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(8th February to 23rd February, 1945)

TWENTY-SECOND SESSION
OF THE
FIFTH LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,
1945



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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

Sardar SANT SINGH, M.L.A.

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Thursday, 15th February, 1945

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

STARRED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

(a) ORAL ANSWERS

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Bahim): Before I ask Mr. Chettiar to put his question, I must bring to the notice of the House that yesterday there was such a number of supplementaries to certain questions that only 15 questions could be disposed of. The result was that other Members who put down their questions had no opportunity to get the information they wanted. So, I shall ask Honourable Members to exercise more self-restraint in asking supplementary questions.

SUBSIDIES PAID BY EXTERNAL AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT

249. *Mr. T. S. Avinashilingam Chettiar: Will the Foreign Secretary please state:

- (a) how many persons are paid subsidies by the External Affairs Department;
- (b) on what grounds these payments are made; and
- (c) whether this expenditure is audited, and what the total amount of this expenditure is?

Sir Olaf Caroe: (a) Government are not clear what the Honourable Member has in mind, but the answer to the question as he has put it is that no subsidies are paid to persons as individuals, and no enumeration can therefore be made.

(b) and (c). Do not arise.

Mr. T. S. Avinashilingam Chettiar: May I know whether the Government pay any amounts to anybody from the External Affairs Department?

Sir Olaf Caroe: They do not pay amounts to individuals. To take an instance, the Government makes a subvention to the North-West Frontier Province, but no one would suggest that my Honourable friend Mr. Abdul Qaiyum receives a subsidy or anything of that kind.

Mr. T. S. Avinashilingam Chettiar: I do not refer to any Associations being given subsidies. What I want to know is whether any individuals are being subsidised by the External Affairs Department?

Sir Olaf Caroe: I have already answered the question as clearly as I can.

APPOINTMENT OF RUSSIAN REPRESENTATIVE IN INDIA

250. *Mr. T. S. Avinashilingam Chettiar: Will the Foreign Secretary please state:

- (a) whether the Soviet Union has expressed any opinion suggesting appointment of their representative in India; and
- (b) if so, whether Government have considered the suggestion?

Sir Olaf Caroe: (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Mr. T. S. Avinashilingam Chettiar: May I ask whether the Government have suggested to the Soviet Union the desirability of having representatives of their Government here?

Sir Olaf Caroe: The question has not arisen at all. I do not know where the Honourable Member has got his information from.

NATURALISATION RIGHTS TO INDIANS IN UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

251. *Mr. Manu Subedar: (a) Will the Foreign Secretary please state at what stage the question of giving naturalisation rights to Indians in the U.S.A. is?

(b) Is it a fact that the Bill for this purpose has been drawn up and was submitted to His Majesty's Government by the U.S.A.?

(c) Is it a fact that the Government of India received a copy of such a Bill in 1939 that they held it back for many months, and that ultimately they suggested that the measure should not be passed during the war?

(d) If the reply to the above is in the affirmative, will Government make clear their position with regard to this?

(e) Have Government considered the changed angle of vision in U.S.A. which has led to a larger immigration quota of Chinese and which would secure for Indians the naturalisation rights that are sought after?

(f) Have Government, since the beginning of the war, made any representation on the desirability of getting naturalisation rights by Indians in the U.S.A. either to His Majesty's Government or to the Government of the U.S.A.?

(g) If the reply to the above is in the negative, do Government propose to take up this question now as an urgent question?

Sir Olaf Caroe: (a) The latest information available to the Government of India is that six fresh Bills for the grant to Indians in greater or less degree of citizenship rights in, and rights of entry to, the United States have been introduced in the House of Representatives and the Senate, the Bills previously introduced having lapsed with the dissolution of Congress before the recent elections. All these six Bills have been referred to the appropriate Committees of the Legislature.

(b) No. The Honourable Member may not be aware that under the American constitution no Bills are introduced in the Legislature by the Government. No question of the submission of any Bill to His Majesty's Government would in any case arise.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) Government have noted what the Honourable Member calls "the changed angle of vision", but would point out that there is a distinction to be drawn between naturalization rights, or the right to acquire citizenship of a foreign country, and an immigration quota, under which a limited number of persons of a particular nationality may enter the country.

(f) Yes. The Agent General has repeatedly represented to the United States Government the importance of early legislation to enable Indians to acquire citizenship rights and rights of entry into the United States.

(g) Does not arise.

Mr. Manu Subedar: What steps do the Government of India propose to take with regard to Bills which are now before the Congress in order that they may not lapse and that they may be passed as early as possible.

Sir Olaf Caroe: The Agent General will continue to represent the interest that is taken by not only the Government of India but by opinion in India in this question.

Mr. Manu Subedar: Have Government tried to get the good offices of His Majesty's Government for this purpose?

Sir Olaf Caroe: His Majesty's Government's sympathies may be assumed.

Mr. Manu Subedar: Are His Majesty's Government favourable to this Bill?

Sir Olaf Caroe: Naturally, His Majesty's Government are favourable to any legitimate claim on the part of India.

Mr. Manu Subedar: From what materials did the Honourable Member say that His Majesty's Government is favourable?

Sir Olaf Caroe: I am not here to give a lecture on His Majesty's Government!

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

Mr. M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar: Has the Honourable Member in his possession copies of those Bills which have been introduced?

Sir Olaf Caroe: I think one has just arrived and I hope all the others will shortly arrive.

PAY FOR RURAL POST MASTERS

252. *Mr. T. S. Avinashilingam Chettiar: (a) Will the Secretary for Posts and Air please state the basis on which pay is fixed for Rural Post Masters?

(b) In how many instances are they paid less than the minimum, i.e., Rs. 6?

(c) Is their pay liable to increase in relation to the volume of business in the post office?

Sir Gurunath Bewoor: (a) The Honourable Member is presumably referring to Extra Departmental Branch Postmasters. These are paid a monthly allowance and not pay and the amount of allowance paid is based generally on the volume of postal business of the office.

(b) 539.

(c) Yes, generally.

Mr. T. S. Avinashilingam Chettiar: Why 539 rural postmasters are paid even less than Rs. 6?

Sir Gurunath Bewoor: The amount which is less than the minimum is paid for either of the two reasons. One is that a suitable man is available willing to work on less than the minimum and the second is that the office is unremunerative and therefore it is necessary that we should cut down the expenditure. But I would like to inform the Honourable Member that I have asked the Director General to take steps to see that every one of these branch postmasters receives the minimum.

Mr. T. S. Avinashilingam Chettiar: May I know whether it is a case with every rural branch post office that the remuneration is regulated by the volume of work in that post office?

Sir Gurunath Bewoor: Generally speaking, that is so in all Extra-Departmental Branch Post Offices.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: Do I understand the Honourable Member to convey that the general rates of payment admissible to these officers are under re-consideration?

Sir Gurunath Bewoor: No, Sir. I mentioned that where a Branch Postmaster is receiving less than the minimum fixed, namely, Rs. 6 per month, the Director General is being asked to see that the minimum is given?

Mr. K. C. Neogy: For how many years have these rates of payment been in force without any alteration?

Sir Gurunath Bewoor: I am afraid the Honourable Member has not quite understood the position. In the case of Extra-Departmental Branch Postmasters there is no such thing as pay. It is an allowance which varies from Rs. 6, which is the minimum, to Rs. 20, which is the maximum. There is a standard laid down which says that you count one point for every Rs. 15 worth of stationery sold per month and one point for every Rs. 500 worth of money orders etc., issued and paid. The minimum is Rs. 6 and for every 5 points the allowance is raised by one rupee. That is a sort of general standard.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: I am much obliged to the Honourable Member, but that was not exactly my point. I wanted to know for how many years have these rates of payment been in force without any alteration?

Sir Gurunath Bewoor: The standard has been in force since 1932, but I would like to add that we are also giving a dearness allowance to all the Extra Departmental Branch Postmasters.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: In view of the fact that the Honourable Member stated that the Government of India is paying a very small remuneration to the Extra-Departmental Postmasters on the ground that they are available for those small payments, may I ask whether the Government of India will consider the question and find out for what pay Members of Executive Council and the Secretaries to the Government will be available and lower their salaries accordingly if they are available for a smaller pay than they are paid today?

Sir Gurunath Bewoor: The Honourable Member is I am afraid labouring under a complete misapprehension. I have said from the beginning that these Extra-Departmental Branch Postmasters are paid an allowance and not pay. They are not whole-time employees of the Government; they have independent

sources of income and a very large number of them are school masters, station masters, shop-keepers and zamindars. There is therefore no possible comparison between a whole-time Government servant and these Branch Postmasters.

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

STEPS FOR MANUFACTURE OF AMMONIA SULPHATE

253. *Sardar Mangal Singh: Will the Honourable the Supply Member please state what action has been taken by the Government to manufacture Ammonia Sulphate? Will it be entrusted to a private firm or will the enterprise be undertaken by Government themselves?

The Honourable Dewan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar: It has been decided to establish initially a factory at Sindri, near Dhanbad, in Bihar, for the manufacture of 350,000 tons of ammonium sulphate per annum. The Government of India are also investigating the prospects of erecting another unit of 100,000 tons per annum on a site somewhere south of the Vindhya. Arrangements for the speedy establishment of the factory at Sindri are in hand.

It has also been decided that the factory should be State-owned and State-controlled. While the factory will be managed by the Central Government, ways and means of associating the Indian States and Provincial Governments in the scheme are being considered.

Mr. Manu Subedar: May I ask whether the final estimate for the cost of the machinery and equipment is nearer five crores or ten crores?

The Honourable Dewan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar: No final estimate has been arrived at and a deputation is now in England to consider what the cost of the plant may be.

Mr. Manu Subedar: Do not Government know how much they will have to spend over this enterprise?

The Honourable Dewan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar: There is an initial estimate of ten crores odd which is given in the report.

Sardar Mangal Singh: May I ask whether the Government will do it directly or will they entrust it to some company?

The Honourable Dewan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar: I would like to say once for all—and I hope this will be a final statement—that the factory will be worked by the Central Government on the analogy of the Ordnance factories.

Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad: Who decides the location of these factories?

The Honourable Dewan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar: The Governor General in Council has in this case decided the location of the factory.

Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari: May I ask if the Honourable Member will specify with a little more precision the site of the factory which is to be erected in some place south of the Vindhya? Is it likely to be in the Madras province?

The Honourable Dewan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar: I am afraid I am not in a position to make a statement on that point. The three Governments concerned—Madras, Bombay and the Central Provinces—and the two States concerned—Hyderabad and Mysore—have been asked to get together and suggest a site unanimously, if possible. I am awaiting the recommendation of these Governments.

INDIA'S EXTRA-TERRITORIAL RIGHTS IN CHINA

254. *Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: Will the Foreign Secretary please state if India enjoyed any extra-territorial rights in China because of (i) any treaty entered into by it with China or (ii) any treaty entered into on her behalf by the United Kingdom with China prior to 1939? What is the situation at present? So far as Indians are concerned in that country, what are their rights?

Sir Olaf Caroe: Yes. Under the Peking Protocol of 1901 Indians, like other British subjects, enjoyed certain extra-territorial rights of which the principal was exemption from the jurisdiction of Chinese Courts. By the Treaty for the Abolition of Extra-territoriality and Related Rights in China signed on 11th

January 1943 and ratified on May the 20th, 1943, to which Treaty India was a party, these rights were surrendered.

As to the present position of Indians in China and of Chinese in India, the Honourable Member's attention is invited to Articles 5, 6, 7 and 8 and the Annexures of the Treaty of 1943 referred to above which are reproduced in the Council of State's Debates, Volume I, No. 5 of 1943.

CHINESE RIGHTS IN INDIA

255. *Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: Will the Foreign Secretary please state what rights the Chinese have been enjoying in this country?

Sir Olaf Caroe: I invite the Honourable Member's attention to the concluding portion of my answer to his question No. 254.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: May I know if, before the war, the Chinese have been enjoying the rights which they do now?

Sir Olaf Caroe: I do not think the war comes into this question. It is a question of revision of the previous position by the treaty which was entered into in 1943 and not in 1939.

INADEQUACY OF PLATFORM SHEDS AT MUTTRA JUNCTION RAILWAY STATION

256. *Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: Will the Honourable the Railway Member please state, with reference to my starred question No. 6 put on the 8th November, 1943, in respect of inadequacy of platform sheds at the Muttra Junction Railway Station and the answer thereto:

(a) whether a copy of that question and its answer were sent to the General Manager, Great Indian Peninsula Railway; if so, whether any communication was received from him; what the decision reached at is;

(b) if he is aware that there was a cold wave at Muttra from the 4th January, 1945, to the 10th January, 1945, that it rained on the 3rd and 4th January, 1945; and that the passengers waiting for trains suffered on that account; and

(c) whether Muttra is a place of Hindu pilgrimage and, therefore, there are many Hindu male and female passengers waiting on the platforms who are exposed to the rains and inclement weather for want of sheds?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: (a) Yes: a copy of the question and answer was sent to the General Manager, Great Indian Peninsula Railway. No communication has been received from him nor was one expected as the matter is within the competence of the Railway Administration.

(b) and (c). Government are aware that Muttra is a place of Hindu pilgrimage and they also realise that inadequacy of platform shelters at stations causes inconvenience to passengers but there appears to be no immediate prospect of relief on account of more pressing requirements of war works. The question of providing further amenities for passengers at Muttra station will, however, be considered along with similar requirements at other important stations in the post-war period.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: Is the Honourable Member aware that on the dates referred to in the question, passengers were suffering terribly on account of cold wave and whoever could get to the nearest part of the bridge which was touching the platform was able to get shelter and others suffered? In view of this fact, will the Government expedite matters and hurry up the construction of such sheds as will protect the passengers?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: It is a question of priorities. The question is whether allocation of materials for this purpose is the most urgent thing. I would request the Honourable Member to arrange to get this question discussed in the Local Advisory Council for Railways. I will also send a copy of these questions and answers to the General Manager.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: I am not on the Local Advisory Committee. In view of the fact that a cold wave might come at any time which may mean loss of human lives, will the Honourable Member consider this fact and give it priority?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: I have already answered the question and I will send a copy of these questions and answers to the General Manager.

STEPS TO COUNTERACT OVERCROWDING IN TRAINS

257. *Sardar Mangal Singh: Will the Honourable the Railway Member please state:

(a) what steps his Department has taken to counteract overcrowding particularly on the North Western Railway;

(b) whether they will run "Military Leave Special" from Delhi to Rawalpindi daily instead of thrice a week and prohibit all military personnel to travel by civilian trains; and

(c) whether any efforts are being made to increase the rolling stock, and if so, to what extent?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: (a) Some of the measures adopted with a view to counteract overcrowding on railways including the North Western Railway were as follows:

(i) Strengthening of passenger rakes up to the maximum extent possible consistent with the haulage capacity of engines, capacity of loops and availability of stock.

(ii) Withdrawal of dining cars from many passenger trains and prohibition of the carriage of motor cars by passenger trains in order to make room for more passenger coaches.

(iii) Reservation of separate carriages for Defence Services so as to prevent military passengers crowding in the coaches for public.

(iv) Rigorous efforts to prevent ticketless travellers taking up accommodation in trains.

(v) Running of special trains for large military movements so as to cause the least disturbance to ordinary passenger services. Also regular specials on several routes for necessary moves of military personnel proceeding on leave.

(vi) Extensive propaganda to discourage travel and to exhort passengers to travel light.

(vii) Imposition of distance restrictions for travel in certain trains.

(viii) Promulgation of a new Defence of India Rule 85-C to make police help available to Railway servants in order to deter passengers from travelling on the roof, buffers and footboards, etc., of carriages.

(ix) Taking of steps to help, where possible, in the development of road transport to relieve congested sections of railways so as to cope with the transport needs, civil and military, of the country.

(x) Intensive use of all available coaching stock and the reconditioning of obsolete vehicles.

(b) The Military Leave Specials between Delhi and Rawalpindi running thrice a week have been cancelled and replaced by Calcutta-Rawalpindi specials running thrice a week from the 17th December 1944. It is not at present feasible to run them at more frequent intervals. It is not practicable to prohibit entirely military personnel from travelling in public passenger trains, as provision has to be made for urgent and essential moves of such personnel which cannot be cleared by the Leave Specials.

(c) Plans have been made to increase the quantity of passenger rolling stock to the maximum extent possible, having regard to the difficulties in securing the requisite material. I hope the increase may be as much as four per cent. towards the end of the next year.

Sardar Mangal Singh: Have the Government considered the suggestion to release Lease-Lend vehicles for transport companies in order to relieve overcrowding?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: Yes, Sir, but there are many demands on vehicles.

Mr. Muhammad Nauman: May I know whether Government have considered the extensive use of checking arrangements for ticketless travel? Is the Hon-

ourable Member aware that relation of checking arrangements has led to overcrowding by ticketless travellers?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: We have taken special steps to deal with that difficulty.

Mr. Manu Subedar: Will the Government enquire why military personnel travel in ordinary coaches even when there is room in special coaches reserved for the Defence Department?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: That is a question which has constantly been brought to the attention of the War Department. The War Department has been very good about taking action.

FUTURE CLASSES OF PASSENGER ACCOMMODATION ON RAILWAYS

258. *Sardar Mangal Singh: Will the Honourable the Railway Member please state:

(a) whether Government have come to any conclusion regarding the number of classes of passenger accommodation on Railways in future; and

(b) whether Government have considered the suggestion of having only one class with a provision for sleeping accommodation on extra payment?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: (a) No. But it is hoped that a conclusion will be reached very shortly, after consultation with the Central Advisory Council for Railways.

(b) Yes. But this was not found feasible.

CONSUMPTION OF COAL BY INDIAN STATE RAILWAYS

259. *Mr. Manu Subedar: (a) Will the Honourable the Railway Member please state the consumption of coal by Indian State Railways in 1941-42, 1942-43, 1943-44 and 1944-45 (up to the 31st December, 1944)?

(b) How does this compare with the consumption in the years 1937-38 and 1938-39?

(c) How much coal is produced by mines belonging to Government and how much is purchased from outside?

(d) Who fixes the price for the coal so purchased?

(e) How does the price paid in war years compare with the price paid before?

(f) Is there any difference in the coal consumption per mile between the locomotives in use before and those that have been recently imported from the United States of America, and, if so, what is the difference?

(g) What steps, if any, have been taken by Government to reduce the transport of coal on Railway account?

(h) Have the Railway Department parted with any coal in their possession for uses other than Railway purposes, *i.e.*, either for export, or for bunkering, or for works belonging to Government contractors?

(i) If the answer to the above is in the affirmative, when and how?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: (a) and (b). The Honourable Member is invited to refer to Statement 27 (a) of Volume II of the Report on Indian Railways for the years 1937-38 to 1943-44 for information regarding the consumption of coal by Indian State Railways for those years. The approximate consumption for the period 1st April to 31st December 1944 was 7,022,000 tons.

(c) The production of coal from Company and State Railway collieries will be found in Appendix B to Volume II of the Report on Indian Railways for the years concerned. The amount of coal purchased from outside is that which will make up the deficit between despatches from Railway-owned Collieries and the total consumption.

(d) Up to and including the year 1943-44 prices were regulated by public tender. Prices are now fixed by the Government of India in the Supply Department.

(e) Prices showed a decline from 1938-39 to 1941-42. They increased slightly in 1942-43, there was a sharp increase in 1943-44, whilst the present prices are between 200 and 300 per cent. higher than the immediate pre-war year.

(f) Figures of coal consumption per engine mile are not recorded as they are of no value. Records are kept of the consumption of coal per thousand gross

ton miles. It is too early to judge if the new engines will give improved coal consumption figures. The determination of coal consumption must be over a considerable period and in varying conditions, and it will not be known for some little time if the improvement we are entitled to expect will be secured.

(g) The following steps have been and are being taken to afford the maximum possible relief to the present acute rail transport situation in the matter of supplies of coal to Railways.

(i) Supplies of Loco. coal are so arranged to ensure, as far as possible, that full rakes from Collieries within the same pilot section are consigned to one Railway in order to save wagon and engine shunting time.

(ii) The supply of coal with least ash content is made to those Railways farthest from the coal-fields so as to economise in the number of wagons required.

(iii) Supplies are arranged from the nearest source and delivery by the shortest route.

(iv) An energetic Fuel Economy Campaign is being actively pursued in order to reduce the total demand for coal.

(v) Coastal shipping is made use of for coal distribution wherever practicable.

(vi) Conversion of locomotives from coal burning to oil burning is being effected where oil supply arrangements can be made to admit.

(h) and (i). Occasionally, the Railway Department has been asked to lend coal from its stocks to essential industries for short periods. This has been done in several instances. I am not in a position to give complete details.

Mr. Manu Subedar: With reference to part (c), my question was, how much is purchased from outside. Will the Honourable Member kindly give that figure?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: I explained that it is the difference between what is produced and what is consumed.

Mr. Manu Subedar: Will the Honourable Member kindly give the figures?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: In a particular year, 1943-44, the production of steam coal from railway collieries was 2,244,986 tons, and the total quantity of steam coal purchased from the market was 6,683,150 tons.

Mr. Manu Subedar: Is it a fact that the bulk of these 6 millions is purchased from European-owned and European-managed collieries?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: I do not think so.

Mr. Manu Subedar: Is any coal purchased by the railways from Indian collieries?

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): I think the Honourable Member had enough information. Next question.

PROF. THOMAS' REPORT ON PROGRESS OF INDUSTRY DURING AND AFTER WAR

260. *Mr. Manu Subedar: (a) Did the Honourable the Supply Member get a report prepared by Prof. Thomas on the progress of industry during the war and the position of such industry after the war?

(b) Why has not a copy of this report been made available to the Members of the Legislative Assembly?

(c) Have Government reached any final views themselves with regard to the position of those industries which have expanded under the stress of the war?

(d) Do Government accept the views expressed by Prof. Thomas with regard to the future?

(e) If the answer to the above is in the negative, what conclusions have Government themselves reached in this matter?

(f) When do Government propose to take the Legislature in their confidence on such matters?

(g) Why are Government pursuing these enquiries privately, instead of taking into confidence either the Members of the Legislature or organizations concerned with these industries or the general public?

(h) Will Government consider the advisability of circulating these reports and fixing a day for the discussion of their subject matter in the Assembly?

The Honourable Dewan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar: (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Reports were prepared for the use of the Post-War Reconstruction Committee on Trade and Industry and some Members of the Assembly have received copies of the Reports.

(c) No; the Government are examining the case of each Industry, in the general plan of post-war industrial expansion.

(d) No; they are the personal views of Dr. Thomas. It may be pointed out, however, that the Reports are mostly factual reports.

(e) The Honourable Member is referred to the answer to (c) above.

(f) There is no question of not taking the Legislature into Government's confidence. It is only security considerations which have prevented the general publication of the Reports, as they contain mention of quantities of stores, of various critical materials, etc., the publication of which is not desirable. Copies have, however, been circulated to all the members of the various Policy Committees of the Reconstruction Committee of Council, and if any Honourable Member of the Legislature wants a copy for his personal use, I shall be prepared to supply him with a copy.

(g) and (h). The Honourable Member is referred to the answer to (f) above.

Mr. Manu Subedar: Will the Honourable Member supply a copy to me?

The Honourable Dewan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar: Yes, Sir, if a request is made.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: May I also have a copy?

Mr. T. Chapman-Mortimer: May I also have a copy?

Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari: May I know whether before this inquiry was undertaken Government drew up any terms of reference to enable the officer concerned to make inquiries or drew up a questionnaire so that he could get information on systematic lines, or they allowed him to conduct the enquiry and make a report in any manner he liked?

The Honourable Dewan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar: I myself gave personal instructions to Dr. Thomas as to the manner in which the information was to be collected, and he had detailed instructions as to how he should go about collecting his information.

SHIP-BUILDING INDUSTRY OF THE SCINDIA'S AT VIZAGAPATAM

261. ***Mr. K. S. Gupta:** (a) Will the Honourable the Supply Member please state if it is a fact that the ship-building industry of the Scindia's at Vizagapatam is treated step-motherly?

(b) Is it a fact that growth of the industry is retarded by the inadequate supply of the necessary machinery and tools?

The Honourable Dewan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar: (a) If the Honourable Member is thinking of step-mothers who lack affection, the answer is in the negative.

(b) The growth of the industry has been retarded by many factors arising out of war conditions including those mentioned in this part of the question.

Mr. T. S. Avinashilingam Chettiar: Are they giving any help to the industry?

The Honourable Dewan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar: Yes, Sir, a great deal of help.

Mr. T. S. Avinashilingam Chettiar: What sort of help?

The Honourable Dewan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar: I think at this stage on this general question it is really the Commerce and Industries Department that should be asked about it; but I can tell the Honourable Member that from giving them facilities for a shipbuilding yard upwards, various kinds of help have been given to this concern during the last four years.

INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION CONFERENCE AT CHICAGO

†262. ***Babu Baijnath Bajoria:** (a) Will the Secretary for Posts and Air be pleased to state the total cost to the Government of India for sending its delegation to the International Civil Aviation Conference at Chicago?

(b) What were the results of the deliberation of this Conference?

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

(c) What benefits accrued to India at this Conference, specially with respect to the development of her Civil Aviation Services?

Sir Gurnath Bewoor: (a) The cost of the delegation including the salaries of the officers deputed from India to the International Civil Aviation Conference at Chicago was approximately Rs. 40,000. Details regarding certain items of expenditure are not yet available and it is not possible to give the exact figure at present.

(b) I would invite the Honourable Member's attention to the *Press Communiqué* on the subject issued by the Government of India on the 14th January, 1945, as also to the document entitled the 'Final Act' of the Conference, a copy of which is available in the Library of the Legislature.

(c) Subject to the ratification and confirmation of the Convention and the Agreements drawn up at Chicago, India will share on a reciprocal basis all the benefits which are obtained from an international agreement on air navigation.

CONTROL OF COUNTRYCRAFT

263. *Mr. Manu Subedar: (a) Will the Honourable Member for War Transport please state the object of the control of countrycraft instituted by Government and the appointment of Countrycraft Officer under the Shipping Controller in Bombay?

(b) Who fixes the freights and on what basis?

(c) Is due allowance made for increased cost of living, increased charges and difficulty of maintaining crews?

(d) Have Government considered that an undue restriction on countrycraft would lead to a reduction in their number, dismemberment of the crew and, what is more dangerous, the prevention of further production of countrycraft?

(e) What special measures have Government taken for increased production of countrycraft?

(f) How many countrycrafts have been produced since the beginning of the war and in which places?

(g) Are timber and other materials made available?

(h) What is the increased cost of production of countrycraft?

(i) Have Government gone into the question as to whether countrycraft, which can be built up very quickly, should be increased in number so as to relieve the pressure on land transport and to enable outlying places to receive goods, which are actually needed by them, including food?

(j) Will Government undertake themselves or through private subsidised enterprise the production of two to three hundred more countrycrafts with a view to relieving the pressure and increasing the supply of water transport as the most natural method of bringing down freights instead of mere control which would discourage this kind of enterprise?

(k) Have Government considered the use of tugs for taking countrycrafts at a time at a greater speed with a view to save the time and thus increase the facility of water transport, involving at the same time a better control?

(l) Have Government received any reports with regard to the countrycraft transport as it worked before the war and during the war?

(m) What is their policy with regard to the next two or three years of the war?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: (a) The object of the "Route Scheme" for country craft is to ensure that country craft on the West coast are more fully and efficiently employed than before. This was explained in two press notes issued on the 15th August 1944, and 3rd September 1944, copies of which were placed on the table of the House on 12th February in answer to Starred Question No. 130.

Coastal steamer transport was brought under Government control in September 1943, and when this was done the Country Craft Organisation Officer was placed under the general supervision of the Controller of Indian Shipping in order to enable the latter to give the Bombay Coastal Shipping Committee a comprehensive view of the total sea transport capacity available and to co-ordinate the full use of that capacity for transport of essential cargo.

(b) Freight rates are fixed by the Controller of Indian Shipping on the advice of Freight Advisory Committees which include representatives of Route Agents, country craft owners and shippers.

(c) I have no doubt that commercial interests represented on Freight Advisory Committees make due allowance for the factors mentioned by the Honourable Member when making their recommendations regarding freight rates.

(d) As already explained in the Press note of the 3rd September 1944, the restrictions imposed under the Scheme are calculated to bring about greater utilisation of countrycraft and thus contribute to stabilised employment of country craft crews.

(e), (g), (i) and (j). The question whether Government should undertake or subsidise the construction of new country craft was considered and dropped, as it was inadvisable for Government to embark on new construction until the results of organising the existing fleet clearly demonstrated the need for augmenting it. Assistance was however rendered to private enterprise by recommending release of timber and other materials necessary to construct and repair craft required to maintain and increase country craft capacity.

(f) The information available is not complete. About 360 craft are reported to have been built during the period September 1942, to December 1944, at various places on the west coast.

(h) Government have no information.

(k) It is considered impracticable to utilise tugs for towing country craft in the open sea and the suggestion would, in any case, be difficult to adopt for want of tugs which are in short supply.

(l) The Report of the Sorley Committee, a press note on which was published in November 1942, contains information regarding country craft transport as it stood at the time of the committee's report. Since January 1943, when the Country Craft Organisation was set up in pursuance of the recommendations of that committee, periodical reports on country craft have been received by Government and information of interest to the public which can be released with due regard to security has been published from time to time through press notes and articles in *Indian Information*.

(m) The control measures that are now in force or a modified form of them will probably be required for the duration of the War.

Mr. Muhammad Nauman: With reference to part (f), may I know if these are done through contractors and if any price was stipulated or tenders were called for?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: No, Sir. I have no information. These orders were placed by countrycraft owners privately with countrycraft builders.

Mr. Muhammad Azhar Ali: Are Government aware that the U. P. forests have been very much depleted because of the timber export, and where is the timber to be provided from in future?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: The subject of forests is not within my Department.

INSPECTORS OF POST OFFICES SELECTED FOR SIND AND BALUCHISTAN POSTAL CIRCLE

†264. ***Seth Yusuf Abdoola Haroon:** (a) Will the Secretary for Posts and Air please state the number of Inspectors of Post Offices selected for the Sind and Baluchistan Circle as a result of the examination held in August, 1944?

(b) What is the number of Muslims selected in the said examination?

(c) If reply to (b) is in the negative, what are the reasons for not selecting a Muslim having maximum marks amongst the candidates who could not qualify by a negligible margin?

Sir Gurunath Bewoor: (a) Three.

(b) Nil.

(c) Only those officials who obtain the minimum qualifying marks in the written examination are interviewed by the Selection Board. Those who fail to so qualify are not interviewed.

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

DISREGARD OF COMMUNAL RATIO ORDERS IN CLERICAL CADRE IN GENERAL POST OFFICE, KARACHI

†265. *Seth Yusuf Abdoola Haroon: (a) Will the Secretary for Posts and Air please state whether it is a fact that orders for maintaining communal ratio in the clerical cadre appertaining to minority community have been disregarded in the General Post Office, Karachi recruiting unit, in the past two years?

(b) What is the number of reserved vacancies for Muslims which were treated as unreserved in the said recruiting unit during the years 1942-43 and 1943-44?

(c) Are Government prepared to investigate the matter?

(d) Are Government aware that this is directly due to the fact that no Muslims are allowed to work in the administrative branches of the Post Office?

Sir Gurunath Bewoor: (a) No. The orders regarding communal reservation have been strictly followed but Muslim candidates have not been forthcoming to take up the full quota reserved for them in spite of the varied and strenuous efforts made by the local authorities to secure them.

(b) 33 for the two calendar years 1942 and 1943 taken together and 44 for the three calendar years 1942, 1943 and 1944 taken together. All were temporary appointments.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) The Honourable Member is, I am afraid, incorrect both in his assumption and his inference. Four Muslims are actually working in the administrative branches of the Karachi General Post Office.

MUSLIM CLERKS IN STAFF AND ESTABLISHMENT SECTION OF THE OFFICE OF DIVISIONAL ENGINEER TELEGRAPHS, KARACHI

†266. *Seth Yusuf Abdoola Haroon: (a) Will the Secretary for Posts and Air please state the number of Muslim clerks working in the Staff and Establishment Section of the office of the Divisional Engineer Telegraphs, Karachi?

(b) Is it a fact that Muslim recruits in the said unit are discouraged by the non-Muslim Head Clerks?

(c) Is it a fact that in the said unit even temporary Hindu Clerks have been allowed to work in the Staff and Establishment Branches in preference to Muslims?

(d) If replies to (b) and (c) are in the affirmative, what steps do Government propose to remove this anomaly and to safeguard the interests of the Muslim subordinates?

Sir Gurunath Bewoor: (a) One.

(b) and (c). No.

(d) Does not arise.

WIRELESS LICENCE INSPECTORS IN SIND AND BALUCHISTAN POSTAL CIRCLE

†267. *Seth Yusuf Abdoola Haroon: (a) Will the Secretary for Posts and Air please state the number of posts of Wireless Licence Inspectors in the Sind and Baluchistan Circle?

(b) How many of these appointments are held by Muslims?

(c) If the reply to (b) is in the negative, are Government prepared to give due share to Muslims in these appointments?

Sir Gurunath Bewoor: (a) Three.

(b) None.

(c) A Muslim who held one of these posts resigned recently. Government are enquiring into the matter.

HEAD OF THE SIND AND BALUCHISTAN POSTAL CIRCLE AND HIS ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (STAFF BRANCH)

†268. *Seth Yusuf Abdoola Haroon: (a) Will the Secretary for Posts and Air please state whether the Head of the Sind and Baluchistan Postal Circle and his Assistant Director, in charge of Staff Branch, are both Hindus?

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

(b) Will Government consider the advisability of appointing a permanent Muslim Superintendent of Post Offices as Assistant Director, in charge of staff and establishment?

Sir Gurnath Bewoor: (a) Yes.

(b) No. Postings are made in accordance with the interests of service irrespective of the community to which the officer posted belongs.

CERTAIN APPOINTMENTS IN LOWEST SELECTION GRADE, SIND AND BALUCHISTAN POSTAL CIRCLE

†269. ***Seth Yusuf Abdoola Haroon:** (a) Will the Secretary for Posts and Air please state the number of appointments in the Lowest Selection Grade in the Sind and Baluchistan Circle excluding the appointments of Inspectors of Post Offices and Head Clerks to the Superintendent of Post Offices and R. M. S.?

(b) What is the number of appointments of Grade B Postmasters in the said Circle?

(c) How many posts under (a) and (b) above are held by (i) Muslims and (ii) Non-Muslims?

(d) Are Government prepared to give adequate share to Muslims in these appointments?

Sir Gurnath Bewoor: (a) Forty.

(b) Five.

(c) Six Muslims and 34 Non-Muslims in the Lower Selection Grade and, two Muslims and three Non-Muslims in Grade 'B' Postmasters.

(d) Promotions to these appointments are made by seniority. The question does not therefore arise.

UNCLEANLINESS IN RAILWAY COMPARTMENTS

270. ***Mr. K. S. Gupta:** (a) Will the Honourable the Railway Member please state whether there is any report presented by Lord Munster to the Government of India? If so, would it be placed on the table?

(b) Is it a fact that in his report he referred to the unclean state of Railway compartments in this country? If so, what is the action taken or proposed to be taken by the Government of India to keep the Railway compartments clean? If none, why?

(c) Is it not a fact that at a Press Conference at New Delhi Mr. G. E. Cuffe, President, Indian Railways Conference Association, referred to this aspect and said that the reason for this uncleanliness was shortage of sweepers?

(d) Is it not the duty of the Railway authorities to keep the compartments clean and tidy?

(e) Is the shortage of sweepers referred to in (c) due to non-availability of sweepers or insufficient and unattractive remuneration?

(f) Are the Government of India aware of the fact that a small number of sweepers available in certain big stations are not available for service to the passengers as they are mostly used by the Station Staff as domestic servants? Do Government propose to put a stop to such a practice?

(g) Does the Honourable Member know that even if a sweeper is available in certain stations, he would not attend to the needs of third class passengers, but only looks to the comforts of First and Second Class passengers? Are there any special instructions to that effect?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: (a) I am not aware of Lord Munster having submitted a report to the Government of India.

(b) In a report submitted to His Majesty's Government Lord Munster referred to complaints he had received directed against the dirtiness of accommodation, Railways are intensifying their efforts to maintain an adequate standard of cleanliness.

(c) It is correct that Mr. Cuffe, President of the Indian Railway Conference Association, referred to this matter at a Press Conference and stated that amongst other difficulties with which Railways were faced were those of

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

obtaining sweepers and the failure of passengers to co-operate by making room for the railway carriage sweepers to perform their duties *en route*.

(d) Yes. But it is also the duty of the public to co-operate in this matter.

(e) I understand the demand exceeds the available supply.

(f) No. I shall be glad if the Honourable Member will specify the stations he has in mind so that action may be taken.

(g) No.

ANIMALS SENT OUT FROM RAILWAY STATIONS IN THE PUNJAB

†271. ***Mr. R. R. Gupta:** (a) Will the Honourable Member for Railways be pleased to state the number of animals sent out of the stations served by the North Western Railway and Bombay, Baroda and Central India Railway operating in the Province of the Punjab between the 30th July and the 31st December, 1944?

(b) Will the Honourable Member be pleased to state the number of animals sent out from Kanana Station of the Bikaner State Railway and Bawal station of the Bombay, Baroda and Central India Railway between the 30th July and the 31st December, 1944?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: (a) and (b). Government have no information and I am not prepared to attempt its collection as this would involve the expenditure of a great deal of time and labour that would be entirely incommensurate with the value of the results obtained. If the Honourable Member will be good enough to indicate the purpose for which he requires the information, I will endeavour to elucidate the matter.

SURVEY OF ACTUAL AND POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENTS OF INDUSTRIES

†272. ***Mr. R. R. Gupta:** Will the Honourable the Supply Member be pleased to state if Government do not propose to place immediately on the cessation of hostilities before the public a survey of the actual and potential developments of industries in this country in the light of the experience gained by the Department in the course of their production and purchase drive as also the data collected by them in these behalf? If such a proposal is not acceptable to Government, will he state their views in regard to it?

The Honourable Dewan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar: Government have every intention of collecting and placing before the public information of the kind referred to as soon as possible after the termination of hostilities. Some data have been collected already and further information is in the process of collection by the various departments of the Government of India concerned with the development of Industry as well as by Provincial Governments.

IMPORTED PLANT AND MACHINERY FOR OPEN-CUT WORKING IN COAL MINES

273. ***Mr. K. C. Neogy:** With reference to the steps that are said to have been employed for the operation of certain imported plant and machinery for open-cut working in the coal mines, will the Honourable the Supply Member be pleased to indicate:

(i) the cost of plant and machinery so far secured for the purpose;

(ii) the coal mines where the above plant and machinery have been employed so far and the improvement in the raisings achieved thereby;

(iii) the future programme of extension of these methods to other areas; and

(iv) the methods of financing the scheme and their incidence upon Government funds and the funds of the collieries concerned, respectively?

The Honourable Dewan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar: (i) The Honourable Member's attention is invited to the reply given to part (c) of Question No. 27 in this House on 8th February 1945.

(ii) A portion only of the open cut coal mining equipment ordered has arrived in this country and it has been put to use at the following collieries:

(a) Bokaro; (b) Tetelmari; (c) Sirka; (d) Jaunkunder; (e) Selected Jambad; and (f) Pure Jambad.

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

The increase in output achieved so far is 55,000 tons per month. This increase relates only to three of the above six collieries, as at two others the plant has only just arrived and at the remaining one it is being used, for the present, only for the removal of overburden.

(iii) The further programme is under consideration.

(iv) The cost of the entire machinery has been borne by Government who also propose to bear all expenditure relating to the mining operations up to and including delivery of coal into wagons, in return for certain payments and facilities to be given by the owners in connection with the work undertaken by Government. No further information can be disclosed at this stage as such disclosure may prejudice the negotiations between Government and the colliery owners, which are still in progress.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: May I know whether in the opinion of the Honourable Member the experiment can be said to have been a success?

The Honourable Dewan Bahadur Sir. A. Ramaswami Mudaliar: It has just begun and I do not venture to express any opinion at this early stage.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: As regards the answer to part (iv) of the question, do I take it that although the collieries concerned will be at liberty to get the full value of the coal according to the prices fixed by Government, a portion of the costs involved in the employment of this particular method may have to be borne by Government ultimately?

The Honourable Dewan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar: No, Sir. I trust that the whole of the cost involved will be borne by the collieries concerned.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: That is what I wanted to be clear about.

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

Mr. M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar: May I know if no arrangement. . . .

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

ESTABLISHMENT OF SYNTHETIC FERTILISER INDUSTRY

†274. ***Mr. R. R. Gupta:** (a) Will the Honourable the Supply Member be pleased to state what decision has been arrived at by the Government of India on the report of the mission appointed to investigate the problems regarding establishment of a Synthetic Fertiliser Industry in India?

(b) Have Government endeavoured to interest private enterprise in this industry and, if so, with what result?

(c) Will the Honourable Member consider the advisability of having the industry referred to above spread over in more than one place in India?

(d) Is the Honourable Member aware that, in view of the restricted supply of coal in India, it will not be advisable to develop this industry in such areas where ultimately it can be switched on to work on Hydro-Electric lines?

The Honourable Dewan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar: (a) and (c). The attention of the Honourable Member is invited to the Press Note dated the 20th January 1945, on the subject which has been published.

(b) I would refer the Honourable Member to the reply given on the 14th November 1944, during the last Session, to part (d) of Starred question No. 341 by the Honourable Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari. As I have stated before, this scheme for the production of 350,000 tons of sulphate of ammonia under State-ownership and State-control is an urgent short term measure for the supply of a substantial quantity of artificial fertiliser to cultivators at cheap rates, and it is the intention of Government to run the factory on a "no profit no loss" basis.

(d) The plant recommended by the Mission is self contained and the method they considered to be the most economical is that employing water-gas made from coke to produce the necessary ammonia, followed by conversion to sulphate by the gypsum or anhydrite process. The Technical Mission were, in fact, of opinion that should power be available from a hydro-electric source, there would be no overall saving of coal, but rather the reverse, by generating power inside the factory.

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

SCHEME FOR CONVERTING WAR INDUSTRIES INTO CONSUMERS INDUSTRIES

†275. ***Mr. R. R. Gupta:** (a) Will the Honourable the Supply Member be pleased to state whether Government have prepared any such scheme by which the industries started during war days for war supplies may be converted into the manufactures of consumers' goods after the war?

(b) Will the Honourable Member lay a statement before the House showing all such industries and Government's proposals for their conversion into consumers industries?

(c) What is the number of such factories which have been developed during war days for the manufacture of only war-materials? How many of them can be converted for manufacture of consumers goods? How many of them can have no alternative production and will have to be closed down after the war? What is the aggregate amount of capital involved in the same? What is the total strength of labour working in such factories?

(d) Will the Honourable Member please state if there is any scheme for compensating such industries which have to be closed down after the war?

(e) If the answer to the above is in the affirmative, what are those proposals for compensation? Are Government still following the policy of giving preference in matters of its purchases by placing orders with the industries referred to above which have been developed at the instance of the Supply Department? Can the articles, which are purchased from them, be imported in India due to easy shipment conditions now?

The Honourable Dewan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar: (a) The Honourable Member will realise that this raises issues of far-reaching importance which cannot suitably be dealt with in answer to a question. I need hardly add that these and kindred problems are now under examination.

(b) It is not possible until this examination has proceeded further to give an exhaustive list of such industries.

(c) Does not arise in view of the answer to parts (a) and (b).

(d) No. If any special case arises calling for action, the question of compensation, if any, will be decided on its merits, with reference to the nature of the contracts entered into.

(e) The first part of this question does not arise. The answer to the second part of the question is in the affirmative. As regards the third part of the question, only a small proportion of the stores purchased in India could be readily imported under present conditions.

POLICY *RE* DEVELOPMENT OF MECHANICAL TOOLS PRODUCTION

†276. ***Mr. R. R. Gupta:** (a) Will the Honourable the Supply Member be pleased to state whether Government are still pursuing the same policy which they outlined for development of mechanical tools' production in India or is there any change in their attitude?

(b) If there be a change in the attitude, in what respect it is so?

The Honourable Dewan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar: (a) There has been no change in Government's policy for fostering an indigenous machine tool industry. Increased assistance is being afforded to the industry which receives the help and advice of Machine Tool Engineering Advisers located in the Calcutta, Bombay and Lahore areas; Government assistance in obtaining raw materials at controlled rates; assistance in procuring supplies of equipment such as Cutting Tools, Measuring instruments, etc., the use of the services of Government's inspection staff at very nominal rates and assistance in getting transport priorities, power and building materials.

(b) Does not arise.

IMPORTED LOCOMOTIVES

277. ***Mr. Amarendra Nath Chattopadhyaya:** (a) Will the Honourable the Railway Member be pleased to state the number of locomotive engines imported into India during 1944 and from which countries and at what cost?

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

(b) How many old engines were substituted by the new imported locomotives and on which lines are they being used?

(c) Were the orders placed after consultation with experts? If so, who were the experts? Were these orders placed after consideration of tenders or they were open orders?

(d) Were there any efforts made to manufacture or start manufacturing locomotives in India during these five years of war by the Government of India or by the Railway Board? If not, is it not possible to start manufacturing now? Will the Honourable Member be pleased to make a statement on the manufacture of locomotives and wagons in India?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: (a) A statement showing the information required is laid on the table of the House.

(b) The locomotives now being imported will eventually replace overage locomotives, but due to the large increase in traffic requirements, overage locomotives are not being withdrawn from service for the present. New broad-gauge locomotives will be distributed among all major Railways. New metre-gauge locomotives are at present in use on the Bengal and Assam Railway. They will, however, be utilised on other Railways if necessity arises.

(c) The answer is in the affirmative. Messrs. Rendell, Palmer and Tritton and other Specialist Railway Officers in India were consulted before the orders were placed. The orders were placed in consultation with the Supply authorities of the United Nations, who allotted manufacturing capacity after considering the requirements of all other bases and fronts. The ordinary peacetime procedure of calling for tenders could not, of course, be followed in the circumstances.

(d) I refer the Honourable Member to my replies to questions No. 11 and No. 17 asked on February 8, 1945. I shall be making a further statement on the subject in the course of my speech on the Railway Budget later in the day.

Statement giving the number of locomotives put into service during 1944 received against the orders placed by the Railway Board, their country of origin and estimated cost

Type of locomotives	Country of origin	Put into service during 1944	Estimated cost per erected locomotive in India (in thousands)
<i>Broad Gauge</i>		No.	
X-Dominion	Canada.	142	3,29
Consolidation	U. S. A.	52	2,96
Electric Diesel	U. S. A.	1	2,30
X-Dominion	U. S. A.	3	3,49
X-Eagles	U. S. A.	40	4,20
		Total	382
<i>Metre Gauge</i>			
Mac Arthurs	U. S. A.	286	2,34

NEW SCALES OF PAY FOR GUARDS, ETC., ON EAST INDIAN RAILWAY

278. ***Mr. Amarendra Nath Chattopadhyaya:** (a) Will the Honourable the Railway Member be pleased to state if the new scale of pay of Guards Grade I and Grade II, Assistant Station Masters, Office clerks, Commercial clerks, Signallers, Numbertakers and Ticket Examiners of the East Indian Railway is less than the old and co-ordinated scale of pay of the aforesaid staff?

(b) If so, is it not a fact that the present scale of pay including Dearness Allowance and cheap rations is not sufficient to satisfy the needs of the

staff under the present circumstances? Will the Honourable Member consider the advisability of restoring the old or the co-ordinated scale?

(c) Is it not a fact that Guards Grade I and Grade II do the same work and work daily the same number of hours? If so, why are they not paid equal pay?

(d) What are the minimum qualifications for a Guard's post in either Grade?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: (a) Yes, with a few exceptions.

(b) Government's policy is to meet the present rise in the cost of living by granting relief in cash and in kind, the scale of relief being adjusted from time to time. They do not consider the present time, when conditions are unstable due to the war, to be opportune for undertaking a revision of scales of pay.

(c) Guards, Grades I and II, do not necessarily have the same duties or work for the same number of hours. Their classification into grades, with different scales of pay, is based generally on the classification of trains, the higher grade Guards being normally employed on main line important services, while Grade II Guards are employed mainly on Goods and Branch line passenger trains.

(d) Direct recruits to Grade I are required to have passed the Cambridge School Certificate Examination or possess a University degree, while the minimum qualifications in the case of candidates for Grade II is the Matriculation Certificate or its equivalent.

Mr. Muhammad Nauman: In reply to part (a) of the question, the Honourable Member has said, "Yes, with a few exceptions". May I know what is in the mind of the Honourable Member with regard to these exceptions, because to the best of my information on the E. I. R. the grade of A class European and Anglo-Indian Guards, which was Rs. 250—550, has now been reduced to Rs. 100—250.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: What I said was "with a few exceptions". The exceptions are that some of the revised scales start or terminate at a lower level.

Mr. Muhammad Nauman: The question here is 'is it not lower than what it used to be before'? That is the question which my Honourable friend has put.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: My answer is, "Yes, with a few exceptions".

Mr. Muhammad Nauman: Does the Honourable Member propose to bring in the old scales in the circumstances which are prevailing at present?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: I have answered that in reply to part (b) of the question.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: If it is not possible to revise their salaries, will the Honourable Member, in view of the conditions which exist at present, give them more dearness allowance?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: The question of dearness allowance is constantly under consideration.

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

NON-RECOGNITION OF WAR SERVICE IN POSTS AND AIR DEPARTMENT

†279. ***Sardar Sant Singh:** Will the Secretary for Posts and Air please state if it is a fact that his Department does not recognise war services of its employees? If the reply be in the negative, will the Department please give the details of their employees whose services have so far been rewarded by special promotions?

Sir Gurnath Bewoor: The Department does recognise war services but employees are not rewarded by special promotion on the ground that they have served in the Field. Promotions in the different grades are governed by Departmental rules.

†280* and 281*.

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

†These questions were postponed to be answered on the 23rd February, 1945.

PROPAGANDA ABOUT INDIA CARRIED ON IN AMERICA BY BRITISH AND INDIAN GOVERNMENTS

282. *Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: (a) Will the Foreign Secretary be pleased to state if there is a propaganda carried on in America by the British India Government through the Agent General for India in America in regard to India?

(b) Is it a fact, as stated in the Indian Press that the British Government spends over Rs. 4 crores per year and the Indian Government spends rupees twenty-six lakhs a year over this propaganda?

(c) If the answer to (a) and (b) be in affirmative, will the Honourable Member be pleased to state under whose authority is such false propaganda being carried on?

(d) If the answer to the above two parts be in the negative, will the Honourable Member be pleased to explain why such information is being published, and what steps did Government take to ascertain the truth?

Sir Olaf Caroe: (a) Yes, the Agent General does conduct publicity in the United States of America.

(b) In reply to the first part I am unable to say what the expenditure of His Majesty's Government on publicity in America is. The information given by the Honourable Member in the second part is not correct.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) I am unable to say why an incorrect statement was published in the press. In so far as the Government of India are concerned, they have ample opportunities for knowing the truth regarding this matter in the United States of America.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: With reference to the Honourable Member's reply to part (b) of the question, may I know what is the correct information?

The Honourable Sir Sultan Ahmed: My Honourable friend is wrong by twenty-one lakhs and a half.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: If the propaganda is not being made adversely to India, may I know whether it is being made in favour of India? If so, what is that?

Sir Olaf Caroe: That is rather an involved question. I am quite sure that no official organisation is making propaganda against India.

Mr. M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar: What is the nature of the propaganda which is being carried on there?

Sir Olaf Caroe: I cannot give a lecture on the nature of the whole system of publicity.

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

REVISION OF DEARNESS ALLOWANCE OF POSTMEN AND LOWER GRADE STAFF

283. *Mr. G. Banglah Naidu: (a) Will the Secretary for Posts and Air please state whether the Dearness Allowance said to have been revised for the fourth time early last year was with reference to the rise in the cost of living index?

(b) Are Government prepared to accept the demand of the Postmen and lower grade staff to grant Dearness Allowance at the rate of Rs. 1-8-0 for every five points rise in the cost of the living index as published from time to time by the Provincial Government?

(c) In the alternative, will Government consider the advisability of supplying to the employees necessities of life at the rates which prevailed prior to September 1939?

Sir Gurnath Bewoor: (a) The rates were reviewed in the light of the general course of prices and not with reference to any particular price index or cost of living index. The reasons for this are that the rise in the cost of living has not been uniform throughout India, and reliable cost of living indices are available only for a relatively small part of the country.

(b) No. The reasons are as explained in reply to (a) above.

(c) No. Government have been taking measures from time to time to afford necessary relief to their employees and the whole position is again at present under review.

CERTAIN MEMORANDUM ADDRESSED TO DIRECTOR GENERAL, POSTS AND TELEGRAPHS

284. *Mr. G. Rangiah Naidu: (a) Will the Secretary for Posts and Air please state whether the Director General, Posts and Telegraphs, to whom a memorandum was addressed on the 4th February, 1942, made the only proposal to increase the outstation allowance for Railway Mail Service as a result of his consideration of the suggestions in the Memorandum?

(b) If there were also other proposals, what were they, and why were they not considered by Government?

Sir Gurunath Bewoor: (a) The Honourable Member is presumably referring to the memorandum from the postmen and lower grade staff of the Madras Circle, which was placed before the Director-General, Posts and Telegraphs, when he visited Madras on the 4th February 1942. If so, I would refer the Honourable Member to the reply given to part (a) of his starred question No. 326 on 14th November 1944.

(b) The other proposals contained in the memorandum related to a variety of subjects. These were duly considered and disposed of by the Director General to whom the memorandum was addressed.

INADEQUATE STRENGTH OF POSTMEN AND LOWER GRADE STAFF

285. *Mr. G. Rangiah Naidu: (a) With reference to the answer to starred question No. 329, dated the 14th November, 1944, that the increase in the ministerial staff above the rank of Postman was on account of increased business, will the Secretary for Posts and Air please state whether the increased business entails increased work on the Postmen and lower grade staff also?

(b) What was the strength of the lower grade staff in 1925 and what is their present strength in the Madras Circle? Will Government please take necessary steps to augment this strength?

Sir Gurunath Bewoor: (a) Yes, but not in all cases nor in the same proportion.

(b) The strength of the lower grade staff (including Postmen) in 1925 was 9,677 and in October 1944 it was about 8,656, but I must explain that the decrease is due to a big reduction of over 1,500 in the number of runners who are included in Lower Grade Staff as a result of numerous Runners' Lines having been replaced by motor mail services. There has actually been an increase of about ten per cent. in the number of Postmen and other inferior servants excluding Runners. The staff of all classes and categories is increased from time to time as and when justified.

Prof. N. G. Ranga: How does it compare with the increased amount of work that is being carried on by these people?

Sir Gurunath Bewoor: I mentioned that the staff of all categories and classes is increased from time to time as and when justified. There are certain standards laid down in the Department according to which as the work increases the staff is increased.

ALLOWANCES PAID TO CLERKS BUT NOT TO POSTMEN AND LOWER GRADE STAFF IN MADRAS POSTAL CIRCLE

286. *Mr. G. Rangiah Naidu: (a) With reference to the answer to starred question No. 330, dated the 14th November, 1944, that such allowances as compensatory allowance, etc., are admissible to Postmen and lower grade staff, will the Secretary for Posts and Air please state the places in the Madras Circle and the rate at which the allowance is paid to clerks but not paid to Postmen and lower grade staff?

(b) What are the places in the Madras Circle and the rate at which the allowance is paid both to clerks and Postmen and lower grade staff, separately?

(c) If the answer to the above reveals invidious distinction between the clerks and the Postmen and the lower grade staff, will Government take necessary steps to remedy the anomaly?

Sir Gurunath Bewoor: (a) and (b). The information asked for by the Honourable Member is given in Appendix 10 of the Manual of Appointments and Allowances of Officers of the Indian Posts and Telegraphs Department (2nd Edition), a copy of which is available in the Library of the House.

(c) These allowances are sanctioned on the merits of each case with reference to the scales of pay, conditions of service, and other relevant factors in respect of each class of employee and the question of invidious distinction or anomaly does not therefore arise.

Prof. N. G. Ranga: Are efforts made to review the conditions under which the lower grade staff and postmen are employed and also whether the various allowances are given or given at a lower rate?

Sir Gurunath Bewoor: I mentioned that these allowances are sanctioned on the merits of each case with reference to the scales of pay, conditions of service, and other relevant factors.

Prof. N. G. Ranga: In regard to those relevant factors and conditions of service, have any efforts been made to review the conditions of service under which these men are being employed because it is a universal fact that they have been paid extremely low salaries.

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

Prof. N. G. Ranga: Has any effort been made to review the conditions under which these lower paid officials are employed?

Sir Gurunath Bewoor: Reviews are always made, whenever representations are received.

LEAVE RESERVE CLERKS IN POSTAL DEPARTMENT

287. *Mr. G. Rangiah Naidu: (a) Will the Secretary for Posts and Air please state whether there is a category of leave reserve clerks in the Postal Department? If, so, what is their percentage to the total strength of permanent clerks?

(b) How are they distributed to each office or are they stationed at central places and deputed to act for incumbents proceeding on leave?

(c) Will the Honourable Member consider the advisability of creating a category of leave reserve for Postmen and lower grade staff?

Sir Gurunath Bewoor: (a) The reply to the first part is in the affirmative. The percentage varies in different branches of the department.

(b) The arrangement is as stated in the latter part of the question.

(c) No; as substitutes are employed when such officials proceed on leave.

FIXATION OF BASIC PAY DEMANDED BY ALL-INDIA POSTMEN AND LOWER GRADE STAFF

†288. *Mr. G. Rangiah Naidu: With reference to the answer to starred question No. 333, dated the 14th November, 1944, that there is no difference in the nature of duties performed by the old and the new entrants, to Postal Department, does the Secretary for Posts and Air propose to abolish new scales of pay introduced in 1931 and fix the basic pay as demanded by the All-India Postmen and lower grade staff?

Sir Gurunath Bewoor: No, Sir.

NEGOTIATIONS FOR CONFERMENT OF UNITED STATES CITIZENSHIP ON INDIANS

289. *Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari: Will the Foreign Secretary please state:

(a) at what stage the negotiations for conferment of United States Citizenship on Indians now are; and

(b) whether no progress has been made in the matter due to the indifference of the Indian Agent-General in the United States of America?

Sir Olaf Caroe: (a) The attention of the Honourable Member is invited to the reply given by me on the 8th February 1945, to question No. 3 tabled by Sardar Mangal Singh.

† Answer to this question laid on the table, the questioner having exhausted his quota.

(b) The Government of India deny this suggestion. On the contrary the Agent-General has continued to represent with marked initiative and in unmistakable terms the importance as the Government of India see it of early legislation to enable Indians to acquire citizenship rights in, and rights of entry into the United States.

Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari: May I ask the Honourable Member if he remembers, in answer to the question he referred me to, he spoke of the inclinations of the Agent General. Are the inclinations favourable to press the claims of Indians generally?

Sir Olaf Caroe: I could not hear what the Honourable Member said.

Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari: The Honourable Member said, in reply to the question he referred me to, something about the inclinations of the Agent General. Are those inclinations favourable to pressing the claims of Indians generally?

Sir Olaf Caroe: Whose inclinations?

Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari: I think I heard him say something about the Agent General's inclinations?

Sir Olaf Caroe: Of course the inclinations are favourable. Why should they not be?

Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari: I asked a question. I do not expect a question in return as a reply.

UNSTARRED QUESTION AND ANSWER.

DISAPPEARANCE OF A POSTAL CASH BAG IN PESHAWAR

7. Sardar Sant Singh: Will the Secretary for Posts and Air please state if a postal cash bag containing Rs. 1,500 disappeared in Peshawar? If so, which official was responsible for it?

Sir Gurunath Bewoor: The reply to the first part is in the affirmative. As regards the latter part, investigations by the Police were unsuccessful. Departmental investigations are now going on with a view to fix responsibility for the loss.

SHORT NOTICE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

DEARNESS ALLOWANCE TO OFFICIALS OF THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

Mr. T. S. Avinashilingam Chettiar: Will the Honourable the Home Member please state:

(a) whether there are any proposals with the Government of India to increase or give dearness allowance to the various cadres of the officials in the Government of India;

(b) whether any dearness allowances have been recommended to officials receiving over Rs. 1,000;

(c) if so, at what rate; and

(d) to whom else and at what rate fresh allowances have been recommended?

The Honourable Sir Francis Mudie: (a) to (d). Certain proposals for increasing the war allowance and dearness allowance are under consideration of Government. I regret that I am at present not in a position to give any information regarding the nature of these proposals.

Prof. N. G. Ranga: Why, Sir?

Mr. T. S. Avinashilingam Chettiar: May I know when the Government expect to make them public?

The Honourable Sir Francis Mudie: When a decision is reached.

Mr. T. S. Avinashilingam Chettiar: Will Government take the decision of this House before they come to their conclusions?

The Honourable Sir Francis Mudie: No.

Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad: Will the Standing Finance Committee be consulted?

The Honourable Sir Francis Mudie: It is not for me to say so!

Prof. N. G. Ranga: Will the Honourable Member repeat his answer?

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Which answer?

Prof. N. G. Ranga: His answer to Dr. Zia Uddin Ahmad's question.

The Honourable Sir Francis Mudie: It is not for me to say.

Mr. T. S. Avinashilingam Chettiar: May I know whether it is the intention that the Executive Councillors should also get an extra allowance under these proposals?

The Honourable Sir Francis Mudie: I am not in a position to give any information as regards the proposals.

WAR ALLOWANCE TO OFFICERS UNDER CONTROL OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE

Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari: Will the Honourable the Home Member please state:

(a) whether any recommendations have been proposed to be made to the Secretary of State in regard to the grant of war allowances to officers under the control drawing over Rs. 1,000 per mensem;

(b) if the answer to the above is in the affirmative, how it will affect similar officers under the control of the Governor General in Council;

(c) the terms on which these allowances will be granted;

(d) whether any complementary proposals are being considered in regard to officials drawing Rs. 1,000 and below in supersession of the proposals placed before the Standing Finance Committee on the 31st October, 1944; if so, what they are;

(e) whether any change is proposed as a consequence in the existing dearness allowances, and

(f) whether it is proposed to place the proposals before the Standing Finance Committee for its concurrence; if not, why not?

The Honourable Sir Francis Mudie: (a) to (f). I would refer the Honourable Member to the answer I have just given to the previous short notice question by Mr. T. S. Avinashilingam Chettiar.

Mr. Muhammad Nauman: What extraordinary objection is there in making the proposals known to us? Is there any secret behind them? Is there any design underlying these proposals which Government is shy of disclosing at this stage?

The Honourable Sir Francis Mudie: The only reason is that the proposals are not yet ready.

Mr. Muhammad Nauman: There are some proposals in the mind of the Honourable Member. Why is he shy of disclosing them to the House?

Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari: With reference to part (d) of the question, may I ask the Honourable Member whether the file in regard to these proposals was started immediately after the 31st October, 1944, after sanction was given by the Standing Finance Committee to the grant of war allowance to people drawing Rs. 1,000 and below?

The Honourable Sir Francis Mudie: I do not remember what part (d) is.

Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari: Part (d) is before the Honourable Member.

The Honourable Sir Francis Mudie: I would refer the Honourable Member to the answer I have already given.

Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari: The answer does not cover my question whether the file was started immediately after the war allowance sanctioned by the Standing Finance Committee on the 31st October, 1944, to officers drawing Rs. 1,000 and below.

The Honourable Sir Francis Mudie: I do not remember when the file started.

Sir Muhammad Yamin Khan: When does the Honourable Member think that his proposals will be ready?

Mr. N. M. Joshi: After the Assembly Session is over.

The Honourable Sir Francis Mudie: No, they will be ready before the Assembly is over.

Mr. T. S. Avinashilingam Chettiar: May I know whether any provision has been made in the Budget for these allowances?

The Honourable Sir Francis Mudie: No provision has been made.

Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari: May I ask how the Honourable Member is able to reconcile the answer given by him to the short notice question today with the answer which he gave yesterday when an adjournment motion was sought to be moved?

The Honourable Sir Francis Mudie: The position is the same.

Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari: In view of the Honourable Member's reply to the short notice question today is not his acceptance of these short notice questions a mere farce?

Prof. N. G. Ranga: May I know whether the Finance Member was consulted to see if he agreed with these proposals?

(No answer was given.)

AMENDMENT TO COORG MOTOR VEHICLES RULES:

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall (Member for Railways and War Transport): Sir, I lay on the table a copy of the Notification No. 2/RF-243/44, dated the 3rd January, 1945, relating to an amendment of the Coorg Motor Vehicles Rules, 1940, under sub-section (3) of section 133 of the Indian Motor Vehicles Act, 1939.

THE CHIEF COMMISSIONER OF COORG

NOTIFICATION

No. 2/R.F. 243/44, dated Mercara, the 3rd January, 1945

In exercise of the powers conferred by section 41 of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1939 (IV of 1939), and the notification of the Government of India, Department of Communication No. B. 60, dated the 28th June 1939, the Chief Commissioner is hereby pleased to make the following amendments to the Coorg Motor Vehicles Rules, 1940, issued with his notification No. R.F. 43/121-39, dated the 26th March 1940 :—

Amendment.

(1) In Rule 30(a) after the words "Provincial Government" add the following :—

"A certificate of fitness issued by a competent authority in the Province of Madras shall be deemed to be a certificate of fitness granted under this Rule."

(2) In Rule 30(g) delete the words "Either" and "Madras or".

2. The amendment hereby made shall be deemed to have been made to have come into force on and from the 1st January, 1945.

K. CHENGAPPA.

Chief Commissioner.

RAILWAY BUDGET FOR 1945-46

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall (Member for Railways and War Transport): Sir, the figures which I am about to disclose in presenting the Railway Budget for 1945-46 are, judged by pre-war figures, phenomenal; but it is of still greater importance that they reflect the success of the railways in performing the task laid upon them.

The past year

2. Assisted by the welcome absence of serious natural disasters in the shape of floods and cyclones or man-made hindrances to movements, performance has shown a satisfactory improvement. The Bombay explosion caused a small amount of damage to the railways and dislocated traffic in the Bombay area for some considerable time but this and a series of minor floods, unlike the misfortunes of the two previous years, had no major effect upon the carrying or earning powers of the railways. In the first 8 months of the year the railways loaded $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent more wagons and carried nearly 2,000,000 tons more goods than in the same period of the previous year. Coaching traffic, judged by earnings, showed a remarkable increase of some 30 per cent, spread over all railways. The heaviest regional increase in goods traffic has, of course, been on the lines of communications to the Burma front where rolling stock was concentrated and where we had the invaluable assistance of our American friends over a large section of the metre gauge; but other railways less fortunately placed have also shown creditable increases. Continuous efforts are

being made to speed up traffic and expedite the turn round of wagons but several factors have tended to offset further improvements such as the more stringent operation of the priority system, the longer delays at terminals resulting from war conditions and the quality of coal which in some areas particularly has led recently to frequent engine failures and consequent dislocation of traffic. Considering the increasing difficulties under which railways have been working, the statistics of operating efficiency have been fairly well maintained.

The Civil and Military load

3. The military operational demands have been met to the satisfaction of the Service Chiefs. The expansion of capacity on the Lines of Communication to Assam has been in excess and in advance of the target and over the rest of the Indian railway system military movements generally have had a high degree of priority which has enabled military programmes, with the inevitable minor hitches, to be carried through. This must be attributed not only to the good work of the Railway and Priority authorities but also to the close co-operation of the Services. A notable example of this is the work of the Panel in Calcutta which regulates not only the military lift to the front but also the civil supplies to Assam and East Bengal. The special thanks of the Railway Department are due to General Lindsell, Principal Administrative Officer, General Headquarters, and his British, Indian and American colleagues for their help and support.

On the civil side essential programmes have, on the whole, been successfully carried out, though many trade movements of low priority have been of necessity held up. The machinery established by the Priorities Branch of the War Transport Department has functioned with increasing smoothness and efficiency largely owing in the same way to the closer co-operation established with other Departments of the Government of India and with Provincial Governments. Particular mention may be made of the inter-provincial distribution of food grains and sugar in association with the Food Department; of the distribution of cotton cloth in co-operation with the Textile Commissioner and the Industries and Civil Supplies Department; and of the movement of timber, iron and steel and cement under arrangements with the Supply Department. In the case of many other major commodities, there has been progress both in distribution and in collection of raw materials combined with economy in transport by means of zoning and rationalisation. As regards foodstuffs in particular, there were local shortages of particular commodities from time to time in certain areas due to congestion of traffic but these were on a greatly reduced scale owing to the improved system of distribution and the railways can claim with satisfaction that in 1944 nobody in India went short of the necessaries of life because of failure of rail transport.

Coal supplies for the railways have been a continual source of anxiety owing to the low coal raisings. A vigorous campaign of fuel economy has been in force and one of the steps taken has been the closing of numerous stations. On one occasion the curtailment of passenger services for a short period was also necessary. Railway coal stocks are at a dangerously low figure and must be increased. The demand for wagons for coal loading for the year was on a slightly reduced scale and has been a particular cause of watchfulness by the Wagon Interchange Control. Over the year, however, all coal offered was moved. Reduced coal raisings during the later months of the year as usual afforded a temporary chance to catch up arrears of movements of other goods but with the coming of the present good coal raising season, and with heavier demands for traffic and particularly a large increase in military traffic a period of great wagon stringency is likely to ensue this spring and to last at least until substantial deliveries of wagons mature in the second half of the year.

In order to interest the public in the difficulties and achievements of the railways we are holding a Railway Exhibition at New Delhi station in the beginning of March and I hope Honourable Members will give it their hearty patronage.

[Sir Edward Benthall.]

Constructional work

4. The magnitude of the work accomplished by the Engineering Departments
 12 NOON of the railways to increase the line capacity and to supply military depots and airfields is not generally appreciated. Since the war began over 1,400 miles of military sidings have been constructed, 70 miles of permanent and 153 miles of temporary sidings for airfields, 21 miles of new single line and 400 miles of doubling or quadrupling have been completed up to the end of January 1945 and the programme is by no means finished. In addition 198 crossing stations, additional loops at 174 stations, lengthening of loop at 145 stations and remodelling of 30 large station yards have been completed. In all some 3,500 miles of track material have been arranged for (including 1,205 miles for overseas) so that in spite of the difficulties arising from shortage of materials and labour and the pressure of every day maintenance work, the engineering departments have succeeded in providing the equivalent of a good sized railway system with a speed and reliability of which, considering the circumstances, they may well be proud.

Passenger traffic

5. As foreshadowed last year, the upsurge of passengers has continued. Some 10,000,000 passengers more were carried monthly in 1944 than in 1943 and 25,000,000 more are now being carried than in 1942 in spite of the relatively small increase in war activity of which the figures of coal consumption and rail movements of goods are a good index. This fact, coupled with the comparatively large percentage increase in upper and inter class passenger traffic, demonstrates beyond doubt that apart from military passengers the increase in travel is due to the increased availability of money. The publicity campaign to restrict travel proved largely fruitless and expenditure on this has been heavily reduced. Certain other steps which were discussed by the Central Advisory Council for Railways have been taken, notably the promulgation of a new Defence of India Rule No. 85-C, to provide police help to railway servants to prevent travel on foot-boards, the restriction of travel by Mails and Expresses to journeys of not less than a certain distance, the encouragement of bus services in congested areas, and stricter measures to combat ticketless travel. Special military leave trains have been run to reduce the military demands on the space available for the public and further extension of this practice is under consideration. Vigorous efforts to improve the lighting, fitting, and cleanliness of trains have been and are being made but thefts of fittings have reached phenomenal proportions, any brass work is systematically stolen and the wastage of electric light bulbs is of such dimensions that imports and local manufacture in spite of pressure for priority are unable to meet more than 50 per cent of our demands, while the intensive use of stock makes it difficult to service the carriages to pre-war standards. Continuous efforts are, however, being made by all railways to improve conditions and we have renewed assurances that the electric bulb supply will soon be on a more satisfactory basis. The only cure for the present congestion is to increase passenger services, but it is impracticable for the railways to apply this remedy effectively owing to the demand for coaching stock for the transport of Armed Forces, the shortage of supplies, particularly of timber, for constructing new coaches, and finally the coal shortage which necessitates the conservation of coal in whatever ways are possible. In spite, however, of the shortage of materials all possible efforts are being made to bring into service every coaching vehicle which can be made to run and to construct more coaching stock, if necessary of inferior wartime specification, in order to relieve the pressure.

Post-war plans

6. Good progress has been made with the details of the post-war plans which were discussed by the House during the last Budget Session. A tentative programme of construction of new railways has been prepared in consultation with Provincial Governments. This can be put into operation at reasonably short

notice and will keep the railways occupied for several years. Standards for improved rolling stock and plans for amenities for third class passengers and staff are being finalised. As regards the manufacture of locomotives and boilers in India, it is hoped to complete the agreement with Messrs. Tatas at an early date and to hand over the Singhhum shops to them on April 1st, 1945. With assistance from the Tata Iron and Steel Works and from the East Indian Railway it is planned to produce 100 boilers within 15 months of that date which, even if not fully achieved, will afford substantial relief owing to the late deliveries of boiler orders from overseas. The lay-out and equipment for the manufacture of locomotives at Kanchrapara under State management are also being finalised and sufficient progress has been made to enable orders for certain heavy machinery to be placed so as to prevent any avoidable delay in commencing manufacture as soon as the works have been remodelled after release from their war functions. Proposals for an overhaul of the rating system and for a regrouping of railways are in hand but nothing useful can be disclosed at the present juncture. A Committee has been set up under the chairmanship of Mr. John Sargent to examine the question of encouraging tourist traffic after the war both by Indians and by tourists from overseas. Generally it is safe to say that railway plans for post-war reconstruction are as well ahead as or in advance of those of any other department of Government.

As regards the question of road-rail competition, Government have very recently had the advantage of a full discussion of the post-war problems at meetings of the Transport Advisory Council and of the Policy Committee on Transport. These bodies were unanimous that effective co-ordination is essential, although there is, naturally, still some difference of opinion as to the best methods of achieving it. Government are approaching the problem in the post-war period in the light of the advice tendered by those two bodies, and from the point of view of securing the utmost productivity of all forms of transport on a basis of rationalisation with the maximum possible co-ordination between the various transport media. In particular they seek to secure a close co-ordination between railway and road interests, whether the latter be those of road-operating companies or of Provincial Governments who may in future participate in road transport operation. In order to regulate competition, they seek, within the general framework of the Motor Vehicles Act, to secure that control of fares, routes and traffic on roads shall be exercised in accordance with principles to be agreed upon between the Centre and the Provinces, such control to be exercised through Provincial Transport Authorities. A still closer community of interests will be sought, where possible, by the railways negotiating financial participation in road transport companies where the Provincial Government concerned is prepared that they should do so. In short the Central Government are willing to consider any methods of securing the joint interests of road and rail development and to accommodate the means of co-ordination so far as possible to the policy found to be most suitable to the varying needs of Provinces. This policy appears to be suited to the prevailing conditions and to be best calculated to result in a rational, rapid and prosperous development of internal transport. This would allow for further developments in the direction of the organisation of road transport through public utility corporations should that be accepted by the Central and Provincial Governments of tomorrow as the goal to be aimed at. In the meantime road transport services are being organised to afford relief on congested sections and to encourage movement of essential supplies.

Rolling stock

7. The Wedgwood report in 1937 expressed the view that the Indian Railways had an excess of engines. It must be remembered, however, that they were then regarding the problem solely from the point of view of economy in normal peace time conditions and in pre-war days there was regularly a shortage of wagons during the busy season, as the result of maintaining only a

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minimum stock, which was said to have had some hampering effect on industry. The war has shown that the railways have been much handicapped by the shortage of power and wagons. As the result of pre-war economy no less than 29 per cent. of India's locomotives are now over 35 years old, but all serviceable rolling stock has had to be kept in operation, often at a high cost in repairs and in efficiency in order to meet the emergency. As soon therefore as the Japanese aggression showed in 1942 that an increased burden would fall on Indian railways, orders were placed for engines abroad and for wagons in India to the maximum capacity of the Indian wagon industry. As the mounting military load on Indian railways became evident, combined with the heavy wear and tear on existing stock, it became necessary, with the approval of the Standing Finance Committee for Railways and as reported in my last two budget speeches, to increase the orders and, owing to the fact that the Indian wagon industry was already filled to capacity, to place in addition large orders for wagons overseas. The total stock ordered for use in India since 1942 has been 937 broad gauge engines, 415 metre gauge engines, 46,734 broad gauge wagons, 12,481 metre gauge wagons of which 17,934 broad gauge and 661 metre gauge wagons have been ordered in India. The liability for the cost of the metre gauge engines and wagons is a matter which is still under discussion between the Railway and War Departments. Of these, 255 broad gauge engines, 334 metre gauge engines, 4,029 broad gauge wagons and 8,790 metre gauge wagons were in service by the middle of January 1945. In addition to this, metre gauge engines and wagons sent overseas from the Indian railways in the early part of the war are now being returned in considerable numbers. It is expected that the whole of the orders from overseas will be in service by the early part of 1946 and the latest order for 10,000 wagons placed on the Indian industry is now scheduled for delivery in 1946 or early 1947.

The orders placed are by normal pre-war standards immense but so was the emergency which faced Indian railways. It is no secret that the situation has been one of great anxiety for the last two or three years. It has only been by the narrowest of margins and with considerable delays that the railways have succeeded in moving the requirements of the Services in addition to the people's food and the raw materials and products of industry. Much less essential traffic has not moved at all. The military load planned for the railways in the ensuing year is higher than ever and for this reason and in order to safeguard essential civil movements, a resolute attempt had to be made to place the rolling stock position on a sound basis. There was, of course, no time for a leisurely purchase in the cheapest market and at the cheapest time. We had to act vigorously. There is no doubt that the timely arrival of metre gauge engines and wagons played a significant part in the victory of Imphal and the replacements and reinforcements which broad gauge railways have received, though relatively small hitherto, have just turned the scale in maintaining the civil life of the country. In a few months when wagons come rolling in, we hope to be in a happier position altogether to supply the war-time needs of the country for the movement of goods and subsequently, after making allowance for the necessity for overtaking arrears of maintenance and for a return to more normal operating methods involving better service to the public, to be in a better position to meet also the high hopes of post-war industrial and agricultural expansion. The public will, however, naturally be anxious, with an eye to the future, to know what will be the effect of these deliveries of rolling stock on the Indian locomotive and wagon industries. There is no difficulty in giving an assurance on this point. In the case of locomotives, the deliveries will barely replace the average locomotives which ought to be scrapped and no provision at all has been made for deliveries of passenger engines so that there is no doubt that there will be plenty of orders available for the new locomotive works which are being established provided funds are conserved for the purpose. In the case of wagons our present orders have had the effect of anticipating future demands to some

extent and will provide for some overall increase in our stock, but in the 10 years from 1945-46 an average of 5,400 wagons will become overage each year against an average of 480 which were still due replacement in the previous 10 years. There, therefore, appears from the technical aspect to be room from 1947 onwards for wagon orders on the Indian industry in excess of the pre-war average. It will also be necessary to initiate a programme for the reconstruction, to conform to Indian standards, of the wooden bodies of certain stock of war time specification received from America and there is the possibility of the wagon builders undertaking the provision of coaching stock of all-steel construction.

Finance of Rolling Stock and War Works

8. According to the principle adopted in Indian finances, commercial departments of the Government of India bear the full cost of capital assets acquired whether under Lease-Lend terms or otherwise. The Railway Department is not therefore concerned with the arrangements made by the Government of India in the Finance Department with the United States of America. The effect of these large purchases on the finances of the railways must clearly be abnormal, especially since they have been made at war prices and in some cases the stock delivered has been below Indian standards. Fortunately the railways have been and will, we hope, continue to be able, aided by this additional equipment, to offset these abnormal charges by earning abnormal profits which the Government propose to allocate in large part to paying for the abnormal cost of war purchases and the cost of works undertaken for war purposes, costs which would be a charge against the War budget but for the fact that Railways are a commercial department. I will now proceed to describe the special measures which Government have decided to take to bring the above principle into effect.

The amounts expected to be spent on locomotives and wagons in the four years 1943-44 to 1946-47 will be about 94.75 crores. If this expenditure is allocated under the ordinary rules, there would be a debit of 16 crores to capital and of 78½ crores to the Depreciation Reserve Fund. The figures of expenditure incurred on works are not so striking, but they are, nevertheless, substantial. The application of the ordinary rules would result in some degree of over-capitalisation and a very serious depletion of the Depreciation Reserve Fund, which would be crippled thereby for future renewals programmes, more especially those of the immediate post-war period.

To deal first with the works it has been decided that all works of general traffic utility executed at the instance of the War Department to meet the needs of war time military traffic will be charged to military estimates and the Railways will pay interest and depreciation at agreed rates subject to the arrangement being reviewed at the end of one year after the war. This arrangement will give a considerable measure of relief to Railway capital. In addition there are numerous other works such as military sidings, depots, etc., constructed for the sole use of the War Department. The costs of such works are shared between the Railways and the War Department according to certain prescribed code rules. Although the Military sidings, depots, etc., constructed during the war should be treated as temporary, the Railway share of the cost, which is estimated at about 3 crores, has been charged to capital. It is now proposed to transfer this expenditure to working expenses in accordance with the principles of allocation of temporary Railway works. As regards other important Capital and Depreciation Fund works for purely railway purposes, we propose that 50 per cent. of the expenditure incurred after 1942-43 should be debited to working expenses in view of the high cost of these works resulting from the war. Under this head, we have for the present made a provision of 1.50 crores to cover the expenditure for which particulars are available.

The rolling stock presents a much greater problem both in intricacy and magnitude. We are, however, able to solve this problem by making a change in the rules of allocation as a temporary measure for the period of the war. All

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rolling stock will be treated as being on replacement account. Under the existing rules a newly acquired wagon or locomotive is compared with the corresponding unit that is treated as having been replaced. If there is any increase in the capacity of the wagon or in the tractive effort of the locomotive the proportionate cost of such increase is debited to capital. The increases to capacity thus made render some wagons or locomotives superfluous, and their cost at original prices is credited to capital by charge to Depreciation Fund. There may actually be no increase in total capacity but there would be a net debit to capital because on individual unit basis the cost of increases in capacity is charged to Capital at present day high prices while credit is afforded at original prices. We now propose that a charge to Capital should be raised only when the total capacity of wagons or the aggregate tractive effort of locomotives is increased on any railway after making allowance for difference in estimated lives of the old and the new stock. If under this new rule any debit is involved to capital we propose to apply a suitable formula to write off the element of excess war time costs by debit to working expenses. Actually under the programmes so far sanctioned there is no increase in the aggregate tractive effort of locomotives while the increase in the aggregate wagon capacity is very small.

In respect of the charge to the Depreciation Reserve Fund we propose with the approval of the Standing Finance Committee to adopt the following measures :—

(i) debits to the Fund will be limited to the amount accumulated therein for the items that are treated as replaced;

(ii) the difference between the accumulations in the Fund and the original cost of the items treated as replaced will be found from the Railway Reserve. This difference represents the arrears of depreciation which as provided for by the Convention of 1924 form an appropriate charge on the Railway Reserve;

(iii) the balance will be charged to working expenses.

Summarising the financial results of these proposals in respect of wagons and locomotives, the charge to Capital will be about a crore; that to Depreciation Fund will be reduced from 78½ to 22 crores; there would be a withdrawal of Rs. 10½ crores from the Railway Reserve and a sum of 61½ crores will be debited to working expenses. Adding 3 crores for Military sidings, depots, etc., and 1½ crores for works the particulars of which are available, the total amount that is proposed to be debited to working expenses is Rs. 66 crores of which 24 crores will be accounted for in 1944-45, 30 crores in 1945-46 and 12 crores in 1946-47.

Capital and Depreciation Fund, 1944-45

9. Having explained this background, I turn to the capital and depreciation expenditure in the current year. When I presented the budget last year I estimated an expenditure of 52·22 crores, 28·7 crores chargeable to capital, 23 crores to the depreciation fund and 52 lakhs to revenue. During the course of the year we arranged to terminate the contract of the Bengal Nagpur Railway by paying 4·8 crores of which 4 crores will be charged to capital and 80 lakhs representing compensation for loss of profits to working expenses. In parenthesis I must observe that the acquisition of the last big Company-managed Railway by the State is an event which in peacetime would have been a source of more than passing comment, and in war time has been a notable achievement having regard to the volume of other work. Under suspense we anticipate an increase of 1·85 crores while the estimate for released material is now 1·77 crores against the original expectation of 4 crores. Due to delay in the final settlement with Liquidators of the Bengal and North Western and Rohilkund and Kumaon Railways we expect a bigger throw forward from 1943-44 and the expenditure now expected is 1·25 crores against the budget provision of half a crore. This additional expenditure has been more than counter-balanced by the relief afforded as a result of the measures I have outlined above for the avoidance of over-capitalisation and the protection of the Depreciation Fund. Against the original estimate of 52·22 crores we now expect to spend 56·24 crores, of

which 12·3 crores will be charged to depreciation fund; 20·84 crores to revenue, 2·17 crores to railway reserve and 20·93 crores to capital.

Capital and Depreciation Fund, 1945-46

10. For 1945-46 our total demand for expenditure chargeable to Capital and Depreciation Fund is 32 crores of which 22½ crores will be met from the Depreciation Fund. We propose to purchase three Railways—Podanur-Pollachi, Jacobabad-Kashmore and the Dibru-Sadiya—at the aggregate cost of 2·83 crores of which 2·26 crores will be charged to capital. Our works programme is for an expenditure of 15·92 crores. After making a lump sum cut of about 20 per cent. we have provided 12·6 crores, 5·4 crores chargeable to capital and 7·2 crores to depreciation. Our total rolling stock programme for 1945-46 is 72·60 crores, but to provide for throwforwards for the next year we have made a lump sum cut of 25 per cent leaving the net provision at 54 crores, of which 30 crores will be chargeable to revenue, 5·8 crores to railway reserve, 15·9 crores to depreciation fund and 2·3 crores to capital. Our suspense balance is likely to increase by about 3 crores but we expect a credit of 4 crores, 1½ crores for released materials and 2½ crores for dismantled lines and abandoned assets.

Accounts of 1943-44

11. I turn now to the income and expenditure of the past, the present and the coming year. Beginning with 1943-44, it was estimated that the year would end with a surplus of 43·77 crores. But the receipts during the last three months proved better by 6·93 crores entirely due to passengers and parcels traffic while our working expenses exceeded the revised estimate by eleven lakhs only. The net result was a surplus of 50·84 crores, out of which general revenues received 37·64 crores and railway reserve 13·2 crores.

Revised Estimate for 1944-45

12. Our estimate of receipts for the current year was 182 crores. Our revised forecast is 214·30 crores. To this increase of 32·30 crores 'Goods' have contributed 6 crores, 'Passengers' 9·36 crores, and 'Other Coaching Traffic' the high figure of 17·4 crores on account of more military specials and of a phenomenal growth in our parcels traffic.

Our budget estimate of gross working expenses including appropriation to the depreciation reserve fund was 114·28 crores. We now expect an expenditure of 147·49 crores. To make a proper comparison with our budget, however, we should exclude a sum of 24 crores, representing adjustments on account of temporary military sidings and of works and rolling stock under the various decisions I have already described, so that our revised estimate exceeds our budget only by 9¼ crores. This is due mainly to dearness allowance 2·15 crores, additional staff 1·76 crores, more expenditure on repairs and maintenance and stores 2·26 crores, other miscellaneous increases about 3 crores, which includes provision for 25 lakhs for wireless installations and 35 lakhs for road transport services.

Our interest charges would be 94 lakhs less than our budget and our surplus is expected to be 42·01 crores, which is the result of a surplus of 43·81 crores on commercial lines and a loss of 1·8 crores on strategic lines.

Budget, 1945-46

13. We place our earnings for budget purposes for the next year at 220 crores, which is 5·7 crores above our revised estimate for the current year. They may well be higher dependent upon the character of the traffic but so may the working expenses. It is only possible in wartime conditions to budget on the revised estimates of the current year and to make a modest estimate of additional traffic which can be relied upon. Our estimate of ordinary working expenses for the next year is 140·65 crores, out of which 30 crores would, but for the revised procedure introduced for the allocation of rolling stock, have been charged to capital and depreciation fund. There is an adjustment of about 2½ crores on account of dismantled lines and abandoned assets. Other points worthy of notice are that our coal bill will go up

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by 1.35 crores, our losses on working of grain shops will be 1.39 crores more than this year and our staff charges including dearness allowance at present rates will be 1.32 crores more. We have made a provision of 82 lakhs for road transport services. The appropriation to the depreciation fund will be 17.12 crores, which is 11 lakhs more than this year. Our net miscellaneous receipts are estimated to be 3.77 crores, an increase of 76 lakhs over this year while our interest charges will be 27.39 crores, 42 lakhs less than this year. Our surplus is estimated to be 36.51 crores.

Disposal of Surpluses, 1944-45 and 1945-46

14. I budgeted for a surplus of 42.02 crores for this year of which 31.18 crores was the share allotted to general revenues, after meeting the loss on strategic lines.

Our estimated surplus for the next year is 36.51 crores (a surplus of 38.34 crores from commercial lines less loss of 1.83 crores on strategic lines).

As I have already explained to the House our ordinary working expenses include in 1944-45 a sum of about 24 crores and in 1945-46 a sum of 30 crores which if we had continued to follow our ordinary rules of allocation would not have been charged to working expenses. To enable the Railways to finance this special liability and bearing in mind the needs of both the General Revenues and Railways, Government propose that the Railway contribution to the General Revenues should be fixed at 32 crores in 1944-45 as well as in 1945-46. With the substantial improvement in our revenue position reinforced by this favourable arrangement with the general revenue we are able to relieve capital of the debit of 15 crores and depreciation reserve fund of 56½ crores. We, however, have to be content with smaller net contributions to the Railway reserve but this is not a high price to be paid for the effective protection that is ensured for the depreciation reserve fund and the capital account. The arrangement made with the general revenues whereby the contribution is stabilised at 32 crores for two years is subject to review if the actual position next year turns out substantially different from what we are able to forecast now. Next year we shall have the problem of providing ways and means in the budget of 1946-47 for financing the expenditure of 12 crores left over from previous years under the special procedure I have explained to the House, as also any further expenditure which it may be necessary to meet under the principle on which that procedure is based. The basis for sharing the surplus in 1946-47 will be determined in the light of conditions next year with due regard to any further special liabilities which may have to be defrayed from Railway revenue.

After contributing 32 crores in each year to General Revenues we shall therefore credit to the Railway Reserve 10.01 crores in 1944-45 and 4.51 crores in 1945-46.

Railway Reserve

15. The objects of the Railway Reserve, as laid down by the Convention of 1924, are specifically to form reserves for securing the payment of the percentage contribution to General Revenues, for arrears of depreciation, for writing down and writing off capital and for the improvement of services rendered to the public and the reduction of rates. It is now apparent that there are other specific purposes for which the Reserve might have to be used, in particular (a) for covering arrears of maintenance during the war, (b) for covering a possible fall in prices in the inflated stores values resulting from high war time prices and (c) for the improvement of post-war amenities for the public, particularly third class passengers, and for the staff.

A careful review following the observations of the Railway Convention Committee and of the Public Accounts Committee on the accounts of 1940-41 shows that arrears of maintenance, in particular for ballast renewals, for new minor works which have been postponed and for maintenance of coaching stock to the extent of 5 crores should be provided for in 1944-45 and that 2

crores yearly should be set aside until such time as conditions make it practicable to resume a normal programme of maintenance. We are not making a special allocation to the Reserve to meet this requirement, but propose that a corresponding amount should be earmarked in the Reserve Fund for arrears of maintenance so that when funds are needed to overtake them it should be possible to seek help from the Reserve in case the revenue position of Railways renders this course necessary.

Stores balances held in suspense account by railways have increased from 10 crores in 1938-39 to 20½ crores in 1943-44 largely owing to the rise in prices and the increased stocks of foodstuffs. It is not feasible to suggest any specific earmarking of reserves to meet the possible consequences of a rapid fall in prices making it desirable to draw on reserves rather than to charge stores at high prices to working expenses but the contingency should not be overlooked.

As regards capital for amenities, this must either come internally from the accumulated resources of railways or be raised as fresh capital. Since such expenditure will not be directly remunerative it is clearly sound finance to build up reserves for this purpose, especially as the other resources of the Government of India for capital expenditure will be under competition from demands for roads, education, health, agriculture and a thousand and one other objectives of the post-war development plan.

The Railway Reserve which stood at 22½ crores on March 31st, 1944, is expected, under the present proposals, to stand at 30.4 crores on March 31st, 1945 and 20.1 crores on March 31st, 1946. Of this, 7 crores represent the sum earmarked for deferred maintenance. From the point of view of sound railway finance and post-war railway development, it is clear therefore that determined efforts should be made during years of good surpluses thereafter to build up the reserve to a far higher figure.

Depreciation Fund

16. The Depreciation Fund opened with a balance of 92.3 crores on April 1st, 1944 and is expected to close at 98 crores on March 31st, 1945 and at 92.71 crores on March 31st, 1946. But for the financial measures proposed above it would have been reduced by March 31st, 1946, to some 36 crores which would obviously have been grossly inadequate. The measures taken therefore at least preserve the Depreciation Fund in the neighbourhood of the existing figure, the adequacy of which has been under consideration by the Railway Convention Committee. In accordance with the recommendation of this Committee a comprehensive enquiry into the lives of the assets was commenced by a special committee under the chairmanship of Mr. Sankara Iyer, who submitted a valuable report but found that, owing to war conditions, a thorough and satisfactory investigation could not be completed. This subject will therefore have to be taken up again at a more convenient time.

Rates and Fares

17. It is not proposed to make any general increase in rates and fares. I say "general increase" because the House will have observed that we have recently issued a press notice indicating that from February 1st it has been decided to increase port-to-port rates on certain goods in order to bring them into line with the cost of shipment by sea. This has been done purely as a war measure with the object of ensuring that shippers who are forced by the controls to send their goods coastwise by sea shall not be unfairly penalised by the cost of doing so and is designed to make the maximum use of all forms of available transport in the present emergency. If successful, it will mean not an increase but a decrease of earnings to the railways to the extent that goods are diverted to the sea route. It is perhaps proper to emphasise once again that the large earnings have been due in the main to increased efficiency in hauling the large volume of traffic temporarily offering and that railway rates and fares, in spite of the increases in 1940 which were relatively light and totally excluded such things as foodgrains and short distance passenger traffic, stand far below the general level of prices prevailing now or likely to prevail

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for some years to come. Transport is still cheap though, it must be confessed, not comfortable.

Staff

18. I have comprehensively surveyed the financial and general position of the railways but have left to the last the most important of all aspects of railway operation, the railwayman himself.

An exceedingly heavy burden is falling on the gazetted officers of the railways. The strain has increased and 150,000 extra men have been added to the railway services, but, owing to the number of officers lent to the Armed Forces and the Supply Department for posts of great importance, the number of experienced officers on the railways is less than before the war even after allowing for a considerable number of extensions of service. It is not generally realised that on the railways there is in any case only 1 officer to about 450 men which is a fraction only of the proportion in the Army and except on the Lines of Communication it has not been possible so far to obtain reinforcements of trained supervisory personnel. The task of keeping the machine running efficiently and speeding it up is therefore no light one, apart altogether from the extra construction work to which reference has been made and such extraneous work as creating and operating the enormous grain shop organisation. In these difficult circumstances the officers under the leadership first of Sir Leonard Wilson and now of Sir Arthur Griffin have put up a very fine performance. They deserve, and shall get, all the support which Government can give them in their task. As in the case of all Government officers, the relief which they have received to meet war time living conditions has been small or non-existent, but I can assure them that any further relief which Government may be able to extend to their officers will be shared by the railways and the small relief afforded by cost price canteens will be expanded to the uttermost.

We have fortunately been able to do more for other classes of railway servant. During 1944, the conditions under which they are working have been almost continuously under review. The cost of living did not on the whole run so high as in 1943: nevertheless relief in cash in the forms of a dearness allowance was increased on two occasions in March and in July. On the last occasion, a considerable extension of this relief was sanctioned by giving all non-gazetted staff an allowance of 10 per cent. of their pay, subject to minima which, in some places, is as much as Rs. 18. There was some criticism among the lower paid staff that this extension gave them nothing extra. This was not in fact correct or a fair representation because at the same time the benefits arising out of the grain shops were extended to a point which was calculated to give the lower paid worker an average addition of Rs. 3-8-0 per head. The selling prices at the grain shops were reduced by 10 per cent. so that foodgrains and other miscellaneous necessities of life for the low-paid worker are being sold at the prices which obtained in the spring of 1942 and the benefits were at the same time extended to a larger number of dependents. Relief so afforded measured by what the worker has to pay at the grain shop compared with what he would have to pay for a similar amount of commodities in the local bazar is in the region of Rs. 11-8-0. The aggregate relief in cash and in kind is such that workers in the lowest wage ranges have been completely compensated for the rise in the cost of living, so far as that rise can be ascertained with accuracy. This method of relief in kind has other advantages. It affords greatest relief to the man with large domestic liabilities, *i.e.*, it gives most relief where most is required. The worker is moreover free from anxiety in regard to increasing bazar prices as the grain shop prices are fixed. Finally, the benefits of inculcating the cash habit among the workers must not be lost sight of. In December 1944, there were 689 Grain Shops functioning on State-managed Railways selling 1,300,000 maunds per month to over 866,000 ration card holders, so that with their families probably no less than 3½ million individuals were being provided for. The cost of this

elaborate system of relief in cash and in kind is already in the neighbourhood of the very large sum of Rs. 20 crores per annum.

The question of granting further relief to Government civilians of all ranks is one which has been having the very close attention of Government and although the relief afforded to non-gazetted railway staff compares well with that of employees of other departments, they will be included in any further extension of benefits and the question will be further discussed with the All-India Railwaymen's Federation in the next few days. As a small but important concession the allotment to the Staff Benefit Funds of the railways is being trebled both this year and next. This will give much needed relief where it is most required for hard cases and will assist in providing amenities for the staff.

Government fully appreciate the difficult conditions under which the men are performing their more than normally arduous duties. The great body of railway servants have worked most loyally in shouldering the immense burden which Indian Railways are now being called upon to bear and will, I am confident, make the tremendous additional effort necessary to tide the country over the next twelve months.

Conclusions

19. The Indian railways are now almost one hundred per cent. Indian owned and they are 99½ per cent. operated by Indians and Anglo-Indians. They are an asset of which India can be proud, but the lessons of the past show that their financial resources must be handled with sedulous care. Government are determined that the mistakes in railway finance made in the last war and commented upon in the Acworth Report shall not be repeated and these proposals are an attempt to face squarely up to all the problems involved. I commend this somewhat unorthodox budget to the House in the firm belief that, if it is adopted, the Indian railways will enter the post-war period, with their war duty to the country faithfully performed, in a fit state technically to cope with the expansion of trade and industry which we all look for, and, if the present policy is continued, in a fit state financially to give a fair chance to the governments of the future.

STATEMENT OF BUSINESS.

The Honourable Sir Sultan Ahmed (Leader of the House): Sir, there is no business for to-morrow and I would request you to cancel the meeting for Friday, the 16th February.

There is another matter which I would like to mention. In deference to the wishes of the House that there should be four days allotted for voting Railway Demands, we propose to move His Excellency the Viceroy to give an additional day, *i.e.*, Tuesday, the 20th, and that will mean four days—20th to 23rd—for voting Railway Demands. But this will involve your cancelling the business for Tuesday which is official.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): There will be no sitting of the House to-morrow.

As for the 20th I cancel the allotment of official business for that day leaving to the Governor General to allot it for the voting of Demands in respect of Railways.

The Assembly is now adjourned till Monday the 19th.

The Assembly then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Monday, the 19th February, 1945.

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