, regarded the Japanese as savage uncivilised little brutes. It is the ex-soldiers who did prevent our country from being overrun by such men. I am not for one moment asking you deliberately to retrench those in employment.

**Mr. Deputy President:** The Honourable Member's time is up.



**Mr. Frank E. Anthony:** Try and find them the maximum employment. But in the matter of re-employing the ex-soldier you have given a promise and it will be a sorry thing if you went back on that promise.

**Shri Satya Narayan Sinha:** The question be now put.

**Mr. Deputy President:** The question is:

“That the question be now put.”

The motion was adopted.

**The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall:** I shall have to deal very hurriedly with only a few of the points that have been raised. One of two speakers spoke of the crores of rupees given away to the gazetted staff. If Honourable Members concerned, or any Members will look at the Administration Report of last year, page 43, they will see that of the total of 57 crores which is paid out to staff for that year, 3 crores or about 6 per cent, only is paid to gazetted staff and the balance 53.72 crores is paid to non-gazetted employees. The concessions to the gazetted staff amount to very little indeed compared with the concessions to the rest of the staff.

I must just make one other point. It is said that it is the duty of the Government to find employment for all railway workers. I agree that it is the duty of Government to create conditions for the maximum employment. But I do not think that any Government can be expected to find employment in the railways if the work is not there, particularly for temporary workers, possibly men who have joined for a month or two and who now apparently claim—I do not think the claim is really sincere, because I can quote Mr. Guruswami's own words against it—but the claim often pressed applies to men who have only had perhaps a couple of months service with the railways and who claim that on that basis they should be employed on the railways for the rest of their lives.

Mr. Anthony raised a number of points in his usual style and reiterated points which he had raised in previous years and frankly I am not able to deal with them all at the moment, but I would like to touch on this question of hours of work, because it is one which has been worrying us for a long time. I have talked to engine drivers and the running staff who have had very long hours during the war and it is our desire to do something about that. In cases where we have attempted to do it we have however sometimes got the backlash from the running staff. They say that they are thereby losing allowances and, so would rather have the longer hours. The Board have issued instructions to railways that they have no objections to Administrations giving consideration to the immediate application of the principles of the Payment of Wages Act to the running staff if by doing so they can keep on men who would otherwise become surplus and thereby prevent an increase of unemployment among railwaymen. The whole question of the hours of employment regulations is under careful study of the Board with a view to seeing what they can do to ease the position of the running staff.

I had now better try and deal with the main issue in front of us. I should not like my honourable friends representing labour to think that we are anything but sympathetic to their claims. I have interjected certain questions to-day because I feel that the House is not facing up to the issue. I have asked the honourable the mover and my honourable friend Mr. Guruswami to give me a straight answer to the question where the money is coming from and in neither case have I had it. They will not face up to the issue.

**Shri Sri Prakasa:** The Nasik Press will give you all the money!

**The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall:** In spite of those interjections I do appreciate how very anxious railwaymen are and it is natural too that they should ask for better pay and conditions. I do appreciate how worried they are about the question of retrenchment, about the post-war scales and so on. And we are not at all unsympathetic. But some of the demands are unreason-

[Sir Edward Benthall]

able and I have attempted to show that. We are bound by financial limitations whatever anybody cares to say and we cannot get away from them. They must be faced up to. We have got to come out boldly and face up to the facts of the situation. Someone has to do it and it is not reasonable to leave it only to the Government spokesmen and for other Members to shriek the issue for that is what is happening.

I am very anxious that this difficult question should be solved by consultation. My honourable friend said, 'Where there is a will there is a way' and there ought to be a way out of this. Mr. Guruswami said that he would be very pleased to discuss it. I quite agree. The Railway Board and Government are perfectly willing to discuss this but the House should know that we did arrange a meeting the other day, on February, 12th, with the Railwaymen's Federation and the Board was sitting there when a letter came saying that the Railwaymen's Federation very much regretted that they were unwilling to meet the Board and instead put out a strike threat. Well, Sir, I have always had one principle in dealing with labour questions over quite a number of years. It was my principle in business, that where there are disputes with labour there is usually no smoke without fire and I have always believed in examining the grievances of the workers with the utmost thoroughness and sympathy and very often one finds that there are wrongs, that there are things which might be righted and that concessions can justly be given, concessions which naturally fall below the extreme claims of labour, but which are reasonable and within the financial limitations, which can be given and go some way, if not all the way, to meet the just demands of labour. I believe therefore in going most thoroughly into all questions which arise with labour and making quite certain that they are getting a fair deal. I have stood for that throughout the war and there is no doubt that the railwaymen do get greater concessions than any other class of Government servants. But having given the workers a fair deal, I do not believe in yielding to threats.

Sir, this strike threat is a challenge not only to the Railway Administration but far more to the public. Furthermore, it is something in the nature of a boomerang. Because if you have a strike, it affects the financial position of the railway and immediately and automatically there is less money to pay to the workers. That is inescapable. There is no question therefore that if you subsequently have to go in for retrenchment, it is not a case of victimisation but it is a consequence of the action taken. It is also, I suggest, at the present time a challenge to the public, just at the moment when everybody is straining every nerve for the reconstruction of India, politically and economically, and particularly at a time when we are facing a food crisis. And I consider that in view of the attitude of Government in this matter this threat of strike is a totally unjustifiable attitude and one, which, I for one cannot accept.

[At this stage Mr. President (the Honourable Mr. G. V. Mavalankar) resumed the Chair.]

On the general issue, it would of course be extremely easy for me to respond. A speaker over there, I think it was Mr. Gadgil, said that Government is never generous, that Government never shows generosity in this matter. It would be perfectly easy for me to give handsome benefits to railway labour and to walk out and leave my Honourable friends with the baby. It would not, I think, be right, but that is what would happen, because as the figures show, somebody has got to face up to this issue.

I think myself that the solution of all these problems lies not in the course of "less work and more pay" as is suggested in many quarters but in finding more work for the railways and in more work by the railwaymen. If we can work together to create industrial activity throughout the country, there is every hope that we shall reduce retrenchment to the minimum and in consequence of the industrial and consequential railway activity, have more money available for staff amenities and for every other purpose. But, as I said, every stoppage, whether in industry or in railways, means less money for the railways and

therefore less money for the workers; and therefore it is commonsense that we must find a solution for this difficulty in working together, in meeting and discussing these problems and trying to find a way out. Sir, we in the Railway Department are only too anxious to meet the Railwaymen's Federation and discuss these matters further with them. Government have stated that they are appointing an impartial committee, because it is going to have a non-official majority. It is an impartial commission to go into the question of postwar scales and I believe that goes quite a long way in reality, if the will is there, to meet Mr. Guruswami, who said that he was prepared to cooperate with an impartial court of enquiry. This is an impartial commission and I can only assure him once again that we are only too anxious to meet and discuss and try and find a basis of agreement. But we will not yield to threats as my

5 P.M. Honourable friend Sardar Sampuran Singh said, in the interests of the public, whose interests come far above anybody's in this matter, particularly at this difficult time. Sir, I must oppose the cut motion.

**Mr. President:** The question is:

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

The motion was adopted.

#### SITUATION RE STRIKE AT BOMBAY AND KARACHI BY R.I.N. RATINGS

**Shri Sarat Chandra Bose** (Calcutta: Non-Muhammadan Urban): Sir, I ask your forgiveness and also that of the House for detaining the House at this hour in the afternoon but my justification is that the news which has come to Delhi from different parts of the country, and particularly from Bombay and Karachi, is that the situation has considerably worsened since this morning. You will remember, Sir, this morning I said that having regard to the latest news that we had got that the situation had worsened in Bombay and also in Karachi, we could not be a party to dropping the adjournment motion altogether. In answer to that Mr. Mason said, "I do not think it is correct to say that the situation has worsened. I believe that all yesterday evening the situation was very much better", and, later on, he added, "It is very much better. I think there is very good hope of a reasonable solution being reached in the course of today." In those circumstances, Sir, we thought that, having regard to what was said from the Government Benches, it might improve the situation if the adjournment motion was not discussed this afternoon. But at about quarter to four news came to us that in Karachi this morning H.M.I.S. *Hindustan* was under fire for 25 minutes, that there were casualties and eventually the ship's company had surrendered. Further news came that in Bombay the situation had definitely worsened, that tanks were on the streets of Bombay, and that there were a lot of casualties. I am told by my colleagues who come from the Bombay Presidency that there were firings 20 times and 60 (sixty) deaths I would not like to detain the House longer than is necessary; but, having regard to the fact that the situation has definitely worsened, I would request you and I would request the Leader of the House also to co-operate with the House in having a sitting tomorrow. Having regard to the situation with which we are faced, I think the House should be in readiness tomorrow to deal with any urgent matter that comes before it, the situation, from all accounts that we have received, certainly demands of us as representatives of the people that we should be in readiness to tackle with it and to give our advice whether by means of an adjournment motion or by any resolution that can be framed. The first thing to be done is this: I ask you, Sir,—and I ask the Leader of the House to cooperate with you and with us—to decide that the House will sit tomorrow, because it may well be that the situation may be worse tomorrow than it is today and we cannot possibly, as representatives of the people, sit in our homes while fires are burning in Bombay, Karachi and elsewhere. With the utmost respect to all my colleagues in this House, I would suggest to them to leave all work aside, to appreciate the seriousness of the situation and to assemble in the House tomorrow morning.

**Mr. President:** I do not know what the position of the Honourable the Leader of the House will be.

**The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall** (Leader of the House): Sir, I have been handicapped owing to the debate this afternoon—I have not had the despatch which the Honourable Member has just read. The position is, as you know, that this morning your ruling, as I understood it, was that we should meet on Monday to discuss this subject at 4 p. m. I also understood that there was general agreement this morning that it was in the public interest that we should leave a little time for thought between now and then and that this question, in the general interest, should stand over for debate on Monday afternoon. That is how I understood your ruling this morning; naturally in a serious situation like this which has arisen further developments may have occurred; but I still think it would be in the public interests to leave the debate till then, when we hope the thing will be clearer. Apart from that we had reserved tomorrow for Bretton Woods, but that has fallen irrevocably through and we have nothing for the order paper.

**Mr. President:** My point is whether Government will consent to the House sitting tomorrow.

**An Honourable Member:** We can find business any time.

**Prof. N. G. Ranga** (Guntur *cum* Nellore: Non-Muhammadan Rural): Practically this is in itself the business.

**Mr. M. Asaf Ali** (Delhi General): May I say that if there is no other business then I would insist on my adjournment motion being taken up tomorrow, because after all it was the urgency of the situation which had moved me to table that motion, and I was prepared to postpone it till Monday in view of the statements that were made and in view of the general hope expressed that there would be no further deterioration of the situation. In fact I had made it perfectly clear in the morning that the suggestion I had made about referring the whole matter to the Defence Consultative Committee should be taken as a sign of truce. In fact I made it perfectly clear that it should be truce from that moment onwards. Now, apparently that truce has not been observed; and if that is so, I insist that the adjournment motion should be taken up tomorrow; and it is the right of the House that we should demand a sitting for tomorrow for the simple reason that the situation is deteriorating from moment to moment. It is not a question of the situation standing still. It has not stayed out; it is deteriorating from moment to moment; and in that situation I do not see how we can sit still. We shall have to assemble here. It is not as if we cannot assemble tomorrow. We can assemble tomorrow and I do not see why Government should not agree to a sitting tomorrow. As for the business, I have said that if there is no other business, then this adjournment motion ought to be taken up.

**Sardar Mangal Singh** (East Punjab: Sikh): Sir, I entirely associate myself with the observations made by my friend the Deputy Leader of the Congress Party; but I do not agree with him when he says that tomorrow we should come and take up the adjournment motion only. I would submit that the Government should bring forward a motion early in the day that the political situation in the country be taken into consideration. In that case we would be able to devote the whole of the day for the discussion of this question. If we take up the adjournment motion there will be only two hours to discuss it, and naturally many honourable members would like to speak on this matter. I would therefore submit that the Leader of the House should agree to give the whole of tomorrow to the discussion of this critical position.

**Miss Maniben Kara** (Nominated: Non-Official): When the Assembly is going to sit tomorrow in order to discuss this specific question, I do not understand how it can be debated on an adjournment motion. So I submit that tomorrow's meeting should be entirely devoted to a thorough discussion of the subject. When a special meeting is being called, it should not be only for discussing an adjournment motion.

**Mr. President:** The question at present is whether we are meeting tomorrow or not. On that point, I would like to hear the War Secretary.

**Mr. P. Mason** (Government of India: Nominated Official): May I say in reply to the Leader of the opposition that when I said this morning that I felt that the situation was improving, I was speaking of the prospects of a settlement over the next two days of the indiscipline which has occurred, and I know of nothing that has happened since, which makes it unlikely that that question should be settled over the next two or three days. There have been, it is true, according to my information two occurrences, one is the surrender of *Hindustan*.

**Mr. M. Asaf Ali:** Despite the truce.

**Mr. P. Mason:** I never mentioned the word 'truce'. I also heard there was an outbreak of rioting in Bombay during the day; but my information is that that is not a matter in which the ratings of the R.I.N. are concerned. Other members of the House may have better information than mine, but I understand that that is an outbreak of rioting such as does happen in Bombay and Calcutta when the conditions are disturbed in which the lawless elements of the population have broken out . . . . .

**An Honourable Member:** What about Karachi, Mr. Mason?

**Mr. P. Mason:** In Karachi the position is, as I said this morning, that the shore establishments have now banded over all their weapons and there seems to be no further resistance there. In the *Hindustan* the ratings have fallen in on the jetty and the matter is, I hope, virtually over.

**Prof. N. G. Ranga:** Kill them into submission.

**Mr. P. Mason:** The point I wish to make is that while negotiations are still going on and the matter is being completed I question whether a discussion in this House is really in the public interest. It seems to me—and I do say this with a sense of responsibility which, I know, is shared on the other side of the House—that the only effect of a further meeting and a long day's discussion on this subject tomorrow—the only effect it can have is to encourage those who are taking part in this indiscipline to continue, and that is what I think we all wish to avoid.

**An Honourable Member:** And leave you a free hand to shoot them!

**Shri Sarat Chandra Bose:** May I say a few words in reply to Mr. Mason? The facts which I placed before the House this afternoon have not been attempted to be challenged. The first fact is that H.M.S. *Hindustan* was brought under fire and that there were casualties. The further fact is that the fire lasted for twenty-five minutes, and one can safely presume that the casualties were heavy. Then, as regards Bombay, the situation has definitely worsened. My Honourable friend Mr. Manu Subedar and other members of this House have received information that there have been sixty deaths in Bombay today since we met in the morning. The suggestion that has fallen from my honourable friend, Sardar Mangal Singh, that the whole situation should be discussed tomorrow, is one which, I expect the Leader of the House and Mr. Mason will accept. It is no use saying that there has been discipline here and indiscipline there. We know what discipline or indiscipline means in the vocabulary of the British imperialist. We know what law and order mean in the dictionary of British imperialists. We Indians have our own view of discipline and our own view of indiscipline. We have our own view of law and order, I mention these facts in order to show that there is certainly very great necessity for the matter being discussed in the House tomorrow. After all, we are here representing the people and surely we cannot sit with folded hands here while Bombay is burning, Karachi is burning and probably Calcutta also is burning by this time. I therefore press my suggestion for your consideration and for the consideration of all Members of this House—the suggestion being that tomorrow we should meet in the morning at 11 a.m. to consider the whole situation. Whether in the afternoon an adjournment motion should be brought forward or not would be a matter for you to consider.

**Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan** (Meerut Division: Muhammadan Rural): I think it is recognised by every one in this House that the situation is very serious indeed. The only objection which the Government seem to have with regard to the discussion of this particular matter tomorrow is that they feel that a discussion in this House might make the situation deteriorate. I do not agree with that proposition of the Government. I feel that a discussion in the House is likely to improve the situation. I was in Bombay last evening. Some of these people who are involved in it met some of the Muslim League Leaders there and they seemed to be very anxious and very keen that a solution should be found and that their legitimate grievances should be remedied and if they come to know that the elected representatives of the people have taken notice of the situation, are cognisant of their grievances and are pressing upon the Government to meet them. I feel that the situation is likely to improve and I don't see why the situation should deteriorate. After all the Members of this House are responsible persons and on this occasion at least I hope that no Member will make a speech for propaganda purposes, because there are the lives of so many hundreds and thousands of people involved. I feel, Mr. President, that a discussion of the situation will improve matters and will not deteriorate it further.

**Mr. P. J. Griffiths** (Assam European): We, in this Group, feel some hesitation in coming to a conclusion as to the advisability of a discussion tomorrow or not. There is no doubt as to the seriousness of the situation but the practical question is—will a discussion tomorrow contribute to a settlement or exacerbate the trouble? That is an exceedingly difficult question to determine. For my own part I have some doubt. I have a good deal of doubt as to whether a discussion tomorrow may not make things worse. At the same time we recognise the anxiety of everybody in this House on the subject. We recognise that it is natural that the House should want to discuss it. So, in spite of the doubt which exists in our minds, we raise no objection to the holding of a session tomorrow, if other parties so wish.

**Mr. President:** I think so far as the Chair is concerned now the matter rests on the consent of the Government.

**Mr. P. Mason:** May I make a suggestion? What I am afraid of is, as I have said, that an open discussion here may lead to a more obstinate attitude and more refusal to discuss and may result in harm being done to the prospects of an early settlement. I would suggest what I understand has been done before in this House and has been adopted in the House of Commons and that is a secret session. We can then discuss the matter freely and the conclusions reached may be placed before the public, if necessary.

**Shri Sarat Chandra Bose:** The practice of secret sessions came into vogue during the war and is properly applicable to war time. Is the War Secretary seriously of the opinion that what is taking place at Karachi and Bombay has led to a state of war? It is only then that he can talk of a secret session, not otherwise.

**Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan:** A secret session is likely to make the situation worse because everybody will begin to think that the situation really must be terrible if the House had to go into a secret session and that is bound to create more mischief than otherwise.

**Mr. P. J. Griffiths:** I think a secret session would make things worse rather than better.

**Mr. P. Mason:** I recognise the point of view of Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan.

**Mr. President:** Is Government agreeable to have a Session tomorrow? The point is that if they want to have a discussion on a separate motion it can be done. Otherwise it will be discussion on the adjournment motion.

**The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall:** We are not prepared to put down a motion. There is of course an honest difference of opinion as to whether a

debate of this sort, secret or public, will do good or not and Government definitely feel that it will not do good. I adhere to the view which was expressed this morning by both sides of the House that it will be much better in view of the present delicate situation if we thought over it over the week end and have our debate on Monday afternoon. I do not want to go into further details. We would prefer to leave it at that. The Deputy Leader of the Congress Party this morning said that he wished to keep politics out of these questions. I think it is better to keep politics out at this stage.

**Prof. N. G. Ranga:** You can keep violence out of it.

**The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall:** Let us discuss this on Monday. So far as the rioting is concerned, it is a provincial matter. It is much better to think over it coolly till Monday afternoon and we might arrange to come to an understanding in the meantime.

**Shri Sarat Chandra Bose:** Till then your agents and forces will have a chance of massacring hundreds and thousands of Indians!

**The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall:** It is remarks like this which make me think that it is better if we wait till Monday.

**Shri Sarat Chandra Bose:** It is because of the hopes expressed this morning of a reasonable solution that we did not press the adjournment motion today. Otherwise, we would have done so. Our hopes have been dashed to the ground, as you have seen yourself.

**Prof. N. G. Ranga:** We want the Government to cease fire. Who ordered the firing first?

**Mr. President:** The question has two aspects, firstly to discuss a separate Motion the whole day. That is one. For that I am afraid it will not be possible for me to appoint a day, unless the Government are a consenting party. Rule 24-A is quite clear on that point. Then, the other course is to restrict the session only to the Adjournment Motion, that is the other course open to me. Does the Honourable Member wish to say anything?

**Mr. P. Mason:** It only seems curious to me that we should meet only to discuss whether we should adjourn.

**Mr. President:** Theoretically and technically, it is a bit curious; but the substance of the Adjournment Motion is to have some business before the House for the purpose of discussion. Ordinarily, it is a device to take something out of the routine business before the House or the Order of the day. In this particular case, that is the only business.

**Sri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar (Madras ceded Districts and Chittoor Non-Muhammadan Kural):** On a point of information Sir. There is business for tomorrow. The House has already been adjourned on the Motion of the Honourable the Finance Member for a sitting for tomorrow. In advance he wants to tell you that he is not going to sit. This House has got to meet formally tomorrow, the Honourable the Finance Member has got to bring the Bretton Woods matter and request the House not to proceed with the same, so that it may adjourn the discussion on that to some other day. Therefore, Sir, I submit we do have to sit tomorrow in the normal course.

**Mr. President:** I may explain to the Honourable Member my own personal difficulty in the matter. Yesterday, I think it was settled that we should see day or not. Today also when I put the question to the Honourable the Finance Member what happens today and then consider whether the House should sit on Saturday he said it was not possible for him to present the Bretton Wood Committee Report and then I had to say that the House would not sit tomorrow. That was the reason why this Motion was kept off till Monday. There is also the other subsidiary convenience of having two clear days intervening so that we might have more information in the meanwhile. That was how the situation stood. It has now taken a different turn and the House is anxious to have the Motion discussed tomorrow. That is what I find. Of course the European Group is not objecting. I do not mean to say they consent, but at any rate if

[Mr. President]

this Motion is put up for tomorrow, they have no objection to it. That is how I understood Mr Griffiths. Then the suggestion was made that we should have a separate Motion and discuss the Motion the whole day. To that, I pointed out the difficulty of Rule 24-A, that is, that unless the Government are a consenting party, a special Motion of that type cannot be discussed.

Then, the only question that remains is the adjustment of the business of the House, and whether the Adjournment Motion which by consent was fixed for Monday should be fixed for tomorrow or not. That is the only question which to my mind requires decision. I find Para. 9(3) of the Manual of Business and Procedure says:

"After the commencement of a Session, the Assembly shall sit on such days as the President, having regard to the state of business of the Assembly, may from time to time direct."

This is irrespective of the consent of the Government and I believe, I have got the power of fixing the session from day to day, once the sitting commences, if the Honourable the Law Member or any Member of the Government has to say anything against this view of mine, he might please enlighten me, I shall consider it.

**The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall:** If I may respectfully say so, what you say is not right. The para. says:

"Having regard to the state of business of the Assembly", and there is no business of the Assembly for tomorrow.

**Mr. President:** It is not the business for the day, it is "business of the Assembly". It can be argued that there is not enough business for the day. What is required is the business of the Assembly; that does not mean the business for a particular day. Am I clear on the point?

**The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall:** We shall of course accept your Ruling.

**Mr. President:** It is not merely a question of any Member accepting my Ruling. Every Honourable Member is bound to accept my Ruling. But I want to be sure that I do not commit any mistake in the interpretation of the Rules of the Assembly. Therefore, I shall be glad to hear any view, which is contrary to mine. If the rule really means 'for that particular day' or 'any particular day', then the previous wording becomes superfluous.

**Shri D. P. Karmarkar (Bombay Southern Division: Non-Muhammadan Rural):** If the Honourable the Law Member wants to take time to consider this complicate question, he may take time till tomorrow.

**The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall:** May I make a suggestion, Sir. We shall not in any way question your Ruling if you suggest that this Adjournment Motion should be taken up tomorrow at four of the clock. I suggest that seeing that there may be some irregularities in that, you might permit Mr. Mason to make a statement at the opening of the Session and again permit him to speak again at the end, so that the House may be in possession of full facts.

**Mr. President:** With pleasure. Of course the idea is to thrash out the whole subject with a view to helping a solution. That is what I gather. The words used here are 'the state of the business of the Assembly'. That also means not only the volume of business, but also the importance of the business; and in view of the importance of the business, and practically the unanimous wish of the elected portion of the Assembly, I should like to fix the Motion for discussion tomorrow.

**Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan:** Apart from that, from what the Honourable the Leader of the House has said just now, there is business for tomorrow. The War Secretary is going to make a statement before the House and after that the Adjournment Motion will be taken up.

**Mr. President:** That was corrected by him. The House ought to be really thankful to him.



**Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan:** We are.

**Mr. President:** The next question is at what time do we meet?

**Shri Sarat Chandra Bose:** May I suggest—my Honourable friend Nawabzada Liaquat Ali Khan anticipated me in what I was going to say—that the Government have now decided to place some business of their own before the House. We are prepared to receive and hear the statement of the Government on the subject. We should certainly meet for that purpose, at least one hour earlier than the time ordinarily fixed for Adjournment Motions. That is my suggestion.

**The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall:** With due respect, Sir, I never said that Government was placing any business before the House. The Government are only trying to meet the convenience of the House.

**Shri Sarat Chandra Bose:** The Statement of the Government means that.

**Mr. President:** I did not mean to interpret that Government undertook to place some business before the House. If the Adjournment Motion was to be fixed as I indicated by the remarks I made, the Honourable the Leader of the House wanted to have permission for Mr. Mason to make a statement. Otherwise, perhaps he may not have sufficient time during the course of the debate on the Adjournment Motion. That is how I understood the Government position, not that the Government were going to place any business before the House.

May I know how long Mr. Mason proposes to take over the statement he will make?

**Mr. P. Mason:** It all depends upon the amount of news I get but it might take 15—20 minutes.

**Mr. President:** Then we meet at three of the clock and take up the Adjournment Motion, as soon as Mr. Mason's statement is finished, so that we may not have to wait unnecessarily in the meanwhile. We will continue the Adjournment Motion for two hours from the time Mr. Mason concludes his statement.

**Srijut Dharendra Kanta Lahiri Choudhury (Bengal Landholders):** I want to be clear. If Mr. Mason drags on his statement till four of the clock, the Adjournment Motion itself should be taken up only after that and it should run for full two hours.

**Shri Sri Prakasa:** We have the precedent of Adjournment Motions being taken up at half past two of the Clock in the afternoon. This happened during the first few days when the Assembly met this session. Why not following that practice meet half past two and then have the statement of Mr. Mason.

**Mr. President:** I think the later the better. The sense of the House seems to be to meet at three o'clock. The House is adjourned till three o'clock tomorrow.

The Assembly then adjourned till three of the Clock on Saturday, the 23rd February 1946.

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