

26th February 1942

THE
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY DEBATES

Official Report

Volume I, 1942

(11th February to 10th March, 1942)

FIFTEENTH SESSION
OF THE
FIFTH LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,
1942



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CORRIGENDA

In the Legislative Assembly Debates, Budget Session, 1942,—

- (1) Volume I, No. 1, dated the 11th February, 1942, page 31, line 20, for "Muslims" read "Muslim";
- (2) Volume I, No. 15, dated the 5th March, 1942, page 708, line 20 from the bottom, for "Suppression" read "Supersession";
- (3) Volume II, No. 5, dated the 17th March, 1942,—
 - (i) page 1207, line 4, delete the full stop after the word "statement"; and
 - (ii) page 1265, lines 5 and 22, for "The Honourable Sir Homi Modi" read "The Honourable Sir Homi Mody";
- (4) Volume II, No. 7, dated the 19th March, 1942, page 1357, line 15 from the bottom, for "The Economist news" read "The Economist news-";
- (5) Volume II, No. 8, dated the 20th March, 1942, page 1422, line 13 from the bottom, delete the second "that" at the end of the line;

- (6) Volume II, No. 9, dated the 23rd March, 1942,—
 - (i) page 1429, line 1, insert the word "is" after the word "blood"; and
 - (ii) page 1457, line 8 from the bottom, read "are" for the word "they";
- (7) Volume II, No. 11, dated the 25th March, 1942, page 1539, line 18 from the bottom, for the word "who" read "why";
- (8) Volume II, No. 13, dated the 1st April, 1942, page 1651, line 21, for the word "attacks" read "attack";
- (9) Volume II, No. 14, dated the 2nd April, 1942,—
 - (i) page 1688, line 17, for "It is given to C class" read "I said that A and B class";
 - (ii) page 1693, line 22, for "Syed Murtuza Sahib Bahadur" read "Maulvi Syed Murtuza Sahib Bahadur"; and
 - (iii) page 1729, line 19 and page 1730, line 9 for "Diwan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar" read "The Honourable Diwan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar".

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

President:

The Honourable Sir ABDUR RAHIM, K.C.S.I.

Deputy President:

Mr. AKHIL CHANDRA DATTA, M.L.A.

Panel of Chairmen:

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Lieut.-Colonel Sir HENRY GIDNEY, M.L.A.

Sir HENRY RICHARDSON, M.L.A.

Sir COWASJI JEHANGIR, Bart., K.C.I.E., O.B.E., M.L.A.

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Assistants of the Secretary:

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Khan Bahadur S. G. HASNAIN.

Marshal:

Captain Haji Sardar NUR AHMAD KHAN, M.C., I.O.M., I.A.

Committee on Petitions:

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Mr. JAMNADAS M. MEHTA, M.L.A.

Sir ABDUL HALIM GHUREKAVI M.L.A.

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

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Thursday, 26th February, 1942.

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.

BIHAR CONGRESS MINISTRY'S MEMORANDUM FOR GIVING MILITARY TRAINING IN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS.

102. *Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: Will the Defence Secretary please state if the Congress Ministry in Bihar, before its resignation, submitted memoranda to the Government of India for giving some military training in schools and colleges in Bihar and for the training of air pilots? If so, were these scotched by the Central Government, and if so, what were the reasons for doing so?

Sir Gurunath Bewoor: Sir, with your permission, I will reply to question No. 102 and question No. 103 together.

(a) A scheme on the lines mentioned by the Honourable Member was forwarded by the Government of Bihar on the 8th April, 1939, but Government are not aware whether it was drawn up with the approval of the Governors mentioned. The scheme did not include the training of Air Pilots.

(b) The Government of India replied on the 26th July, 1939, to the effect that certain aspects of the scheme had their full sympathy and that they would do all in their power to render assistance. They pointed out at the same time the constitutional and practical difficulties in implementing the other features of the proposal.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: May I know, Sir, what were the constitutional difficulties referred to in the answer?

Sir Gurunath Bewoor: The constitutional difficulty was, Sir, that defence is a central subject.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: May I know, Sir, which features of the scheme were approved by the Government and which features of the scheme could not be approved by them on account of the constitutional difficulties?

Sir Gurunath Bewoor: I have mentioned that it was a question of military training. It was pointed out that military training is a central subject and it can only be undertaken by the centre.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: The Honourable Member stated that certain aspects of the scheme had the sympathy of the Central Government,—which were these aspects?

Sir Gurunath Bewoor: It is a very big scheme. It is difficult for me to give all the details. I have got the correspondence with me; but so far as it related to physical instruction, the scheme had the sympathy of the Central Government which offered to find suitable instructors for the purpose.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: Did they not ask for some people to instruct students in order to start a college of Instructors, and could those men not be supplied by the Army Department?

Sir Gurunath Bewoor: I have pointed out that the scheme was for military training, and the Central Government pointed out the difficulties in the way.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: Sir, there were two schemes. First a memorandum was submitted for starting a school to give military training to boys as well as for training them as Air Pilots. The other referred to a military college for Instructors. You have always been complaining that you had no Instructors, and the Bihar Government wanted to start a college for Instructors. Could you not have supplied some persons from the Military Department to help the Bihar Government to start this college for Instructors?

Sir Gurunath Bewoor: The college was for giving military instruction in schools and colleges.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: May I know, Sir, whether the Government will lay the correspondence on the table of the House?

Sir Gurunath Bewoor: No.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: When the Defence Department refused to supply Instructors to any Provincial Government, may I take it that it was because it was a central subject and the Government was unwilling to interfere in the matter, or was it because that they were short of Instructors?

Sir Gurunath Bewoor: This was in 1939. At that time the Central Government pointed out the constitutional and practical difficulties. The correspondence was not pursued by the Bihar Government.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: The Honourable Member pointed out the constitutional difficulty, but what were the practical difficulties?

Sir Gurunath Bewoor: The practical difficulties were the finding of a sufficient number of Instructors at the time.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: May I know if between 1939 and 1941 the demand of such Universities which approached the Defence Department for supplying Instructors was met or complied with?

Sir Gurunath Bewoor: I don't see how the Universities come in. This question relates to the Bihar Government scheme.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: This arises out of the supplementary answer given to my supplementary question. May I know whether, if there were a sufficient number of Instructors then, they could not be supplied by the Defence Department? I refer to the Bombay University proposal; if there were Instructors could you not have supplied them?

Sir Gurunath Bewoor: The Bombay Government did not ask us at that time. Only recently they asked us.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: May I know if Instructors are now available, and if the Honourable Member will supply Instructors if they are asked for?

Sir Gurunath Bewoor: Instructors for whom?

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: Instructors for the college that is going to be opened.

Sir Gurunath Bewoor: It is not going to be opened. So far as we are aware, the Bihar Government has dropped the scheme. We have not heard anything further after the reply we gave in 1939.

Dr. P. N. Banerjee: There is no Government in Bihar now.

Sardar Sant Singh: May I know, Sir, if the constitutional difficulties which the Honourable Member mentioned are such as to prohibit absolutely the Provincial Government from undertaking any sort of military training?

Sir Gurunath Bewoor: I mentioned that we pointed out the constitutional difficulty that defence was a central subject and therefore military training must be undertaken by the Central Government.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: May I have an assurance from the Honourable Member that if any University now approaches the Defence Department with a similar request, it will be complied with?

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

Lieut.-Colonel Sir Henry Gidney: In view of the fact that Government is in urgent need of officers today, I take it they are prepared to accept any scheme that comes within their administrative powers, and I should like to know whether or not Government is prepared to supply Instructors to institutions of this kind when they are started?

Sir Gurunath Bewoor: At present we require all the Instructors for our own military training centres. We are training thousands of suitable young men for the officer ranks.

Lieut.-Colonel Sir Henry Gidney: Does the Honourable Member really mean that Government does not today possess Instructors in sufficient numbers to supply Instructors to others?

Sir Gurunath Bewoor: Yes, Sir, I have stated so before.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: May I know, Sir, since when are the Government short of Instructors?

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

BIHAR CONGRESS MINISTRY'S SCHEME FOR STARTING A MILITARY COLLEGE FOR INSTRUCTORS.

†103. ***Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh:** Will the Defence Secretary please state:

- (a) if any detailed scheme to start a military college for instructors, who could train students in schools and colleges and later citizens in general, drawn up by the Bihar Congress Ministry with the approval and help of the Bihar Governors, Sir Maurice Hallet and Sir Thomas Stuart, was forwarded by the Bihar Congress Government to the Government of India and a request was made to supply them with dummy rifles and retired military officers; and
- (b) if repeated reminders were sent by them to get a reply to their memoranda and requests referred to above; after what interval, if any, the reply was given, and what the Government's reply was?

RIGHT HONOURABLE MR. A. V. ALEXANDER'S STATEMENT ON WAR POLICY IN EUROPE AND IN THE FAR EAST.

104. ***Mr. Lalchand Navalrai:** (a) Will the Defence Secretary be pleased to state whether it is a fact that the Right Honourable Mr. A. V. Alexander, First Lord of the Admiralty, made a statement on or about Saturday, the 10th January, 1942, to the effect that "Britain should never take her eyes off the Centre—the Axis powers of Europe. If we can knock them out, we can do what we like with the Japanese afterwards"?

(b) Is it a fact that Britain is more concerned about the situation in Europe than either in the Far East or elsewhere?

(c) If not, why was the statement referred to in paragraph (a) above made by the First Lord of the Admiralty?

(d) Is it a fact that Mr. Alexander further stated that Britain had in the meantime to hold on in the Far East because she had a duty to perform to the Commonwealth?

(e) Does the Commonwealth, envisaged by Mr. Alexander, include India?

† For answer to this question, see answer to question No. 102.

(f) Are Government aware that the above statement is viewed in India as a dangerous statement causing alarm?

(g) Have the Government of India taken any steps to protest against such statement? If so, with what result? If not, why not?

Sir Gurunath Bewoor: (a) and (d). Government have seen in the public press a report to this effect.

(b) The statement of the First Lord of the Admiralty does not appear to admit of the interpretation which the Honourable Member seeks to put upon it.

(c) Does not arise.

(e) I cannot answer for Mr. Alexander, but India is included in the usual use of the term "British Commonwealth".

(f) Government have no reason to believe that it is so.

(g) No, as Government see no justification for taking any such steps.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: May I know what interpretation was

Sir Gurunath Bewoor: That portion of the question was disallowed by the Honourable the President.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: May I know if this statement was intended to show that stepmotherly treatment is given to India, and everything should be done for Europe?

Sir Gurunath Bewoor: It is open to the Honourable Member to put his own interpretation on the statement of the Right Honourable Mr. A. V. Alexander, but as I have pointed out, our view is that that statement does not appear to admit of the interpretation which the Honourable Member seeks to put on it.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: Is the Honourable Member aware of the apprehension created in the public mind by a similar statement made by Mr. Curtin, the Australian Minister?

Sir Gurunath Bewoor: I am not aware of it.

ACCIDENT CAUSED TO TWO CLERKS BY A MILITARY LORRY ON THE STATION ROAD, DELHI CANTONMENT.

105. ***Bhai Parma Nand:** (a) Will the Honourable the Home Member be pleased to state if it is a fact that two clerks of the Central Ordnance Depot, Delhi Cantonment, while returning home on bicycles at about 2 P.M. on Saturday, the 1st November, 1941, were run into from behind by a military lorry on the Station Road, Delhi Cantonment, one being slightly injured and the other seriously?

(b) Is it a fact that these two clerks were picked up by a military officer and admitted in the Indian Military Hospital, Delhi Cantonment?

(c) Have the Police authorities been able to trace the driver of the Military lorry, and, if so, with what result?

(d) What action have the Military authorities taken against the driver?

The Honourable Sir Reginald Maxwell: (a) and (b). Yes, but neither of the clerks was seriously injured. They remained in the Indian Military Hospital for only one day and were then discharged at their own request.

(c) and (d). The driver was traced and in accordance with the usual practice in cases of this kind the case has been handed over to the military authorities who will no doubt take appropriate action.

THE FEDERAL COURT (SUPPLEMENTAL POWERS) BILL.

PRESENTATION OF THE REPORT OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE.

Dr. P. N. Banerjee (Calcutta Suburbs: Non-Muhammadan Urban): Sir, I present the Report of the Select Committee on the Bill to confer supplemental powers on the Federal Court.

THE RAILWAY BUDGET—LIST OF DEMANDS—*contd.*

Second Stage—*contd.*

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The House will now discuss the Railway Budget.

Lieut.-Colonel Sir Henry Gidney (Nominated Non-Official): May I make a statement with your permission? Tomorrow this House is sitting to discuss in secret certain questions in relation to the army and the defences of India. May I request you, on behalf of a large number of Members of this House, and through you, the Leader of the House, to say whether he is prepared to make a statement today indicating to us what procedure he will adopt tomorrow so as to give us some opportunity of being able to utilise the position with an intelligence which would be denied to us if he does not do so? We do desire to have a useful discussion, but we would like to know what line the Government are going to take? Are we going to have a series of lectures as we had in the various Consultative Committees

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The Honourable Member need not make a speech for that purpose.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai (Sind: Non-Muhammadan Rural): May I also say

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): I cannot allow Members to raise a debate now.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: I only want to know, Sir, whether we can send in questions or not

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The Honourable Member may do whatever he likes in accordance with the Rules and Standing Orders.

The Honourable Mr. M. S. Aney (Leader of the House): A motion will be formally moved by me with a preliminary speech. Then His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief will make a statement in the House, and there will be a debate. Then, in the end, there will be a reply on behalf of the Government. That will be the procedure.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: Should we send in questions

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

I think it is now the turn of the European Group to move their cut motion.

DEMAND NO. 1—RAILWAY BOARD—*contd.*

Revision of the Convention of 1924.

Sir F. E. James (Madras: European): Sir, I beg to move:

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

Sir, the purpose of this cut motion is not to reduce the resources of the Railway Board, but to raise a discussion on this matter, and I can assure the Honourable the Communications Member that this motion is moved almost “*con amore*”. I never understood why the Convention of 1924 is called the convention. It is no more a convention than it is a conventicle. It is a resolution which lays down, with the full sanction of the Legislature, the principle of the separation of railway from central finances, and the basis on which that separation is to be conducted. I have looked up the previous debates on this subject, and I find that there is a very large measure of agreement as to the necessity for revision. I find the Public Accounts Committee recommending it some years ago. Two of our own Leaders on previous occasions recommended it; the Commerce Member in 1936 recommended it.

An Honourable Member: Those were years of depression.

Sir F. E. James: The Muslim League, so ably represented in the House today. . . . (The Muslim League Bloc benches were empty at this stage) . . . also recommended it. The then Finance Member, Sir James Grigg, recommended it in 1937. And here may I digress and say how glad I am sure the House is that the British Government have found it necessary to enlist his pugnacity and ability in their service

The Honourable Diwan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar (Commerce Member): After his experience of India.

Sir F. E. James: One may look to his enlivening the debates in the House of Commons. I think the epithets which he was accustomed to use here are better understood there than they were here. The Railway Standing Finance Committee at a meeting held only the other day recommended revision, and the Honourable the Communications Member on two occasions has referred to it. Last year he said that the basis of the convention was really too heavy a burden on the railways in normal

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times; and this year he has opened his defences by saying that he proposed to move a continuance of the moratorium for one year only. The understanding that I derive from that phrase is that he is prepared to undertake a consideration of revision in the meantime.

Now, Sir, this convention, Members will remember, divides itself into three main parts, the first part dealing with the financial aspect of separation, the second part with the control of expenditure, and the third with policy in connection with Indianisation and State control. As far as the last part is concerned, that was really a direction to Government on the part of the Legislature as to Indianisation and State control. I claim that that direction has been now translated into a settled policy which has been faithfully pursued and zealously carried out.

With regard to financial control of expenditure there are a number of points which I should like to make. First of all, there is laid down in the convention that the Railway Budget must be presented to the Assembly in a separate form and prior to the presentation of the General Budget. I have always wondered why it was considered necessary to present two separate statements, one to this House and one to the other House. I should think that it would have been much more convenient to have one presentation at a joint Session of both Houses. Anyhow, there is no provision in the convention for the presentation of a statement to the other House. However, that is a small point, but one that might be considered by the Government, because a good deal waste of time, energy and material must go into the making of two separate statements. They have got to be the same in substance, but I understand it is a convention that the Chief Commissioner for Railways cannot make identically the same speech, and, therefore, the same statement has to be made in different words. The second point refers to the Standing Finance Committee for Railways, of which I have been a member for some years, and which I regard as a very useful organisation. We are a very friendly body, sometimes a trifle irrelevant, and at times there has been a tendency on the part of the Committee to concentrate upon arranging its meetings at attractive places. I am glad to say that in recent years we have concentrated more upon the work on hand; and the work on hand is a detailed scrutiny of the estimates, capital programmes and new schemes involving expenditure. The longer one is a member of that Committee, the more useful one finds it, though I do not know what the Government think of it. I should imagine they would be glad to welcome the opportunity of the detailed scrutiny which this Committee is expected to make of the accounts.

The third observation which I want to make is in respect of the Central Advisory Council for Railways, which I regard as now a useless and redundant body. I quite admit that it is useful to the Communications Member because at the meetings he does sometimes get an advance performance of what he gets later in the House. But it does not fulfil the original purpose of the Acworth Committee, and that was that there should be a Council for Railways, a counter-part of the Advisory Committees which have been set up in the various railway administrations. I have found during my membership of this Council that

the interest of its members reaches its highest point when canvassing for election to the various Railway Advisory Committees at the headquarters of Railway Administrations.

The Honourable Mr. M. S. Aney (Leader of the House): Is not that the only organisation through which the Members of the Council of State are in a position to take some intelligent part in the administration of the railways?

Sir F. E. James: It certainly is the only organisation of its kind on which they are now represented; but whether it does give them an opportunity of taking an intelligent part in the administration of the railways is a matter for doubt. I have no time to go into details on that point, but I do suggest that if the convention is to be revised, that part may well be revised with profit to all concerned.

The third part of this Resolution deals with the financial clauses relating to the basis on which the separation of railway from general revenues has been carried out. These clauses, as the House knows, have been dead for some time because of the moratorium; but they won't lie down! The moratorium which occurs with somewhat distressing regularity really is in itself an admission that the Convention has broken down under existing circumstances and therefore revision is needed. Now, Sir, what directions should revision follow. Well, I would suggest that these are adequately laid down in section 186 of the Government of India Act. Apart from working expenses and other payments of a regular character, such as pensions and interest charges, we suggest that any future revision should provide for three main things. First of all, a regular contribution from revenues to be used for the purpose of betterment and improvement, possibly based upon the percentage of the gross earnings over a period of years, taking a period of years for an average. Secondly, a general reserve fund to meet deficiencies and other contingencies which in any case should be less than five per cent of the capital at charge. Thirdly, adequate provision for a Depreciation Fund. I have seen lately a good deal of criticism about the Depreciation Fund, as to the amounts which are being collected and as to the method by which that collection is made. While in theory it may be preferable to base your allocations to the Depreciation Fund upon an orthodox commercial method, so that wasting assets are replaced by their original cost, we are on the whole satisfied, after taking into account assets such as land and the fact that the present basis of the calculation was the result of very careful investigation in the past,—we are on the whole satisfied that $\frac{1}{10}$ th of the capital at charge is a reasonable approximation of the equated life of the assets that could be arrived at by scientific calculation. I would add to these three the desirability of investigating the necessity for the establishment of an amortization fund. I would here refer Honourable Members to the extremely able chapter in the Appropriation Accounts of Railways in India for 1934-35 written by the late Sir P. R. Rau, one of the ablest Financial Commissioners for Railways that the Government of India have ever had. Now, Sir, I have no time to do more than sketch these general indications as to the lines upon which revision should take place.

My next point is that if the moratorium is now to be extended only for 12 months as the Honourable the Communications Member seemed

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to suggest, it will be a very great mistake to go back to the basis of the Resolution of 1924. It is true that the special needs of the taxpayers in abnormal times must be considered but I would remind the Honourable the Finance Member of the words of his predecessor in 1937:

"It would be a wise thing for the Railways to accumulate reserves and there is a certain fear lest the powers of building up reserves, which is the long view, should be abandoned for the short view of extracting the greatest possible benefit to the Central Exchequer."

The present policy is to withhold as much unnecessary capital expenditure as possible, so that the Railways will, when the days of difficulty come after the war, be able to embark upon large schemes which will enable the country to take up the slack in employment which is likely to happen as a result of the demobilization of industry and the defence services. After the war, therefore, a great deal of money will be required to put the Railways back into good running shape. In 1941, that is last year, the Communications Member expressed the hope that this House would not forget the services which the Railways had been able to render during the war and would be ready when peace is restored to give the Railways generous treatment. That is why we plead for an investigation into the basis on which the new Resolution to replace the 1924 one should be based. The Railways are entitled to receive, not necessarily generous treatment but at least just and scientific treatment in regard to finance, a treatment which so far they have never really received under the existing Convention. It will not be enough for the Honourable the Communications Member after the war to say to the Railways "Well, boys, you have done a splendid piece of work. We have pinched your surpluses, dismantled your lines, worked your existing tracks beyond their ordinary resources. We have used up most of your existing locomotive power. We have put a heavy hand upon capital expenditure. Now, in return for all this, we are going to return to you the Convention of 1924 which at best places extremely an heavy burden upon you in good times and in bad times and makes it impossible for you to do even what you ought to do as a commercial undertaking". I am aware that this relation between the Railways and general finances is not an easy one. It cannot be a cut and dried relationship because on the one hand there is the desirability as far as possible of applying commercial principles to railway finance; while on the other hand there is the interest of the taxpayers who are vitally interested in the returns which the general revenues may get from the Railways. I do claim, however, that the Convention of 1924 has not, on the long view, been just to Railways. We feel, therefore, that a case has now arisen for an investigation. Do not let the House leave it until after the war. When peace comes, as peace will come with victory, the Railways will have to turn to reconstruction. Let them turn to that reconstruction feeling satisfied that from the financial point of view justice is being done to them. Sir, I move.

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

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

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta (Bombay Central Division: Non-Muhammadan Rural): Sir, I had the privilege of being associated with this Convention in 1924 and I have watched its working with the greatest

attention and I do feel that the time has arrived when its revision should be undertaken. At the same time I wish to make it clear that if any revision takes place it ought to be binding on the Railway Administration.

Mr. N. M. Joshi (Nominated Non-Official): How can you make it binding?

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: If we can make it. If we cannot, we cannot. One of the two parties to that Convention must honestly abide by it and the House should very zealously watch that no infringement of its substantive articles should take place. That unhappily has not happened during the last 18 years. Today the Convention is more or less a dead letter in many substantial aspects. My chief complaint against the Convention was that it is a burden on the railway revenues to an extent which is not reasonable for the fact that the railways are a monopolistic body and the fact that they have not paid for many of the concessions which the State has given to them and also because they are not supposed to pay income-tax and also for the reason that for many years there had been a dead loss to the taxpayer. The figures of this loss are given in the report of the Acworth Committee. For that reason the State should get some reasonable return for the services which it has rendered, for the loss it has borne and also for the concessions which the railways enjoy. I agree that so long as you pay one per cent. on the capital at charge you are none too generous to the taxpayer and you are paying what it is reasonable for you to pay. But when one per cent. on the capital at charge is paid, there is a subsequent provision that one-fifth of the remaining and one-third of any surplus that remains thereafter beyond three crores should also be paid to the State, that is an unreasonable diversion of railway revenues. I would, therefore, support any revision in which the State gets one per cent. on the capital at charge and the rest remains with the railways.

One of the reasons why I say this is that the surpluses are used for non-railway purposes. The rates and fares are not reduced and crores are going to the general taxpayer without improving the railways or benefiting their customers. That is precisely what the Acworth Committee did not want. The Acworth Committee definitely stated that these surpluses should be used for the improvement of the railways themselves or should be distributed among the customers of Railways by a reduction of rates and fares. You will find it in the report of the Acworth Committee. That is not done. On the contrary, the greater the surplus the greater is the burden on the customer of the railways. That is what we have seen until in the last six years, the burden has increased by ten crores. I may remind my Honourable friend, the Railway Member, that in the Memorandum itself they have admitted that the increased revenues from these rates and freights since 1936-37 will be somewhere near seven crores. I have no doubt that if it is thoroughly examined with the additions that are now being proposed, ten crores will be the additional amount taken. All this is precisely against the Acworth Committee's recommendations. Therefore, I do not want the State to get more than one per cent.

The second point which I wish to emphasise is that the Depreciation Fund accumulates at a speed which is unhealthy. You have now found after 18 years of experience that the Depreciation Fund that is allocated out of revenues is never wanted more than 50 per cent. You are able to make 35 crores of loans for the purpose of payment of interest out of that

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fund, and for the rest it remains to be used in the balances of the Government of India at a moderate rate of interest. We must revise the amount required for the Depreciation Fund. At least in one railway—I forget the name; I gave it years ago to the Railway Board—the depreciation set aside was one-seventh of the operational cost. Supposing your stock is not used to some extent in a particular year, then there could be not much of a depreciation. There may be some but not much. If 500 of your engines have not been found necessary in one year or 15,000 of your wagons were not required, what depreciation can be there? Therefore, in one of the railways the test of depreciation is the extent of the operation of the rolling stock in that year and that is presumed to be seven per cent. of the operative cost. This suggestion I am putting forward for consideration when the time for revision comes, so that there may be no undue burden on the revenues and depreciation will be scientifically provided.

My last but one point is that while the Convention is in force, depreciations are made on railway revenues without any justifiable reason. When the railways pay for all the working expenses, when they pay for all renewals and replacement and when they definitely collect a depreciation fund, in the middle of the year steps are taken to withdraw from the railway revenues additional sums which go to conceal the surplus and the heaviness of rates and fares. Only year before last, without any provision in the Convention, 30 lakhs of rupees per year were removed from the railway revenues for the purpose of capital works because they are called small capital works and thus by a back door, addition is made to the depreciation charge. Those small renewals are not now to be made from the Depreciation Fund; they are made from revenue. It means that you are adding to the Depreciation Fund surpluses without justifying the addition. What amount in that way is taken, I do not know. Also interest is being charged on capital work from revenue and it has in my opinion taken away many more lakhs per year. The amount by now must be in the neighbourhood of 40 crores. In that way, the capital amount is concealed and the railways are under-capitalised.

As regards the last recommendation made at the end of the Convention to which my Honourable friend, Sir Frederick James, referred, it has been killed before it came into force. We wanted Indianisation, what has happened is communalisation. Indianisation is not proceeding as fast as it should.

The Honourable Sir Andrew Olow (Member for Railways and Communications): I would submit, Sir, that this hardly arises out of the question of the financial Convention.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: I am not raising it; I have no time to raise it; it is useless to raise it. But as it is a part of the Convention, I am expressing my honest conviction as to what you have done to the Convention. You have torn it to pieces so far as the additional recommendation of the Assembly of 1924 is concerned. The Europeanisation remains where it was and communalisation has been added; altogether the Convention is honoured more in the breach than in observance. This and several other reflections arose in my mind. I am not going to amplify them because there is too much sadness in my heart because a commercial organisation is being prostituted for political and communal purposes.

You talk of commercialisation of railways; you have de-commercialised them by many of the provisions which you have broken. Therefore, Sir, I support the general demand for a revision of the convention. I associate myself entirely with its main principles; it is a most healthy financial administrative measure. I do not agree that any of its main provisions can be touched without doing harm both to the railways and to the general finance. The principles underlying the convention are deeply rooted in sound financial rectitude and I can only say that whatever changes are made we will keep inviolate the main principles of the convention and will carry them out more honestly and sincerely in all their aspects as recommended by Sir William Acworth.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: Sir, I am glad that this discussion on the question of the separation of railway finance from the general finance is taking place today. Like my Honourable friend, Mr. Jajnadās Mehta, I too happened to be a Member of the Assembly at that time and, if I remember aright, I was also a Member of the Committee which was set up by the House to consider this question. Today, Sir, I do not wish to go into the financial aspects of this convention. Generally speaking, I approve of the terms laid down in the convention for the adjustment of the claims of the general taxpayer and of the users of the Indian railways as set down in that convention. What I propose to speak about this morning is the parliamentary control of Indian railways. Sir, if I remember aright at that time the Legislature insisted that in order to keep parliamentary control over Indian railways and railway finance, there should be full and adequate discussion of the Railway Budget in the Legislature. I think it was set down in the report of that Committee at that time that about a week or six days should be spent in discussing the Railway Budget. I do not remember the exact number of days, but the intention of the Legislature was that before they agreed to the separation, the Legislature must insist that the Railway Budget should be adequately discussed.

Sir, I do not wish to make a complaint about what is happening in the House today. Some years ago, we used to spend four days in discussing the Demands for Railways. Now the number of days is reduced to two. I feel, Sir, that this reduction of the number of days is against the convention which was set up by the Legislature at that time. The number of days is reduced on the ground that some Honourable Members of the Legislature absent themselves. Sir, is that the reason why the claims and the right of the Legislature should be taken away. After all, the number of speakers who can speak in four days cannot be larger, but there are enough number of speakers here to discuss the Railway Budget even for four days, and if I may say so, if there are six days, they would also take a very useful part in the debate for six days. I, therefore, feel that this aspect of the convention should be placed before our minds when we consider the terms on which the new convention should be based.

Besides the discussion that takes place in the Legislature, there is another method by which the Legislature tries to keep control over the railway finances and that is setting up a Committee called the Standing Finance Committee for Railways. One remark which I should like to make on the working of the Standing Finance Committee for Railways is about its report. I have seen reports made by the Standing Finance Committee for Railways. The reports only give the result of the discussion, but we know very little about the discussion that takes place. Sir, I have studied the reports of the Committees which the House of Commons sets

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up in Great Britain and the Reports of the Committees there generally contain full discussion so that the legislature knows what the Committees do and how the Committees do their work. Here, Sir, the House has very little opportunity to judge how its Committees do their work. We hardly know how the Committee votes, the Legislatures do not know how their representatives work on the Committee. I, therefore, feel, Sir, that when the new convention will be discussed, this aspect will also be borne in mind, that the Committee must be responsible to the Legislature, and in order that the Legislature should have the responsibility for the work which this Committee does, the Committee must report fully to the Legislature. Then, there is a third instrument by which the Legislature tries to control the policy of Indian railways, and that is the Central Advisory Committee. I feel that even in this respect the expectations of the Legislature are not fully met.

I do not know how many times the Central Advisory Committee meets in a year, perhaps once or twice, but no more than that. The Legislature cannot really have that much of control which is necessary when the Central Advisory Committee which is appointed as an instrument of the Legislature does not adequately function. My own view is that the Central Advisory Committee should be a sort of Railway parliament in India and it should be fully representative of the interests which are involved in the administration of Indian railways and it should meet very often. It should meet as often as the Committee itself chooses, it is wrong to leave the calling of the Committee to the Railway Member and the agenda also to be framed by the Railway Member. I feel that the Committee itself should prepare its agenda and the Committee should have the power to call its own meetings, some officer of the Committee should have the power to call its own meetings and the Committee itself should meet very often and discuss the detailed administration of the Indian Railways. It is only in this way, by means of these three instruments, namely, the discussion in the Legislature, full discussion and full report of the Standing Finance Committee for Railways and the proper functioning of the Central Advisory Council that the Legislature will maintain its control over the Indian Railways. I hope the Convention will be examined from this point of view so that the Indian taxpayer and the Indian users of Railways, both will secure the best results of Indian Railways.

Mr. Husenbhai Abdullabhai Laljee (Bombay Central Division: Muhammadan Rural): Sir, I entirely agree with the remarks of my Honourable friend, Sir F. E. James, and I must congratulate him for the suggestions he has made with regard to making this Department a really commercial department with sound finance. The provisions which he has asked us to make with regard to reserve fund and especially with regard to slack period is really worth noting. I say, Sir, that so far as businessmen in this country are concerned, whether export or import or industry, will certainly be grateful to Sir F. E. James for the suggestion he has made with regard to railways, because industry and commerce depend a great deal thereon. After having said that, I must also draw the attention of the House and of my Honourable friend to another important aspect of the question. We all admit and we must admit that Railways have been for long largely subsidised from the general exchequer. Only very recently when we were discussing the question of motor transport and when the conditions of railway finance appeared very gloomy, they pleaded and rightly too that all

considerations must be shown to the railway administration because, after all is said and done, any deficits in the railway administration would come from the general taxpayer and any surplus, after providing for a reasonable reserve fund and other things, would go to the public. Sir, I am not one of those who, after taking the benefit from the public exchequer for building up my concern, will say that I have no further connection with that which built up my concern. Even now directly or indirectly the public exchequer and Government are supporting the railways against all other methods of transport, and the facilities and assistance given to the railways are much higher than is given to other means of transport. Therefore, in considering railway administration we must not also forget that the public finances deserve very careful consideration. And if the railway administration treats itself entirely as a commercial body with nothing whatever to do with the public, I do not think my Honourable friend, the Finance Member, will not consider putting an income-tax; and if at all he does avoid it I am sure when he has got a deficit he will try to reduce the limit and get income-tax on the salaries and thereby may probably bring in the poor hard-hit employees on the railways and by other means realise the wealth to make that good by such payments.

In considering an administration like the railway the general exchequer must be looked into from all points of view; and it should not be said that it has nothing to do except 1 per cent. as Mr. Mehta says. It is due from the commerce and industry and they should provide for it as after all everything depends on the public at large has got buying power; in other words, that without all this traffic in travelling and freight no business can be carried on. And the only way to do that is to ask the Finance Member to be equitable both to the railways and to the general taxpayer. We have been always saying that the general public has been taxed very much, and I do feel that the Finance Member,—of course he need not go into the accounts and the depreciation accounts of the railway administration as he goes for the Excess Profits Tax in order to get as much tax on income,—but, surely, when I am dealing with depreciation I should like that renewal and additional sums that are being written off I should like to be gone into and let me make one inquiry. Recently when we have been dismantling certain tracks these tracks are supposed to have been written off to revenue. I should like to know whether the value of these materials has really been given as a gift to War Department or the value thereof has been written up after depreciation or whether the value thereof has been worked out as of waste material. All renewals and additions must be specified and should not be put into ordinary revenue without careful consideration as to whether it should not go out of depreciation and to what extent renewals and other charges if at all should be added legitimately to the current revenue as, Sir, on this depends the balance sheet. Sir, I support the motion.

Mr. Muhammad Nauman (Patna and Chota Nagpur *cum* Orissa: Muhammadan): Sir, I rise to support the motion. My Honourable friend, Mr. Jamnadas Mehta, has fully explained how the Convention of 1924 is not being put into actual practice or has deviated from its original purpose. Without repeating his remarks I will only say that as the Convention has become old, a revision is very necessary. The relation between the railway budget and the general exchequer has been very peculiar since the time I became a Member of this House, *i.e.*, from 1935. We have seen that when we were having deficit budgets in the earlier

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stages the general exchequer was asked to give us substantial aid for meeting them; and now, when we have begun to get surpluses, we have instead of meeting only those obligations we have gone further and are contributing generously towards the revenue of the general exchequer. As Mr. Mehta pointed out, with the surpluses the expectations were that relief should go to those quarters which contributed to that surplus; but instead of that we find that the general exchequer is being benefited. I do not object as the time at which it is done is of exceptional conditions; but what I wish to impress is that although it has been said that our railways are a national asset of 800 crores and that it is a commercial enterprise which is running on commercial lines, yet in practice we find the opposite. The railways are not run on commercial lines but on bureaucratic lines to suit Government which run the administration. Even the heads of the railway administrations feel that they are responsible to no one,—I mean the General Managers and those others who run the railways.

My Honourable friend, Mr. Joshi, referred to the Central Advisory Committee, the Standing Finance Committee, and opportunity being given to this House to discuss the budget. I will not dilate upon it, but I will say that while it was the desire of the Committee to give six or eight days time it has been reduced to two days only during which period there is not enough time to place even a hundredth part of the grievances of the people before the House. As to the Central Advisory Committee, I have been a member of same since 1935. Its functions are only advisory and it has nothing to do with the working of the administration. We cannot raise any concrete question about the working of any particular railway; and even the Resolutions of this House, like the Resolution adopted in February 1940 regarding catering contracts, are not taken into consideration and remain a dead letter. Would it be possible in any other popular Assembly in the world? Could any other administration responsible to the legislature and to the people afford to flout the opinion of the House in the way they have done here in the matter of Resolution of 8th February, 1940? That is the story of the Central Advisory Committee.

As regards the Standing Finance Committee, as Mr. Joshi pointed out, the Members do not get the detailed report of the discussions there, and they have naturally a right to know whether their representatives on the Committee are doing their part properly and are able to grasp the questions placed before them and do justice to the cause for which they have been selected by this House or not. Although we discuss a lot—and I am glad that the Financial Commissioner Sir B. Staig, and Mr. Sankara Aiyar, have tried their best to give us facilities for understanding the financial matters, yet the Members of this House are perfectly justified in saying that they do not know what we said and what we did not, how we have voted and how we have not, and how and why we agreed to a certain proposal, and so on, and so forth. If these reports were to be made more comprehensive and elaborate I think that would give a better understanding to the Members of this House and would give a better justification to the members of the Standing Finance Committee who represent this House there.

Now, Sir, I come to the concrete issue of the capital charge and the Depreciation Fund. The method of charging Depreciation Fund has been on very peculiar lines in the Railways. I remember to have pointed out then to the Financial Commissioner Railways in the Standing Finance Committee as well that accumulation in

12 noon.

the Depreciation Fund has been sometimes unusually very high. Of course, I cannot claim to know much about accounts, but I have only said in the Standing Finance Committee that this has not been the practice in other commercial houses and whether they justify the present method of keeping on the Depreciation Fund in the manner in which they do at the present moment is also an important matter which a revision will only reveal and we will decide whether we should maintain this method or we should change same.

Then, Sir, the question of charging one per cent. interest on the Capital Account. Of course, that is a matter which my other friends have already discussed fully, and I do not want to add anything except this that I support Mr. Mehta's arguments and I also feel that it should not be more than that, and whatever income we may have from the Railways in excess of that it should go to provide further facilities to those who have contributed to that income, namely, there should be a reduction in fares and freights, there should be increase in amenities, in short any excess that there may be should be allocated for providing more facilities for the customers of Railways instead of a contribution to the general exchequer.

Now, Sir, the Railways have resorted to different manipulations in order to bring about this surplus. When the Motor Vehicles Bill was placed before this House, I and many of my colleagues did say definitely that this was a step to bring a definitely bigger income to the Railways at the cost of motor transport, and the travelling public

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The Honourable Member is moving over all sorts of subjects. I think he had better confine himself to the Convention.

Mr. Muhammad Nauman: Yes, Sir, I would only say that it is necessary that the Convention should be revised in the light of those factors which have arisen in the meantime. The conditions in 1924 were very different from those in 1942 and I feel that if a revision is made, we will have better facilities for all those things which we want to suggest and probably things will get clearer to everybody. With these words I support the motion.

Mr. K. C. Neogy (Dacca Division: Non-Muhammadan Rural): Sir, the Convention of 1924, itself contemplates periodical revisions of its clauses and I would remind the House that as early as September, 1928, a Committee of this House consisting of sixteen Members, elected by the vote of the Members of this House, was actually elected for the purpose of reviewing the working of this Convention with a view to making recommendations as regards the revision of any of its clauses that might be necessary. This Committee was presided over by the Finance Member, but, unfortunately, the Committee did not make satisfactory progress, and I had the honour of raising the issue, which has been raised today by my Honourable friend, Sir Fredrick James, in February 1930, and there was a very long debate on that occasion. I find that my speech occupies 6½ pages of the printed proceedings, but I propose to take not more than six minutes on this occasion to deal with it.

The then Honourable Member in charge of Railways, Sir George Rainy, gave an account as regards the progress that the Committee had

[Mr. K. C. Neogy.]

made in its investigations. He stated that the Committee after going into the matter for a short while appointed a sub-committee to go into certain detailed considerations. That Sub-committee had met from time to time and he promised on that occasion, that is to say, in February 1930, that the Sub-committee would be summoned towards the close of the Session. As far as I am aware, nothing further has been known about the matter. I should like my Honourable friend, when he gets up to reply, to tell us as to the progress that has already been made in this matter. It may be that a preliminary examination has already been made of the various questions, and valuable materials may have been collected thus reducing the work for any other Committee that may now be appointed.

Dr. P. N. Banerjea (Calcutta Suburbs: Non-Muhammadan Urban): The Sub-committee did not submit its Report.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: Very many issues do in fact suggest themselves to one's mind while dealing with this subject and I had to deal with very many of them in 1930. But the two main difficulties which were mentioned by Sir George Rainy on that occasion were (i) constitutional; and (ii) financial. In regard to the constitutional point, Sir George Rainy stated that a final arrangement with the Railways would very much depend upon the general constitutional structure that may be put up in India as a result of the deliberations that were then going on in England. Well, that was the position in 1930. The 1935 Act definitely contemplates the setting up of a Statutory Railway Authority and there is a separate chapter devoted to it. Now, as far as the Statutory Railway Authority is concerned, I must say that Indian opinion is very critical of this proposal . . .

Dr. P. N. Banerjea: Strongly opposed.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: But, then, luckily for us today that provision in the Constitution has not yet been brought into operation. Going through the relevant provisions in the Act, however, I find that there are certain very salutary principles laid down. For instance, in one of the sections it is stated that the Railway should be managed as a commercial proposition having due regard to the interest of trade, industry, agriculture and the general public. Then, again, another section lays down certain broad principles which should govern the expenditure of the Railway fund. It also refers to the contribution payable by the Railways to the General Exchequer, though nothing definite is stated therein in regard to this matter. Now, Sir, so far as the constitutional question is concerned, we have that picture of the Statutory Railway Authority before us and I do not suppose the Honourable Member will now have any difficulty on this account to deal with this question. But in so far as the working of the present convention goes, I do not suppose that it is very much inconsistent in any way with the spirit of the Statutory Railway Authority provisions of the Act, excepting that the Railway Administration is expected in future to be brought more under the control of the Governor General than of the Governor General in Council. That, of course, is a very broad point that I have stated. There are other features to which I do not want to refer just on the present occasion.

As regards the financial difficulties, well I do not know if Sir George Rainy had definitely any difficulty in mind, excepting that he did not know what the demands of the general exchequer on the revenues of the Indian Railways would be. We have worked this Convention for the last 18 years, and we have had lean years and we have had very prosperous years too; and I do think that we are now in a position to undertake an impartial examination of the financial aspects of the question. As regards this financial question, I should like incidentally to refer to certain statutory expectations, if I might use that word, that had been aroused in the minds of the provinces in regard to getting a share of the income-tax revenue from the Centre; and in dealing with this and many other questions, Sir Otto Neimayer had to refer to the contribution that was expected to be made by the railways. When Sir Otto Neimayer made his report, the railway finances were in a very bad way and he naturally took a very gloomy view of things; but now the situation has considerably improved, and I do hope that my Honourable friend will not have any great difficulty in dealing with the financial aspect of the problem.

Several points have been made rather of a detailed character by the speakers who have gone before me; but as I have no time now, I should only like to say that there are two sides to almost every question, and although I may not be able to deal with all the various points that have been touched upon from my own point of view, I must say that I do not agree with all that has been said by the previous speakers. As a matter of fact I think that criticisms of a detailed character that have been made already really fall within the purview of the duties of the committee, if any, that may be set up to examine this Convention. However, I should like to summarise the points on which the inquiry should proceed.

First of all, the question of the extent and nature of control that this House should exercise over the railway administration and railway finance; and my Honourable friend, Mr. Joshi, has already raised the question of the privilege of this House, and I strongly support his observations on that point. Then, of course, we have incidentally to consider the functions of the Railway Finance Committee as well as the Central Advisory Committee. The next point to my mind would be dealing with the relations between the Finance Department and the Railway Department; for instance, the position of the Financial Commissioner, to which I had to refer more than once previously, would have to be examined in the light of actual experience. Then the question of the nature and extent of the accounts control which again is a very important matter. Next comes the question of the devolution of the powers of sanction that has been made in favour of different authorities. There is definitely a view that the devolution has gone absolutely too far. I read a debate that was raised at the instance of Mr. Chapman-Mortimer sometime back on this question. Then the next one would be the question of allocation of expenditure between capital and revenue in particular matters. Then comes the contribution to the general exchequer. Next, the Reserve and Depreciation Funds, their composition and utilisation. Then last, but not least, the general principles that should govern the railway administration, such as in matters of railway freights and rates.

I should not like to take up any more of the time of the House

Dr. P. N. Banerjee: Then about the amortisation fund.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: That again is a question that will have to be discussed perhaps by a small committee rather than by this House just at the present moment. It would also depend upon the financial position; if we can possibly have an amortisation fund, so much the better, but on that point I should not like to dogmatise, particularly in the absence of certain details.

This is all that I wanted to say and I do hope that when my Honourable friend gets up, he will be able to give a favourable reply to this debate.

The Honourable Sir Andrew Clow: Sir, I am grateful to Sir Frederick James for raising this very important issue and for speaking as he did *con amore*, an example which has been followed, I think, by the other speakers. We have had in the course of the debate observations on what I might call minor issues, although not unimportant, and I propose to deal with these very lightly. For example, as regards the Central Advisory Council, I must say that I myself have found it of very great value. We have discussed problems of policy of the first importance, such as the acquisition of railways and questions of safety. We have even descended to catering contracts; and while on the subject of that I might say in reply to Mr. Nauman that there has been no flouting of any conclusion reached in this House. The Resolution to which he referred was withdrawn on my giving an assurance which I implemented fully, and the policy was, subsequently, reviewed by the Central Advisory Council and we adhere to that policy.

Then there is the big question of depreciation. That would require a long speech in itself, and I do not propose to enter on that field in detail. I would suggest that Honourable Members who wish to study the question might look up the papers to which Sir Frederick James referred, the appropriation accounts, and to which Mr. Jamnadas Mehta also referred. I think they might also study the speech made in this House about two years ago by Sir Bentic Staig when he dealt with this question very fully—the adequacy of the Depreciation Fund. I have studied it myself in considerable detail with the very valuable assistance of officers in the finance side of the Railway Board and have been quite convinced that there is no substance in the plea that the Depreciation Fund is too large and that we are putting too much into it. Mr. Jamnadas Mehta cited the experience of the past 18 years and said that in the last 18 years we had put more into it than we had taken out. Of course we have. But then a great many of our assets are new; there was very substantial capital expenditure until only a few years ago and the lives of some of our assets, in reaching our present calculation, are taken at, I think, 200 years. So that we must expect at the moment to be putting more into the Depreciation Fund than we have taken out of it, and that applies especially at a time when we are having difficulty in making renewals.

To come to the Convention itself, it is possible to hold a great many opinions. As Members who were at that time Members of the Assembly will recollect, the Government proposal was that 5/8ths of one per cent. should be given to general revenues. That was enlarged in the course of its progress through the Assembly, first, I think, by raising it to one per cent. and then by what I might call the frills to which Mr. Jamnadas Mehta referred and which he was anxious to see cut off, little provisions adding 1/5th and 1/3 and so on. Although the Government of India had felt at the time that 5/8th of one per cent. was the most that could

reasonably be asked, they felt later that they ought to defer to the views of this Assembly in the matter and they accepted the Convention in the form that the Assembly desired.

There has been a good deal of condemnation later of the Convention, but I am not prepared to say that in the circumstances of the time it was an ungenerous deal. But of course conditions changed rather radically after the Convention was passed. In the first place, there came in motor competition on a scale which was certainly not envisaged by the framers of the Convention. In the second place, charges for labour went up to an extent that in that ungenerous time was not foreseen. I mentioned these two in a speech some time ago in the House, and a critic writing to me pointed out that I had omitted to mention another important change, and that was the adoption of a policy of protection which of course diminished the long leads of exports to the ports and tended to give shorter leads. I do not include that, because that is rather a temporary factor for the increasing industrialisation should neutralize the loss which in the initial stages that policy probably caused to the railways.

But these two other factors I had mentioned remained. And speaking entirely for myself as Railway Member, and not for my Honourable friend, the Finance Member, who, I am asked to say, owing to another engagement could not be present here when the last speaker made his speech, I would certainly say if we were confronted with times of peace, "give us a better deal than we got in 1924". And, again speaking personally, my own view would be it is rather unreasonable to ask the Railways to pay money in years when the money is not there, and that has been in the past one of the serious difficulties that the Convention had raised. At the same time we must not forget that the original object of the Convention and the purpose which those who passed it thought they were serving lay precisely in that point. They thought they were providing the Finance Member with a sure and steady income which would not depend on the fluctuations of railway economics. Whether it is possible to adhere in the light of our experience to that approach, I very much doubt.

We are still faced with a further difficulty, and that is that we have to deal with war, and not with peace. As I said a few moments ago, if we were in times of peace, we should certainly say "give us a better deal; give us a smaller liability than the Convention imposed". but I am not at all sure that I will be prepared to take the same line in the present exceptional circumstances,—circumstances which were never foreseen by the framers of the Convention. For I feel that if we are going to continue to earn surpluses at anything approaching the present rate, it can be said with a good deal of force that the Convention does not give the general taxpayer a sufficiently good deal, and that he should get greater relief in war time than the Convention affords. We are thus faced with the problem, for those who are inclined to accept those views, of whether you can frame a system which will meet equitably the two very different conditions of war and peace, and that is the question which I would like the House to think over. As I indicated in my original budget speech, we are at present merely repaying a debt due under the Convention, and we are not paying what I called a few moments ago the frills, we are repaying the annual one per cent. contributions which in Mr. Jamnadas Mehta's view are a fair charge on the Railways. But if we find a little later that the present prospects held out in my Budget speech are going

[Sir Andrew Clow.]

to be fulfilled, obviously a different situation will arise, because we shall be confronted next year with a position in which the surpluses cannot be applied to the redemption of that debt. It will all or most of it have been redeemed, and the House will have to come to a conclusion as to what procedure should be followed. I would, therefore, suggest that we cannot at this moment reach a conclusion that the Convention must be revised and may prove that we shall have to have an interim arrangement for the period of the war. But I may say that if somewhat later in the year we find the possibilities envisaged in my Budget speech are being fulfilled, we shall consider most sympathetically the proposal which Sir Frederick James has put forward.

Sir F. E. James: Sir, may I ask the leave of the House to withdraw the motion?

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Has the Honourable Member the leave of the House to withdraw the motion?

Several Honourable Members: Yes. Yes.

The motion was, by leave of the Assembly, withdrawn.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The next one is in the name of Mr. Ramsay Scott:

Functions of the New Central Transport Organization and the Need for co-ordinating all Forms of Transport.

Mr. J. Ramsay Scott (United Provinces: European): Sir, I move:

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

The object of my cut motion is to give the Government an opportunity to explain to us more fully their new Transport Organization and its functions. The latest baby of the Government of India has come into existence with little pomp and ceremony, and it even lacks an official name.

Mr. Thomas Sharp in the *Political Quarterly* recently said, the civil service tradition is slow but sure, and ten paces aside to every one forward, and the thing I want to know is not so much where we stand as is what direction we are going.

The transport system of India is vital to the needs of 300 million agriculturists who wish to get their produce marketed and to the 380 millions in India who have to keep body and soul together. I know of no greater internal problem today than transport. The Honourable Member told us that the Railways were overloaded and that he was cutting down passenger services to increase goods services, and with this brief reference and with tears in his eyes he dismissed the subject as if that was all he could say or do. We, on this side, are not satisfied with this position, and something has got to be done, and that something quickly. I would ask you what are the powers of the new triumvirate? Are they just three nice old gentlemen who will journey round the provinces in a comfortable saloon and pat provincial officials on the head and say be a good boy and do this or that? The Railways want gingering up. We want quicker transport of goods and less wagons decorating the landscape in the vicinity of big stations on their endless miles of sidings. I still see a rather dog-in-the-manger policy as regards the use of Railway bridges by road transport, and this attitude must be altered.

There are other forms of transport, and however small their capacity compared to railways, they must not only be examined but used and used intensively without delay. The all powerful Railways today are like a lion in a snare. It needs the two per cent. mouse of other forms of transport to nibble the bonds and help him out. What use are you making of your rivers, of your canals, and of your waterways and roads? It is essential that road transport be properly used to assist the railways, to carry passengers and goods short distances, say up to 50 miles, and in fact to act as feeders to railways. I shall be told that the snag is lack of petrol. Well, Sir, Japan was faced with this problem, and she realised it and planned ahead and had charcoal gas buses running in 1937. It did not need two years of war to make her take stock of the situation.

Now, Sir, let us examine our resources of Road Transport and fuel, and I shall give the United Provinces figures only because I know them best. Our petrol consumption in the United Provinces is 65 to 70 lakhs of gallons and we have 3,000 buses and 700 lorries. I believe these require 50 lakhs of gallons to run an average 2,000 miles per month. Now, Sir, what is the fuel position or the alternative fuel position? We have three alternative fuels, the basis of two of these are molasses of which we have an available supply of 400,000 tons in India of which 300,000 tons are available in the United Provinces and Bihar and I have no doubt that this output could be increased by 50 per cent. The first fuel is called Power Alcohol, and because of its freedom from water it can readily be mixed with petrol or it can be used by itself. The United Provinces has only one distillery which produces five lakhs of gallons a year. There are only two other distilleries in India both in Indian States. I want the Honourable Member to tell us if we are or are not in a position to put down more plants and if so, how quickly, taking into consideration the copper and steel position.

The second fuel is rectified spirits and every distillery in the country which produces country spirit can produce rectified spirit. The United Provinces have six distilleries and their total output is in the neighbourhood of 17 lakhs gallons. Can we increase these too? This fuel cannot be mixed with petrol but must be used by itself.

The third fuel is based on charcoal and it takes about 21 lbs. of charcoal or 64 lbs. of wood to enable a bus to travel 17 miles or the same distance as a bus will travel on a gallon of petrol under the best conditions. One bus or lorry requires a ton of charcoal to travel 2,000 miles per month. Only half the United Provinces buses if put on charcoal gas would require 2,000 tons of charcoal monthly. What have you done to see that Forest officers have received orders to get on with the production of charcoal? How many kilns will be required and are you providing the necessary mild steel, as each kiln requires a ton? A kiln can produce 40 tons a month; so in the United Provinces alone you require 50 tons of mild steel as an initial outlay.

Then we come to the equipment of the bus. 2,000 plants will require steel and what are you doing to see that the firms making these plants are supplied with steel. These plants are costly, but hire purchase firms can be utilised. Fuels, I believe, come under the Scientific Industrial Research Board, but is this body or any other body dealing with the development of gas producer plants? Next, I ask you what plans you have for the sale of these fuels? I also foresee that some provinces which are not

[Mr. J. Ramsay Scott.]

so well off as the United Provinces will also have to be helped out with alternative fuels. I have endeavoured to put the situation before you as fully as I can, in the short time at my disposal, in order that the Honourable Member can satisfy us in his reply. Yesterday I spoke about the War Transport Board and I hope the Honourable Member can also tell us about its activities and powers.

I conclude by remarking that there is a saying that God helps those who help themselves and I assure you, Sir, that this House and Industry is willing to help and is asking to be told in what way they can best assist to co-ordinate all forms of transport to meet the needs of the India we serve.

Sir, I move.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Cut motion moved: "That the demand under the head 'Railway Board' be reduced by Rs. 100."

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: Sir, I support this cut motion very heartily; the criticism that is made on the floor of the House is done, I submit, with the friendliest motives and in no spirit of hostility. The difficulties of the railways at the present moment are easily appreciated and nothing that I propose to say is intended to convey that the Railway Board are not doing what they should do. Notwithstanding that, the feeling remains that the public are being starved and if hostilities come too close to India, the public will have to undergo very severe trials and difficulties. But if the starvation of transport is to reach the present proportions that it has done the future can only be visualised with a great deal of anxiety. As I told the House some days ago, some of the raw produce of the country and some of the perishable articles are not being transported with ease and facility. Not only are they not being transported with ease and facility but they are actually being locked up in the godowns and in the fields. That being the case, the civil life of the public is very largely hampered. The one condition of a successful war, in my opinion, is that the civil life should be kept up as far as possible near to the normal. With this object it is that I am going to suggest to the Honourable the Railway Member one or two more points.

As he himself knows, the present strain on the railways is somewhat artificial because in the absence of coastal shipping services a part of this transport has been diverted to the railways. With the virtual paralysis of the bus traffic and the lorry traffic, the pressure on railways has gone up, and certainly we do not wish to revert to the bullock-cart days. I would like to have some information about the new transport organisation which has been set up, I want to ask the Government and the Railway Board whether they are thinking of any alternative method. There is a great deal of suspicion among permanent officials of any new idea. They generally look upon enthusiasm with mistrust. In fact, they take it as a sign of immature ideas. I want that this mentality should go. Particularly in these times they should have an open mind about everything that is suggested to them. No suggestion should be looked upon with suspicion. Every suggestion should be encouraged and often five that may be rejected the sixth may be so helpful that it might solve the difficulty. What happened in the last war in America? A gentleman called Hogg invented a parachute. It was proved to the hilt that it was possible to have parachutist troops. The American Army Headquarters tried the experiment

and it was proved that the man was right. The newspapers acclaimed it as a real triumph of science but the Army Headquarters turned it down, and it is only now in this war the parachutists have come into their own after 25 years. What would have been the military history of the world, what would have been the fortunes of the world and what turn events would have taken if the mentality of the permanent officials in America were a little less opaque and a little more transparent and if it was open to new ideas, particularly at a time like this.

I am referring now in particular to a proposal which has been before the Railway Board for many years. It is the proposal for Guideways. It is an alternative transport which is cheap and which is, I understand, practical. As I am not a technical man, I can pronounce no judgment on the technical aspect of that question. But the scheme has been before them for several years. It was pronounced to be good by the ex-Chief Commissioner of Railways, Sir Guthrie Russell. Mr. Skelton, the engineer who has invented this system was a railway engineer. Sir Guthrie Russell had recommended this scheme to the Kashmir Government some years ago wishing it all success. I shall read those three lines which at least ought to convince the Railway Board and the Government of India that at a time like this, whatever may be the ultimate result of this investigation, the least they can do is to give a trial to the Guideways proposal. Don't mind if it fails. Here is an experiment which has got the blessings of Sir Guthrie Russell and in view of the need of more transport in which we stand today, when the civilian life is being already hampered, the letter of Sir Guthrie Russell to Mr. Skelton deserves the most careful consideration of Government. This is what Sir Guthrie Russell wrote to Mr. Skelton: The letter is dated the 26th September, 1939:

"My dear Skelton: Reference your letter D/-Nil from Srinagar. I wish you every success with the military authorities."

That means that Mr. Skelton was trying to have the support of the military authorities in introducing the Guideways system in the Kashmir State where there are not enough railways. The letter goes on:

"I may say I have heard from the Prime Minister of Kashmir and have replied to him recommending that he should give your 'Guideways' a trial in Kashmir. There would seem to be no reason why they should not despite war," etc., etc.

Sir, I do not wish to read the other letters but in view of the extreme necessity of the hour and in view of the loud complaints of the public and in view of the war, this system which has the backing of Sir Guthrie Russell should be given a trial. I believe it has also the support of several eminent engineers including the present General Manager of one of the Railways in India. I do not wish to give their names. I think that at least a case is made out that my friend, Sir Andrew Clow, should consider the advisability of making an experiment. Sir, I support the motion.

The Honourable Mr. M. S. Aney: What is this Guideways system?

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: It is a system of transport which I understand carries 28 passengers. The cost of the vehicle is only Rs. 6,400 and it runs on a concrete road. I cannot give you more particulars, because myself know this in a casual manner and my time is over.

The Honourable Sir Andrew Clow: Sir, although the Mover did me the courtesy of giving me beforehand the points he was going to raise, they only came into my hand as I entered the House this morning and having been

[Sir Andrew Clow.]

busy since with a very important subject, I am afraid it has not been possible for me to collect detailed information as to kilns, forests and quantities of steel for which he asks but I can deal with the more general question that he raised.

I think one of his first demands was to know what was being done and what the function of the new organisation relating to roads was. Well, our intention is that it should be charged with the duty of making a close study of the problem of maintenance of road transport in order to secure its fullest utilisation in consultation with the Provincial and Railway Administrations. For example, two important subjects which it is going to tackle are the control of petrol and the possibilities of developing other fuels and, particularly, the use of producer gas. I cannot tell the Honourable Member off-hand precisely what the difficulties are in the way of getting plant for industrial alcohol but I understand that they are such as to make it not a very optimistic outlook for a large expansion in that direction.

Before I go on to the bigger subject that he raised, I ought to make just a remark or two about the question of Guideways, which Mr. Jamnadas Mehta has brought to the notice of the House on more than one occasion. I have also devoted some study to this question a year or two ago and I do not think I am revealing any secret when I say that while Sir Guthrie Russell was anxious to see an experiment done in Kashmir he was not taking the same view of the invention as Mr. Jamnadas Mehta does. We are always anxious to see experiments because we always try to learn from them and actually a short length of Guideway was erected and put into operation in the Bombay Presidency. But I am quite clear in my own mind that at the present time the attempt to get the steel to make the single rail for the Guideway, for the rolling stock and everything else would be a waste and that it cannot act as a substitute for the shortage of railway transport on which Mr. Jamnadas Mehta dwelt. What its possibilities are in times of peace it is not necessary for me to discuss.

Now, I have tried to emphasize more than once in this House that although we are anxious and will do our best to develop road transport and not merely mechanical transport but also animal-drawn transport, that is much the smaller side of the question. I think both the speakers recognised that. I gave an estimate lately which was that in present conditions motor transport is carrying less than two per cent. in the form of goods of what the Railways are carrying, so that even if we were successful in our ambition to increase that by a large amount, even if it be a hundred per cent. increase, it would still be a comparatively small contribution. The vital question is that to which Mr. Jamnadas Mehta referred, the difficulty of providing for all the demands upon the services of the Railways. We have been considering that for some time. The Railways have themselves been exercising a certain amount of discretion as regards the traffic they will take and the traffic they cannot. We have to weigh up the very different demands—demands for the movement of troops, for the movement of supplies, of coal, of other goods and for the evacuation of persons from certain areas, and we have come to the conclusion that the time has come to systematise the control of transport priorities. In the initial stage this work will be in the charge of the Communications Secretary who will be relieved of the bulk of his present work by the immediate appointment of an Additional Secretary. He will be given at once an experienced

Railway Traffic Officer to serve as Controller of Railway Priorities and will be responsible for the work of the Road Transport Organisation to which I have been referring. He will work from the start in the closest co-operation with the Provincial Boards of Transport and with Provincial Governments. The Communications Secretary, as a Member of the Railway Board, will maintain the closest touch with its activities but he will of course have independent and direct access to Government. The general organisation will be developed with all expedition and it may involve departmental changes of a more extensive character.

Sir F. E. James: May I ask the Honourable Member this? Did I understand him to say that there will be a special officer appointed to deal with railway priorities in the Secretariat of the Communications Department?

The Honourable Sir Andrew Olow: Yes, almost at once. I hope the House will agree with me that, while we should not neglect the smaller questions of full development of road transport and any other forms of transport, we can find, the really vital problem lies here in getting the best use we can out of our railways which are rendering such immense services and in ensuring that, when as at present they cannot meet all the demands made upon them, the right demands have priority in such circumstances.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The question is: "That the demand under the head 'Railway Board' be reduced by Rs. 100."

Mr. J. Ramsay Scott: I beg leave of the House to withdraw the motion.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Has the Honourable Member leave of the House to withdraw the motion?

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: I object.

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

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

The motion was negatived.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): There is no other motion in the name of the European Group. The Muslim League Party have to begin at 1 o'clock, and it is now five minutes to one. If there is no objection, they can begin their cut motions now.

Grievances of the Pilgrims to the Hejaz and Board's Policy in not agreeing to issue cheap Return Tickets to the Pilgrims.

Khan Bahadur Shaikh Fazl-i-Haq Piracha (North-West Punjab: Muhammadan): Sir, I beg to move:

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

Sir, in moving this cut, I want to discuss the grievances of Mussalmans in not being allowed the benefit of railway concessions and other travelling facilities for pilgrims to the holy land of Hejaz. Sir, when I move this cut I feel that it has become a sort of vain practice every year to talk on

[Khan Bahadur Shaikh Fazl-i-Haq Piracha.]

these matters without any tangible result. But as there is no other suitable occasion in the Legislative Assembly to press for such things, I avail of this opportunity to give vent to my feelings.

Sir, as a matter of fact, the Honourable the Communications Member has absolutely turned a deaf ear to the numberless grievances of the Mussalmans, and it painfully reminds me of the gloomy occasion when we walked out, as a protest, at the time of the presentation of the last year's Railway Budget. At this time I am putting before him a very simple request which is being allowed to all and sundry but to the Mussalmans.

When I ask for facilities for return journey at concessional rates for Haj pilgrims, I do not ask for anything new, which is impossible for the Railway Administration and which they are not allowing to others. There are in vogue a number of concessions for travelling in the railway trains in all the Indian railways. They allow concessional rates for all those passengers who take pleasure trips to the hill stations, to entertaining companies, i.e., parties of dancers, musicians and actors, etc., cinema film producing companies, cricket, football, hockey, volley ball and other sports and athletic teams, polo teams, pigsticking parties, horses and ponies for races and competitions, exhibits for exhibitions and shows, Y.M.C.A. conference members, Christmas, Dusehra and Easter Holidays concessions, concessions to commercial travellers and fox hounds, and in the days of Durga Puja, Kumbh Mela and other *Ashnans* and the like fairs. It is very sad indeed that the Railway Administration never thought for a moment to extend the same facilities and concessions to the Haj pilgrims who have to travel from various parts of the country every year in large numbers to the pilgrim ports.

Sir, when the principle of concessional return tickets is followed for several places of pilgrimage in India by almost all the Indian railways, is it not a grave and very shameful injustice to the Mussalmans, and is this not one-sided favouritism, intentionally excluding the Mussalmans from all these concessions?

The principle of issuing return tickets at concessional rates is also observed by the shipping companies, that undertake pilgrim traffic, and in order to avoid expense and trouble to the Government to repatriate destitute pilgrims, it has been ruled for every pilgrim, either to buy a return ticket for sea journey to Jeddah and back, or to deposit money in cash with the Government, sufficient to meet the return journey expenses. The same principle of return tickets if adopted by the railways will be doing nothing more than helping the Government in decreasing the number of destitute pilgrims. The fact that the railway administration will have the use of the money paid for the return at least for four or five months earlier, will be a compensation to some extent for the concession allowed to the pilgrims.

I know that some of these concessions have now been only suspended and temporarily withdrawn on account of defence services, yet there are some still prevailing. I have been putting the matter before Members in charge of Railways year after year, but no attention, whatsoever, has ever been paid to this request. The Standing Haj Committee also made a similar request but to no result. I am absolutely at a loss to understand any valid reason for this unreasonable refusal and rejection on the part of the railway authorities, of this very plain request.

Sir, in the year 1929 this recommendation was also made by the Haj Enquiry Committee which was set up by the Government under the chairmanship of an I.C.S. officer, to enquire into the inconveniences and troubles of the Haj pilgrims and to make their recommendations in that respect. But the House will be astonished to know that no action has been taken on this recommendation along with so many others for the last 13 years. The real thing is that in relation to the Haj pilgrim question Government accept whatever suit them and quietly reject those recommendations that are in favour of the pilgrims.

For the information of Honourable Members I would quote the recommendation by the Haj Enquiry Committee in their report and also their observations on this question. On page 157 they have made the following recommendation :

"The Railway Board should be requested to grant return tickets of all classes, available for eight months, at the rate of a fare and a third, issuable at all railway stations, on production of a pilgrim pass for the current year."

In this respect they have remarked as follows on page 36 of the Report, in paragraph 66 :

"We also consider that the Railway Board should be requested to grant return tickets at concessional rates to pilgrims. Several railway companies in India at present do give certain concessions in respect of fares to and from places of pilgrimage in India, and also in respect of first and second class passengers travelling to hill stations, the return tickets being available for a period of eight months. We would strongly press for the grant of similar concessions to pilgrims to the Hedjaz by the issue of return tickets of all classes available for eight months at the rate of a fare and a third and obtainable at all railway stations on production of a pilgrim pass for the current year. We understand that third class return tickets have, on occasions of fairs and holidays, been issued by certain railways at a concessional rate, and in view of the importance of the traffic and the fact that the company will have the use of the money paid for the return journey for at least two or three months, we consider that the concession might reasonably be granted to pilgrims to the Hedjaz."

Since the publication of the Haj Enquiry Committee Report, myself and several other Muslim Members of this House have been pursuing this question in the Assembly debates and otherwise, but to no result.

Sir, the manner in which this question is being treated by the Railway Administration is unbearable and can no longer be tolerated
 1 P.M. by the Mussalmans. We thought that the protest in general, we demonstrated against the very partial attitude of the Communications Department, towards matters relating to Mussalmans and our expression of no-confidence in the authorities of that Department last year would open their slumbering eyes and that they would realise the grave and very wide dissatisfaction among the general members of my community, and now they will make amends for, but it seems, Sir, that that had produced no effect and some other effective means shall have to be adopted. I will most strongly and sincerely ask the Honourable Member in charge to ponder over the question of affording genuine and legitimate facilities to Haj pilgrims and win our confidence. It will not at all affect the enormous and ever increasing revenues of his Department, but relying on the results of other concessions, it can confidently be said that it will surely increase the earnings of the railways and enhance the credit and popularity of the department. I hope and expect that the Honourable Member will consider this old demand of ours in a sympathetic way and relieve us of the burden of that great feeling that he is not doing anything for us. I

[Khan Bahadur Shaikh Fazl-i-Haq Piracha.]

realise that requirements of war may be put before us to shake off our modest and just request, but I shall be much content if the Honourable Member admits that the demands of the Haj pilgrims for railway concessions are based on justice and that they will be allowed as soon as the pressure of the defence services is decreased. We do not want to put him in an awkward position about the enforcement of railway concessions for Haj pilgrims during the war, although he cannot deny that there are still many concessions allowed in railway journey to others.

Sir, before resuming my seat, I would say something more for the provision of certain other travelling amenities to the Haj pilgrim passengers. Sir, from the pre-war figures of the pilgrims that embarked at the pilgrim ports of Karachi, Calcutta and Bombay, it appears that the total number of them in the year 1939 was about 22,000 and in 1938 was about 24,000, twenty-five per cent. of whom were women and out of this number about 75 per cent. were from the rural areas and the rest from urban areas.

It is evident that out of these thousands of pilgrims there is a very small number that travel in a class higher than the third, in the railway journey and in deck while on board the steamer. Most of the pilgrims come from the villages and they are often totally inexperienced of railway journey even and, therefore, they have to undergo great hardships, inconveniences and troubles during their journey in the train. People coming from the countryside and from places far off from the railway lines have to change at several junctions and it happens more than often that not only do they miss trains but their companions as well, nay most of them even lose their luggage. These people deserve a greater care, attention and sympathy of the Railway Administration. These poor and ignorant passengers who are often accompanied by their female relations do not find even seating accommodation in the mail trains and have all along to undertake journey in the slow passenger trains and, therefore, they have to take several uncomfortable days and nights to reach their destination, that is, the pilgrim ports. For instance, a pilgrim coming from Peshawar side has to travel over a thousand miles to reach Karachi port and over 1,500 miles to reach the Bombay port. It can easily be imagined how long is the distance they have to travel and how much inconveniences and troubles they have to face.

The plight of the third class passengers has always been discussed on the floor of the House and therefore I need not repeat those grievances here again. They are well known to Honourable Members of the House. The pilgrims owing to overcrowding in the trains cannot even find space and opportunity to say their five time prayers during the rail journey and, thereby, feel extremely embarrassed. The Haj Committee that travelled all over India in making enquiries were fully conscious of these troubles and it was on that account that they made a recommendation in this respect which I would read for the information of the House. They recommended:

"Whenever it is possible to organise the despatch of pilgrims by special trains or in batches of fifty or so at a time, the railway companies should be requested to provide special facilities, e.g., rolling stock such as is used in military trains, or on a scale in excess of the accommodation ordinarily given to third class passengers, guards, or conductors well acquainted with the pilgrims' language, suitable facilities for prayers and refreshments en route etc."

On page 36, of their report they observed:

"The railway journey to the port of embarkation in a third class carriage is, as already stated, normally very uncomfortable. Where it is possible to organise the despatch of pilgrims by special trains we have every reason to believe on the assurance of the representatives of the Bengal Nagpur Railway who were good enough to appear before us at Calcutta as well as from correspondence with the Publicity Officer for Railways, that the railway companies will be prepared to grant special facilities, and will arrange for the provision of guards or conductors well acquainted with the pilgrims' language as well as for suitable refreshments *en route*, and possibly for rolling stock, such as is used in military trains, to enable the pilgrim to take some rest on the journey, or, if this is impossible, for accommodation in excess of that provided for the ordinary third class passenger, which will enable the pilgrim to travel with his luggage in comfort. Arrangements could probably be made to halt such special trains at times convenient for congregational prayers. Where the number of pilgrims available is not adequate for a special train, but amounts to fifty or more, it will be possible to reserve similar accommodation for them on ordinary trains."

Sir, although as observed by the Committee, the representatives of various railways that appeared as witnesses before the Committee assured the Members that they will be prepared to grant special facilities to the Haj pilgrims as suggested by them, yet nothing has so far been done in this connection. I would emphatically request the Honourable the Communications Member to consider the recommendation of the Haj Committee and to arrange to run special trains for Haj pilgrims from principal railway stations of the Provinces, for the convenience of the Hajees that travel in so large a number from all parts of India. For such persons as are at distant places from the main lines and the principal railway stations, reserved through compartments should be made to run to be ultimately attached with either the special trains or mail trains going to the nearest pilgrim port. By doing so all the inconveniences and troubles of the Haj pilgrims during the railway journey will be automatically removed. I think this will not cost anything extra to the administration. The special trains and the reserved through compartments should be made to run keeping in view the sailing dates of the pilgrim ships from the pilgrim ports so that the pilgrims reach the port only a day or two earlier and are not compelled to stay for many days in wait for the departure of the pilgrim ships.

Sir, I move the motion with the hope that it will have the general support of the House and that of the Honourable the Communications Member.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Cut motion moved: "That the demand under the head 'Railway Board' be reduced by Rs. 100."

Maulvi Muhammad Abdul Ghani (Tirhut Division: Muhammadan): Sir, this cut motion is not a censure motion on the Government because the very words put in the notice of the cut motion indicate that. I agree with the Mover of the cut motion that this question has been urged from time to time. Since I came to this House, I have given notice every year of similar cut motions since 1938. This year too it struck me that this grievance of the non-extension of return concession tickets to persons going to Hedjaz or Kerbala should be repeated once more. However, I urge the concession for these people also. The Government are not going to lose anything. Approximately about 12,000 people go on pilgrimage to the Hedjaz and also a fair number to Kerbala. This year on account of

[Maulvi Muhammad Abdul Ghani.]

the war, I understand, the number on the whole has been reduced. So, if the Railway Board asks the various railways to extend this concession to the poor pilgrims to the Hedjaz and Kerbala they will gain in two ways. These return tickets will be issued for a period of over three months and many of these men die in the Hedjaz or *en route*; so there will be no refund of this money which will be gained by the railways. This concession has been extended to passengers in India on various occasions like Diwali, Christmas and even Easter, without regard to caste or creed. The concession demanded here is very modest, and it is not for all Muslims but only for those Muslims who go on pilgrimage to the Hedjaz. I think the Honourable Member should not grudge this, specially when he is not losing anything but rather gaining. There will also be no justification for refusing it to a special class of people, and it will add to the credit of the railways if they extend it to this sect of people. For a man of religious turn of mind like the Communications Member it should not be difficult to grant this modest demand. It is not in any sense a threat but a request and I hope the Honourable Member will see his way to accept the motion.

Maulvi Syed Murtuza Sahib Bahadur (South Madras: Muhammadan): Sir, as one of the members of the Haj Inquiry Committee, I am much interested in this question. My Honourable friend, Khan Bahadur Piracha, has made out a very strong case, and I support him whole-heartedly. He quoted two recommendations of the then Haj Inquiry Committee of which my Honourable friend, Sir Abdoola Haroon, and myself were members. Of course, we realise that our recommendations have not at all been heeded, though the Committee was presided over by Sir H. B. Clayton, I.C.S.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The Honourable Member may continue after Lunch.

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

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

Maulvi Syed Murtuza Sahib Bahadur: Mr. Deputy President, I was saying, before the House adjourned for Lunch, that the Haj Enquiry Committee was presided over by Sir H. B. Clayton, who, as a true Christian, entered into the feelings of the pilgrims after examining those who undertook the pilgrimage. After deliberate consideration which covered a period of more than a month and a half, we drew up the Report. The Secretary of the Committee, Khan Bahadur Mohammad Inamul Huk, a Government servant, I am sorry to say, died just before we drew up the report at Poona. We keenly felt his demise just as that moment when we were working as a team. Sir H. B. Clayton went deep into each and every question along with the other members of the Committee, and the outcome thereof are the recommendations referred to by the Honourable the Mover of this motion.

Sir, in this connection, there is one point to which attention has to be drawn. It is a very momentous one. Pilgrimage to Mecca is not like

ordinary pilgrimages, such as to Ajmer Sharif, or Pakpatan Sharif or even Baghdad or Kartala-i-Mualla. It is incumbent on each and every Muslim who can afford to meet the expenses of the journey and who is bodily able to undertake the journey. Of course, there are some exceptions. According to Islamic law, if any one, though strong enough to undertake the journey, has got his old parents whom he has to serve and if there is no one else to serve them, he might put off the journey till his parents are all right or till they do not stand in need of his help. Such being the case, the Government should go into the matter very deeply and enter into the feelings of the poor pilgrims who form the majority. Nearly 75 per cent. or even 80 per cent. of the people that go to Mecca come under the category of the poor and they are not at all well-to-do persons. So, Sir, this concession, if granted, will be very helpful to the poor.

It may now be asked as to how it is that when it is not incumbent upon them, they take to this pilgrimage, though poor? It is out of affection, it is out of love and out of attachment to Mecca, that is, the original seat of Islam, that these persons go over there. It is, therefore, quite necessary that their case should be taken into consideration by all of us, not only by Muslims, but by non-Muslims as well. I, therefore, appeal to the full House, particularly to the Honourable Member in charge of Railways, who happens to be, though not as old as I am even in membership of this Assembly, but who has been here for several years and who can very easily enter into our feelings, I hope that at least this time our prayer will be acceded to unanimously by all including Government Members. With these words, I support the motion.

The Honourable Sir Andrew Olow: Sir, he would be a hard man who would not be touched by the appeals that have been addressed to me. One Honourable Member put it on the score of religion, another Honourable Member on the score of my age and reminded me that it is getting on for 20 years since I first spoke in this House. I confess that I have a good deal of sympathy with the proposal made. By looking up past history, I find that when the question was raised at the instance of the Haj Enquiry Committee of 1930, it went to the Railway Conference Association, and they are hard-headed men but not all hard-hearted men. They examined it very strictly from the commercial point of view and in the result they were not apparently of Khan Bahadur Shaikh Fazl-i-Haq Piracha's opinion, and they were not convinced that the concession would be a paying one. They calculated the third class railway fare from Calcutta to Bombay and back which then stood at Rs. 38 and which is now a shade higher. They then thought, "well, if we could give one-third fare off or even half off and collect 1 2/3 or 1 1/2, even then it would not make a great difference to the poor Haji and we certainly will not make any money out of it". But even these small things do help and are a consideration to those who, as I have often been reminded, are mostly very poor.

In one respect I agree with what my Honourable friend, Khan Bahadur Shaikh Fazl-i-Haq Piracha, said, but he was not entirely correct because we are at the present moment, as I think he recognised it later on in his speech, giving no concessions to any one on account of war pressure. The concessions we had been giving to places of pilgrimage include of course both Hindu and Muslim places of pilgrimage. We had included, for example, concessions to the *Urs Piran Kalier* which I think is at Roorkee and we have been giving concessions to the *Urs Khwaja*

[Sir Andrew Clow.]

Moinuddin Chishti at Ajmer. But I recognise these instances are in a different category. The subject matter of the present motion is of even deeper interest to the community whose members have spoken and I can give the undertaking that we shall examine it sympathetically as soon as war pressure is over and we are in a position to consider the grant of concessions again. I suggest if the Honourable Member is satisfied with the assurance I have given, he will withdraw the motion.

Khan Bahadur Shalkh Fasl-i-Haq Piracha: Sir, I beg leave of the House to withdraw the motion.

The motion was, by leave of the Assembly, withdrawn.

Overcrowding in the Trains and particularly in Inter and Third Class Passengers' Compartments and Inconvenience caused to the Travelling Public in these days.

Mr. Muhammad Nauman: Sir, I move:

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

Sir, the purpose of this motion is simple and it does not require any elaborate explanation. Since the beginning of the debates in this Session, probably Honourable Members must have noticed that most of the speeches made on one motion or the other centred round the question of transport difficulties, whether for commodities or human beings. So, I believe the Honourable Member for Communications has been able to see the anxiety in minds of the people's representatives on the situation which has arisen under the present conditions. Of course, by this motion, I particularly want to bring to the notice of the House the question of overcrowding in trains and, particularly, in Inter and Third class compartments. The question of overcrowding in Inter and Third class compartments has been more or less of a chronic type and this question probably was brought before us in the Central Advisory Council some years before, and some kind of census on different trains was taken and probably they were trying to relieve the people from that situation then. Now we find that that dormant chronic condition has relapsed into a more acute and worse form. These conditions have resulted out of a few particular situations which have arisen in these days. I am particularly speaking of Calcutta when the panic started. Arrangements were made for running duplicate specials three or four days after the panic had started. I was told by some people, although I cannot vouch for its accuracy that one or two persons died on the platform at Howrah because of the great rush. Duplicate train arrangements were made three or four days after the panic started but this delay was certainly criminal. First, the panic started in Calcutta, then, it started in Madras, and probably it may start in other places too. The question is that the Government and the Railway Administrations ought to have been ready and should be in a position to tackle the situation, whenever it arose in different cities and at different times. To my mind it seems the Railway Administrations have miserably failed to provide for this situation. That is one point, which requires serious consideration.

Later on, they came with a programme to cut down passenger trains and on the East Indian Railway alone I understand about 78 trains have been cut down including those on branches and the main line. With the condition of overcrowding being so severe, when 78 trains are cut down, the House can easily imagine what could be expected. Regarding up

trains which start from Calcutta, there may be the question of panic in that particular city, but you will find that even in the down trains which reach Calcutta, normally there is no comfortable accommodation for Inter and Third class passengers. In many cases, it was found that the number of compartments of Inter and Third class has been reduced because more First and Second class or more saloons had to be added to the particular trains and the load of the train had to be maintained. All these things were done at the cost of mostly Inter and Third class passengers. As I have said earlier, the pressure all along has been mostly on Inter and Third class passengers. You can imagine that the reduction in the number of trains and the reduction in the number of bogies and compartments to facilitate the movement of the military and travelling of higher officers must have made the position much worse. Now, Sir, the Honourable Member may say that there are not enough locomotives or engines to run additional trains or to maintain even those trains which have been running for a few years past. Can they not think of running trains between certain distant stations, say 200 and 300 miles apart and reduce the number of long distance trains? Sometimes it may be possible to reduce the number of short distance local trains as well. But it will probably be most inconvenient if the trains for long distances say between Howrah and Delhi are reduced.

I was told by a responsible officer of East Indian Railway that effort has been made only to cut down trains which run on sectional lines, that is, local trains or trains which run on branch lines like Patna, Gaya line and other branches. This has been done to maintain the main line and the chord line trains which run between Delhi and Calcutta or such long distances stations. In the Central Advisory Council no papers were circulated regarding these. Reports were made to me by a responsible officer of the East Indian Railway administration that effort has been made only to reduce the number of local trains, but we do not know the actual position. Judged by the whole fact, the position is that on any train and on any important station, if you just see, there is hardly any accommodation possible for even the number of passengers who are travelling on short journeys for way-side stations. I have known instances where in large stations like Patna Junction people had to miss trains because there was no possibility of their being accommodated in any Inter or Third class compartments. Of course, there has been overcrowding also to some extent in First and Second class compartments. I do not want to refer to this at this moment. The situation in Inter and Third class is more or less of a chronic type and it has relapsed into acute condition now in spite of the best efforts of railways. Railways are able to avoid inconvenience and discomfort to the travelling public in Inter and Third class compartments if they desire to do so but they would not do it. Their condition is now awful. I ask the Honourable Member to realise how he is going to improve on this particular situation. Can he not think of running Inter and Third class trains with higher loads and on longer distances? Can he not think of any other alternative suggestion of a concrete type which would relieve the public from this appalling condition?

He should also seriously think over such contingencies of panic and that railways should have ready plans for evacuation of all such big cities where panic may start at any later stage—it cannot be said where it may start—but the story of Calcutta or Madras should not be repeated. I do not know much about Madras as to how things are happening there, but, as I said in the earlier part of my speech, I saw things for myself in

[Mr. Muhammad Nauman.]

Calcutta, and for that reason I ask the Honourable Member to think over all these arrangements beforehand and try to relieve the public from the trouble in which they may find themselves. Sir, I move.

Mr. Deputy President (Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta): Cut motion moved:

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

Maulvi Muhammad Abdul Ghani: Sir, the overcrowding in these days is due to three causes. The first is that about 50 per cent. of the trains have been curtailed. The second is that trains are always too late at the stations where passengers have to change for different lines. And the third cause is that the trains now-a-days do not have the maximum number of carriages; perhaps the administration, or the Guard, or the person in charge of the train is afraid that he may have to attach some reserve compartments or saloons, but the other day the Honourable Member for Communications said that saloons will not be attached to passenger trains

The Honourable Sir Andrew Olow: Military saloons to mail trains.

Maulvi Muhammad Abdul Ghani: However, there would be some relief at least. About the first cause, namely, curtailment of trains, I am not going to urge that the number of trains should be increased these days but as regards their being late, I hope, the various administrations will take into consideration the inconveniences of the passengers. For instance, the Bengal and North Western Railway have arrangements to carry passengers with the help of the Eastern Bengal Railway from Amin Gaon direct to Lucknow, and one route is from Amin Gaon up to Allahabad *via* Chappra. So there is direct communication from Amin Gaon by the Eastern Bengal to Lucknow and to Allahabad. There were formerly eight fast trains running through the Bengal and North Western Railway system, but these days they have been curtailed to only four—two *via* Bhatni and two *via* Benares to Allahabad. During my recent travel I found that the train which was destined to reach Lucknow at 4-15, namely, 13 Up, actually reached there at 8-15, and thus the connecting trains for Delhi and other Central places were lost because the Great Indian Peninsula train starts from Lucknow at 6-5 A.M. and the train was late by more than four hours. So the passengers of that train who were in considerable number had to remain there. The next train came and that train carried a number of passengers and besides the Bengal and North Western Railways' passengers a number of passengers also came by the East Indian Railway train. So, unnecessarily, there was accumulation of passengers at a central place like Lucknow. The overcrowding was inevitable. I think the authorities should refer this matter to the various Railway Administrations that they should avoid unnecessary haltings. I found a train halting for about an hour instead of 15 or 20 minutes at certain stations and there was no necessity in my opinion because no train was to pass from the Lucknow side for which that train had to wait. The drivers should be warned that they should not unnecessarily delay the trains at particular stations. They should be cautious not to make unnecessary delays because there is no unnecessary burden on their minds about the war.

Then, there are instances of certain branch railways which come to certain stations and have not been extended a few miles to a central place from where people come in large numbers to attend Courts and other

business. For instance, at Chappra I saw that a train starts from Bararini Junction—No. 17 Up—which comes to Chappra at 17-19 hours and stops there, and all the people going to Savan side had to wait besides a number of litigants after finishing their business by about 17 hours, assemble at Chappra station and have to remain there, on account of the stoppage of this train. Had this train been extended by 40 miles up to Savan, about two to three hundred persons would have daily been cleared by that train. This journey would take only two hours and from Savan that very train would have started as Down train No. 18 at 4-0 A.M. and carried about several hundred passengers up to Chappra and it would thus relieve the main line passenger trains which are only two, from the Savan side. About 200 passengers who are men who have to look after their business, such as court litigation and the like, will have more convenience. Every day about 200 persons starting from the Savan side to Chappra have to remain at Chappra unnecessarily for taking another train which is at midnight and the people carried from this side altogether have to find their seats in a train which is not sufficient for them. Simply a little attention is required on the part of the administration of the Bengal and North Western Railway that they should extend No. 17 Up and 18 Down up to Savan, so that the main line passengers may not be unnecessarily put to inconveniences and overcrowding.

There is another difficulty created at Cawnpore and at Lucknow. The Bengal and North Western Railway train, 11 Up, goes up to Cawnpore and it reaches there at 22 hours, when there is no corresponding train for the passengers of the Bengal and North Western Railway to take the train of the East Indian Railway—and it is a specially inconvenient time. Instead of this 11 Up running up to Cawnpore, it would have been better if it stops at Lucknow, and the 13 Up is continued to Cawnpore, because even if that train is delayed, there will be ample time for the west-bound passengers to take the train of the East Indian Railway at Cawnpore. In this way the congestion at Cawnpore and Lucknow will be relieved and the overcrowding of several hundred passengers will not take place. These things are happening every day. I think this may be analysed; and if the administrations come to my view—having regard to the circumstances I think they should agree to my proposal—this will be done when the matter is referred to them. With these few words, I support the motion and hope that overcrowding which is unnecessarily high these days will be stopped and that efforts will be made in this direction to decrease overcrowding which is quite unnecessary. With these few words, I support the motion.

Qazi Muhammad Ahmad Kasmi (Meerut Division: Muhaminadan Rural): Mr. Deputy President, the question of overcrowding in trains and especially in third class and intermediate class compartments has been a continuous complaint in this House and among the public generally for a large number of years. Now, on account of the war, train services have been curtailed, lorries have been stopped, and the old habits of travelling continue, and it is a very serious problem as to how to control the traffic and provide convenience for the passengers. No doubt it is for the railway authorities to consider this point; but I have not yet been able to understand as to the principle on which railways have been curtailing the train services. They always promised to give sufficient accommodation for third class and intermediate class passengers, but the position was not satisfactory even before the war started. Now, the question is as to whether the authorities have taken a census of the passengers in pre-war

[Qazi Muhaunmad Ahmad Kazmi.]

time, and as to whether they have found a means of curtailing the number of passengers who travelled by these trains before they started curtailing the number of trains themselves. We are living in Delhi, and it requires no argument, but only a little trouble, to satisfy oneself as to whether there is overcrowding or not. Only about two days ago, I saw the Bombay Express which leaves this place at about 8-20—a number of bogies, about half the train, is attached from Delhi; and if you only go at 7 in the evening to the Delhi Platform and look at the bogies which are to be attached to that Express, you will find that at 7 in the evening there is absolutely no space in third class bogies and the inter-class compartments. It is absolutely flooded with people long before the train comes from Bombay—people have to enter the carriages not through the doors, but through the windows. This is a thing which is happening before our eyes, and I shall just ask the Railway Member and the authorities to consider this point, not because it is coming from us who are probably considered as criticising merely for the sake of criticism, but from the point of view of humanity, from the point of view of convenience, from the point of view of the people who have to travel from one place to another and only want a little comfort and a little space in the compartments provided by the railway. I know the difficulties of the authorities, but the question is that they can very well provide conveyance for the military by special trains; but if more than half of every train, a number of bogies, is to be filled by the military people every time, the travelling public is bound to have a shortage of space, and overcrowding is bound to happen. So, I suggest that, before effecting any curtailment of the train service, the Railway authorities should go through the previous statistics and then decide as to what are the directions in which the trains can be curtailed. I think that the curtailment of passenger trains has not been of so much benefit to the railway itself as it has been to the discomforts of the people. Now, because of the curtailment of local trains, the difficulty has come to this that every person who wishes to travel has to travel by some through train. As we all know, through trains are overcrowded already. So this problem of passenger service should be considered along with the number of passengers that the railway is expected to carry, and then they must let the public know as to the number of passengers the railways are prepared to carry, and the Government as a whole must consider as to what is to happen to others who want to travel as they are deprived of other forms of transport like buses and lorries. This matter has to be considered with the aid of statistics, in that case overcrowding will disappear. So I suggest that this matter should be considered with the seriousness it deserves, and we should like to know how the Railway Board proposes to solve this problem of providing sufficient accommodation for the passengers who want to travel if the number of trains is curtailed. Sir, I support this notion.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: Sir, I rise to support the cut motion moved by my friend. This used to be a hardy annual when I was here about ten years ago, and there used to be such a warm discussion that practically a whole day was absorbed in ventilating the grievances of third class passengers. As a result some improvement did take place, but I find that the position still remains much the same. The Honourable the Railway Member cannot be unaware that during the last ten years the population of India has grown. Four crores is the additional population. What was not sufficient for 85 crores of people

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cannot be sufficient for 38 crores and 90 lakhs. What have Government done to increase the accommodation for the third class passenger?

An Honourable Member: Nothing.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: If I say nothing, it would not be perfectly accurate, but I will say it is hardly anything. From the Annual Report for the year 1940-41 published only a day before the presentation of the Budget, I find that during the year under Report, all that was done was 246 new and re-built carriages were made available—page 76 of the Report. Now, even supposing that in one such carriage 50 people could be accommodated, the total number of new passengers that these newly built or re-built carriages can carry will be 12,300. Does the Honourable the Railway Member think that in a country which has in ten years added five crores of people to its population, new carriages that will carry only 12,000 passengers will be enough? Is that reasonable that for the growth of population of five crores, only 12,000 travel every day? Is that a correct percentage? I should say no. It is far too low. Is a country with a population of 4 crores 88 lakhs to have only 246 new carriages for third class passengers? I think the position is very ridiculous that the number of new carriages built should only be 246 when the increase in the new population is nearly five crores. Supposing you built some more carriages in the previous year,—I have not got the figures here,—but with the figure of 246 before me, I am bound to say that overcrowding was inevitable. I understand that in some carriages the limit of passengers has been fixed, that is to say, not more than so many could sit in the carriage, but that limit has now been withdrawn; so that it does not matter how many actually sit in the carriage, how they are made to sit, how many stand, and how many stand on the footboard of the carriage.

Sir, the position will be accentuated by increases in fares and decrease in the number of trains run. Therefore, this proposition should be accepted by the House, unless, of course, the Government give an undertaking that in the course of the year they will build at least 5,000 new carriages. With a 30 crores surplus, what right have you to overcrowd your only real patron, the third class passenger? My friend, Mr. Joshi, used to say every year that the first and second class passengers live on the charity of the third class passengers. This is his usual observation, and now, even he is tired of repeating that observation. But the fact nevertheless remains true that the first and second class passengers live on the charity of third class passengers. I need not go into the parasites whom I described yesterday. These bugs should disappear. They take away the very blood of the traveller, but the Railway Board knows that this House is an attenuated body, that in war time criticism is apt to be mild, and they can gather as much money for other purposes as they can while the sun shines. I, therefore, hope, that the House will not accept this position lying down. After all, the only customer who pays to the Railways is the third class passenger.

Then, Sir, reference is made to the inconveniences suffered by the third class passengers. These inconveniences don't seem to have been removed by what is stated in the Annual Report. We were told a lot last year about the Kumbh Mela arrangement at Hardwar, and that you

[Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta.]

had added a new platform or a new station. The Government have before them also the complaints of the Jain community that in Parasnath, which is an important station which is visited by thousands of Jain pilgrims for pilgrimage, there is no platform at all. The passengers reach the station at day time or night time, there are always hundreds and thousands of Jain pilgrims, but there is no platform at Parasnath to protect them from sun and rain and accident. They have made a representation without results. With Rs. 30 crores, with your pockets bulging out on both sides, that you should make no provision for such amenities of the passengers and cause them overcrowding and inconvenience is to my mind unimaginable except in a country like India.

I refer the House also to the inconvenience that is caused in Bombay both at the Bombay Central and the Victoria Terminus, by the entrance to the third class being placed at a great distance from the main platform from which a large number of through carriages and trains leave. For old men and children it is a real trial, a racing with death. Some relaxation, I am told, is now made at the Bombay Central, but I am sure that if the Members of this House were compelled to travel in third class and go to the Bombay Central Main platform through the approach for third class passengers, all of them would die of heart failure. You have to mount up and in a zig zag manner before you reach the top of the bridge through which you again descend to the main platform. I am told that in the Bombay Central at least some change has been made, but I am not aware of a change made at the Victoria Terminus. I do not wish to go into the endless grievances of the passengers, but I myself know that still at many stations water is not available.

The Honourable Sir Andrew Olow: I thought we were discussing overcrowding.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: Inconveniences—both overcrowding and inconveniences. I am talking of inconvenience on account of water.

Mr. Deputy President (Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta): "Inconveniences" is mentioned there.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: Why should the Honourable Member interpret the cut so narrowly?

The Honourable Sir Andrew Olow: I should think that if the Honourable Member had listened to the ruling given by the Deputy President yesterday, he would have seen the convenience of confining discussion to a single point.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: It was the convenience of the Railway Member that dearness allowance should not be discussed, although I tried to bring it by a side door. The Honourable Member conveniently avoided replying, but today he is caught. The word is "inconveniences" there, and I do not want to let him escape so cheaply if I can help. I myself do know, that the number of people who serve water to a train with 12 carriages is one. Therefore, while water is there, not a drop is

available—water, water everywhere, but not a drop to drink. I, therefore, suggest, that water supply, particularly in summer days, should be made very largely available so that one need of the travelling public during the hot summer months may at least be adequately met.

Mr. Deputy President (Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta): Order, order. I feel inclined to revise the ruling I have given a little while ago. Here "inconvenience" obviously means inconvenience due to overcrowding, and not other inconveniences.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: I would like to make my submission. The wording is like this, ". . . particularly in Inter and Third class passengers compartments and inconvenience caused to the travelling public in these days". Two things are under discussion.

Mr. Deputy President (Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta): My interpretation is that the inconvenience there refers to inconvenience due to overcrowding. That is my ruling.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: When an interpretation is doubtful, it should be in favour of the aggrieved party.

Mr. Deputy President (Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta): The Honourable Member has already had his say.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: I know that on account of the way in which it is worded, it is open to the same thing as I am saying, and also as the Honourable the Railway Member says. When two constructions are possible, the one more favourable to the public should be given.

The Honourable Sir Andrew Olow: I may remind the Honourable Member of Mr. President's ruling that an Honourable Member must confine himself to the points raised by the Mover. He gave that ruling in connection with a discussion on Provident Fund yesterday.

Mr. Deputy President (Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta): The Honourable Member has only one minute more.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: I shall complete my speech. In one minute I shall give him some pleasant news. A friend from Poona writes to me to complain that the hair cutting saloon at the Victoria Terminus is closed, that it is a great amenity taken away, which the public had been enjoying for the last so many years, and that I should definitely ask a question on this subject in the House, when there is a hair cutting saloon at Howrah, why not one in Bombay, and why this provincial discrimination? My friend who is an *ex-Member* of this Assembly, writes to me from Poona. He says, severely cross-examine the Railway Member, ask supplementary questions.

Mr. Deputy President (Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta): The Honourable Member's time is up.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: Therefore, my last request to the Honourable Member is, listen to the complaint about the hair cutting saloon.

Mr. Muhammad Ashar Ali (Lucknow and Fyzabad Divisions: Muhammadan Rural): I have not much to say, it is only two points that I want to refer to. During my travel, I find that children of the officials of the Railway Department, such as Station Masters and Assistant Station Masters who are posted, not at the main big stations, but at wayside stations, have to go and attend their schools with a free pass. They are generally accommodated in the Inter class or Third class. Of course, it is a necessity for the servants of the railways to send their children to school. But what happens in such cases is that they generally occupy and overcrowd the compartments. They have also to take some servant or guide to drop them at their schools. If the railway administrations want that children of their railway servants should be sent to schools, they ought to arrange for either a small bogie or a small compartment separate from the ordinary passengers' compartments. That has been my experience. For instance, when such children go from Kakori to Lucknow or from Malhar to Lucknow, what I find is that the children travel in the ordinary compartments and the passengers are overcrowded. The result is that even if there are ladies they have to give the seats to the boys who go to the schools. As you know, these small urchins create all kinds of mischief. They walk about from one side to the other and there is very little accommodation for the ordinary passengers. This is the result of your issuing free tickets and free passes. Therefore, I would submit, in addition to the inconveniences which have been pointed out by the previous speakers, you may also consider this inconvenience caused by these school children and provide for them some separate compartment so that the ordinary public may not be put to any inconvenience. I recognise that you have got to provide for the soldiers and for special trains and that you have also got to curtail your trains to a great extent but still if the members of the Railway Department will put their heads together and bring out a well thought-out scheme, it will be better and that will avoid this inconvenience to the public.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai (Sind: Non-Muhammadan Rural): Sir, I have got up not to inconvenience the Honourable the Railway Member but I have got up to get convenience from him for this overcrowding and if he wants that he should not be inconvenienced, then he should be very ready to find out some remedy for this evil. Now, the question of overcrowding is not a new one. I should think it is a permanent evil which has remained for a very long time and every time attempts have been made to ask that there should be more wagons or certain conveniences should be provided in such a way that this evil should be removed. Our complaint has always remained unheeded. Even the ladies and children are so much inconvenienced that it is a sorry state of affairs that the Railways should not have done anything for them up to this time. Now, things have come to a crisis and that is because the Railways hitherto have done nothing. At the present moment, we find there is so much overcrowding because a sufficient number of carriages are not being attached to the trains as to accommodate the third class passengers but even the soldiers and the military people are being allowed to travel in

the same trains. Formerly, we used to see that there were separate trains for these soldiers. Now, we find that they come in the ordinary trains and that causes great inconvenience, because they occupy the seats that are meant for the ordinary passengers and that causes so much harassment. The Railway Department cannot possibly say that we are unable to do anything. If they are unable to do anything at this time, they must close the railways rather than say that we will run the railways and make our earnings whatever may be the inconvenience to the passengers. This is absolutely unreasonable, to use no other word. I am conscious of the fact that this time they have got some excuses, due to the war but what have they done? They see with their open eyes that the passengers are being overcrowded and I do not think that even the Honourable the Railway Member or the Members of the Railway Board can say that there is no overcrowding.

The Honourable Member has said in his speech that the rising necessity of the war with all its direct and indirect effects is likely to have cramping effects on the general public. He says there is little prospect at present of the Railways meeting more than a proportion of the demands made upon them even if the tide of battle comes no nearer our shores. That is to say, even though the war does not take place in India, God forbid it, he is feeling himself so unable and so powerless that he is leaving everything in the lurch. Now, the Honourable Member should exercise all his efforts to find out which are the ways by which this travel should go on and it is the duty of the Railway Member to find that out and there are many ways which he can himself explore and find out. For instance, now, motor cars and buses have been stopped more or less. The Railways may take up these buses and cars and run them, so that at least for short distances this overcrowding may be avoided. The Honourable Member says in his report that there is likely to be hardship on an increasing scale but that those running the railways will do as much as lies in their capacity to eliminate unnecessary hardship. Now, overcrowding is a matter which cannot possibly be denied. It is doing harm and people are huddled up in the trains, not only men but women and children and if the Honourable Member wants to eliminate unnecessary hardship this is the hardship which should be removed. Therefore, it should not be said that 'we cannot help you'. I do not think that such a reply should be given and I think it will be a disgrace to the Railways if they give such a reply.

Mr. Umar Aly Shah (North Madras: Muhammadan): Sir, the story of the overcrowding of third class compartments has now become very painful, and the third class passengers undergo great hardships. The railways look after the comforts of the first, second and inter class passengers, but they pay very little heed to the comforts of the third class passengers. This is not the right policy. I do not want to dilate on the political aspect of the question, but it appears to me, because of this overcrowding, that the third class passengers are great sinners. The Hindu Dharma says:

*"Adanodoshana Bhavadaridra
Daridriadoshana Karoti papam
Papamkaroti Narakampragnyati
punardaridraha Punarapapi."*

[Mr. Umar Aly Shah.]

This means: "They are poor. Dire poverty is the result of the great sins committed by them."

These third class compartments are nothing short of veritable hell. Besides, there are so many ticketless passengers in these third class compartments which fact goes to increase their overcrowding. As the House is aware, not less than 13 lakhs ticketless passengers travel every year. Besides, we have in these third class compartments so many beggars, pickpockets and thieves. All these factors make travelling by third class compartments nothing short of hell. There are so many restrictions for the higher class passengers, but there are none for the third class passengers. I have seen myself recently as many as 2,000 passengers being huddled together in a few third class bogies. The Railway Member has shown a surplus budget, but what has he done for the comfort of the third class passengers? Where is the accommodation for them? The station masters and other railway officials show no regard for these poor third class passengers. I was formerly a member of the Congress, and I have had many occasions to travel by third class compartments. I can say from personal experience that third class travelling is very uncomfortable. Our religious susceptibilities are also hurt when we travel by third class compartments. I request the Honourable the Railway Member to consider this problem of over-crowding in a sympathetic manner.

How many third class compartments have been made? Recently 20 per cent. of the trains was cut short for strategical purposes. In spite of this, many Branch Lines have been dismantled causing greater inconvenience to the people. Sir, I support the motion.

Mr. J. H. F. Raper (Government of India: Nominated Official): Sir, my Honourable friend Mr. Nauman has indeed raised a point which is of great importance and obviously of very great general interest. As he says, previous speakers on previous days have referred to the difficulty the public are experiencing and I can assure him, the House and you, Sir, that this is fully appreciated. The position is giving us a great deal of anxiety at the Railway Board and also the Railway General Managers. We are well aware that overcrowding is taking place. I have personally seen it and have had meetings with General Managers and they have told me the difficulty that is being experienced. But unfortunately, although my Honourable friend, Mr. Lalchand Navalrai, says, there must be a remedy, we have not yet been able to find one. I am afraid the position is likely to get worse instead of becoming better. I can assure you that we will do all that we possibly can to help the situation.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: In what way?

Mr. J. H. F. Raper: We will refrain until the last possible moment from reducing the train service any further or curtailing accommodation. That is a thing which I can say quite frankly. On some railways, as the House knows, there has been no reduction up till now. Unless the position deteriorates on these railways, we shall hope to stave off the evil day before any reduction is made. I may here refer to the fact that on one

railway there has been a slight increase. That has happened to the suburban service of the G. I. P. Railway.

Mr. Muhammad Nauman: Are all the trains running with full load? When you put saloons or reserved bogies, do you make any compensation for them so far as the third class and Inter class passengers are concerned?

Mr. J. H. F. Raper: I was coming to that point. I was just referring to the general position and difficulty. It has been stated, I think by Mr. Lalchand Navalrai, that overcrowding has been going on for many years. That, I am afraid, I am not in a position to admit. As the House will be aware, a census has been held on every railway every year. The results are put before the local Advisory Committees on Railways where they are examined. I know that on many railways where a particular train is found to be overcrowded, an additional coach has been put on it. The latest figures that I have of overcrowding show that it was very small, something under one per cent. I do not think that showed at that time a chronic state. Since then, of course, the position has got very much worse, but railways will do their utmost to watch it and see where the shoe pinches most, and if they are in a position to do so, they will relieve the position by attaching additional coaches. What the railways have done is first to start propaganda urging people to refrain from travelling as much as possible. This has been done in other countries; it is of course done in Great Britain; and we hope that this will have some effect to deter those passengers who do not necessarily have to travel from doing so. It will leave more room for the others. That may have some effect; we hope it will, and we shall continue with those efforts. After that propaganda was launched the position deteriorated rather rapidly and certain train services had to be curtailed owing to coal shortage, as I think the House is aware. But we do hope that this propaganda will have some effect, because I cannot believe that of the thousands and millions of passengers that we carry it is essential that every one should travel.

Another point to which Mr. Nauman referred was the panic that occurred at Calcutta and was likely to have occurred in Madras.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: Sir, I am not able to understand how it is said that they travel unnecessarily. I cannot believe that in these days they make unnecessary travel.

Mr. J. H. F. Raper: I said that among the thousands and millions of passengers that travel there must be some who need not travel, and if they need not, I say it is unnecessary. They may have their own reasons of course but we cannot in these difficult times always do what we want to do.

I was talking about Mr. Nauman's reference to the panic at Calcutta and the possibility of that having happened at Madras. So far as Madras is concerned, we have not heard that there was any difficulty. The number of passengers who were cleared from Madras more than in normal times is very considerable. From Calcutta the number of passengers within a comparatively short time, from about 20th December to sometime towards the end of January, the number over and above the usual, was nearly half a million.

[Mr. J. H. F. Raper.]

I think he made particular reference to the East Indian Railway. For many days on end the East Indian Railway ran five additional special trains; and over and above that they attached extra coaches to their normal trains which were the equivalent of two more special trains, making seven in all. These trains, some of which ran through to Delhi, caused very considerable difficulty especially on the single line sections, and goods traffic was of necessity delayed. Had the full evacuation scheme, which has been prepared, been put into force it would have been quite impossible to have continued with the goods traffic on anything like the present scale; and the probability is that it would have to have been stopped altogether. I think every one will appreciate the necessity of our moving coal for example. All these trains would have passed through the coal area and would have stopped any of the coal trains moving; and whoever made the decision, it was a wise decision that that scheme should not be brought into force at that time. In matters of this kind the General Managers of Railways act in careful and close consultation with Provincial Governments and they did in this case; and we are assured that whatever the East Indian Railway did was as reasonable and as much as they could do in those circumstances. This the Honourable Member for Railways has already explained.

Mr. Nauman believes that the East Indian Railway has only curtailed local trains. That does not seem to be the position to us. We know that the East Indian Railway has taken off certain of their trains on their single line in the Moradabad Division, and near Cawnpore; and this has been done specially to leave room for additional goods trains, and it is a very necessary measure. It is true that on some of the branch or less important lines trains have been cancelled; but that again would be justified and probably essential in order to relieve engine power and running staff, in both of which we are very short at the moment.

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

Maulvi Abdul Ghani complained of the unpunctual running of trains. He also explained that we have not got the maximum number of carriages on these trains. One most prolific reason for unpunctual running is a heavy train; and it is very largely because these trains are running very much in excess of their normal load that there is unpunctual running. If you put two engines on a train you get delayed for watering; and if you have only one engine you cannot go as fast as you normally should; and so unpunctuality results and other trains are thrown out of gear. And that is one of the reasons why running is so unpunctual at the moment. Some of the railways are proposing to slow down their trains so that they can increase the loads on them and at the same time maintain punctuality. This will not be very acceptable to some people of course, but it is one means of improving the situation, and at the present time it appears to be the only means.

In regard to Maulvi Abdul Ghani's other remarks which I was not able to follow altogether because I am not acquainted very well with that part of the country, a copy of his speech will be sent to the Bengal and North-Western Railway; and I certainly hope it contains suggestions which will be helpful to passengers and they will find it possible to adopt them.

Mr. Kazmi referred to passengers getting in through the windows. That is not necessarily evidence of overcrowding. It may be evidence that some very careless passenger has put his luggage up against the door and you cannot get in at the short time at your disposal. But it may also be an indication of overcrowding which I have already admitted is existing.

Mr. Jamnadas Mehta rather floored me with his statistics. I think he said that we had 246 new carriages and if you put 50 people in each they would accommodate 12 thousand. We certainly use our carriages to better purpose than just once a day in the year and no more. Even if we allow for a full load in these carriages only once every two days, and normally the number that they accommodate is somewhere near 100, it looks as if we had made provision for the carriage of about 4 crores of passengers with these additional coaches on a ten year basis. So it is not far short of his estimate of the increase in the population.

Then, Mr. Mehta referred to the inconvenience at Bombay Central, which has been put right, and at Victoria Terminus. I was under the impression that the G. I. P. Railway had endeavoured to do something at Victoria Terminus and had permitted third class passengers who had booked their seats at city booking offices to utilise the Fort end, but what he said will be transmitted to the G. I. P. Railway to see if they are able to take any action.

Then, he raised the question of the hair dressing saloon at Victoria Terminus. I understand the saloon was in use last October and if it has been closed since I am afraid I cannot guarantee that it will be put back again. It is no use providing a saloon if passengers do not use it, or if a hairdresser cannot be persuaded to work it.

His complaint regarding water is of course a matter which will receive attention—it always does—both during the hot weather and at other times. We would, naturally, prefer to have more details as to where we are amiss in this respect and whether the normal programme undertaken by Railways to provide water is inadequate.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: I may tell the Honourable Member that I had to seek the services of the Guard and the Station Master to get water

Mr. J. H. F. Raper: I should like to know the name of the station, so that we may be able to do something about it.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: Frontier Mail at more than one station.

Mr. J. H. F. Raper: Another complaint has been made regarding military men travelling by ordinary trains. We cannot help their travelling by ordinary trains. When they are not sufficient to travel by a special train they are given, as far as possible, reserved compartment or are accommodated in additional coaches, but there are always likely to be small parties moving about in the ordinary passenger train services and if it causes a little inconvenience I can only express regret. Soldiers are passengers we should be very glad to see.

Sir F. E. James: Surely they are not untouchables.

Mr. J. H. F. Raper: I have endeavoured to give an account of the position and to show that we appreciate that difficulties are very real and very serious. We shall, I promise, do the utmost we can to relieve these difficulties of passengers, but as I have said they are bound to increase.

Mr. Muhammad Nauman (Patna and Chota Nagpur *cum* Orissa: Muhammadan): Sir, I beg leave of the House to withdraw the motion.

The motion was, by leave of the Assembly, withdrawn.

Maulvi Muhammad Abdul Ghanj: Sir, I wish to move motion No. 45 on the Final List.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): It is not on the agreed list. I do not know whether the Honourable Member in charge has any objection to its being moved.

The Honourable Sir Andrew Olow: Sir, I have no objection if it suits the rest of the House.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): I do not know whether there is any objection to this cut motion being moved.

Several Honourable Members: No objection.

Railway Accidents.

Maulvi Muhammad Abdul Ghanj: Sir, I beg to move:

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

Sir, I find that the increase of revenue in Railways is accompanied by increase of losses of lives and increase of accidents. In 1940, there have been a number of accidents which find place on page 82 of the Railway Administration Report (Volume I), and the other day an accident took place at Khaga. Accidents are taking place every now and then and especially in these days of overcrowding there is every danger of such accidents. I, therefore, think it proper to draw the attention of the authorities to this matter.

When I compare the figures of the accidents which have taken place, I find that during the year 1937-38 the number of total accidents which took place over all Railways was 18,910 and during the year 1940-41 it increased to 20,285. And as regards the loss of life the number of passengers who lost their lives in 1939-40 was 229 and this has increased in the year 1940-41 to 308. The number of passengers injured have increased from 1,298 in 1939-40 to 1,319 in 1940-41. Similarly, casualties among the railway servants excluding those in railway workshops also have increased from 178 in 1939-40 to 243 in 1940-41. The number of injured in 1930-40 was 15,882. It increased to 17,378 in 1940-41. Under the third category—"Other than passengers and railway servants"—the number of persons killed in 1939-40 was 8,180 and this has increased to 8,201 in the year 1940-41. The number of injured under this head has increased from 1,102 in 1939-40 to 1,141 in 1940-41. Thus the total number of casualties excluding those in Railway Workshops have increased from 3,537 in 1939-40 to 3,752 in 1940-41 and the number of persons injured has also increased from

18,282 in 1939-40 to 19,833 in 1940-41. It is contended in the Administration Report that the number of passengers killed and injured is comparatively lower than the number of Railway servants and other persons, but I submit that after all, whether they are railway servants or they are passengers, or outsiders, their life is also equally dear as the life of passengers. Thus it is evident that the number of lives lost and injured due to accidents has been increasing regularly. If it had been the case that in some years the number was greater and in the next year it had come down, then we could have come to the conclusion that it was due to accidental causes; but this regular increase in the number of casualties—killed and injured—is a question to be seriously considered. In the very beginning I said that as the revenue is increasing so are the casualties increasing and so I urge on this House the necessity of drawing the attention of the Railway Board to exercise their proper control on the various administrations to decrease the number of accidents and to warn their employees to be more careful. One of the reasons has been stated by the Honourable the Railway Member in his speech, that experienced personnel in growing numbers have gone on military and other services. It may be true that on account of the inexperience of the personnel some accidents may be caused. But this principle in my opinion does not hold good because the number of casualties has been increasing regularly for long long years ago. It is not during the short period of the duration of the war, but even in those periods when experienced personnel were in charge of the railway trains. I hope the actual causes of accidents will be ascertained and efforts will be made to see that their number, instead of regularly increasing, should be regularly decreased. With these words I commend my motion to the House and I hope the House will accept it.

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

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

The Honourable Sir Andrew Clow: Sir, I was not aware until I came into the House this afternoon that this subject was going to be raised. So I cannot deal with it as fully as I should have liked. But it is a subject with which the House is already fairly familiar and, unfortunately, we are reminded from time to time by accidents like the regrettable one which occurred the other day on the East Indian Railway that travelling by train, as by any other form of fast locomotion, can never be entirely guaranteed against accidents. If I heard the Honourable Member rightly, he alluded to the accident at Khaga and many smaller accidents. I have not, of course, had the report on this accident as yet, but the information at my disposal suggests that it was not similar to any accident of which I have previously heard. The preliminary information I have is that the signalling gear was put out of action, probably by a storm, and that the train, in consequence, ran in, and instead of running through on the main line, ran into the loop line on which there was a goods train standing. But I do not propose to deal with the responsibility for the accident because that is the subject of an investigation by the Chief Government Inspector of Railways, who rather, fortunately, happened to be at the time at Allahabad and was able to reach the scene within a few hours of the accident. I can assure the

[Sir Andrew Clow.]

House that we feel the same sympathy as they do with those who have suffered in that accident, and I gather that the relief arrangements were prompt, and I hope, efficient

Sir Muhammad Yamin Khan (Agra Division: Muhammadan Rural): If the Honourable Member does not mind my interruption, may I ask how, if the signalling gear was put out of order, the train ran into the other train which was on the loop line? The signalling gear getting out of order only means that they did not get the signal, but how was the change of line effected.

The Honourable Sir Andrew Clow: I should prefer not to enter into details until I have the Chief Government Inspector's Report because that will be placed in the Library of the House; but my supposition—and I would say it is a pure supposition at present—is that owing to the signalling gear being out of action, it was not possible for the signals to warn the driver that the points were set for another line.

Now, Mr. Abdul Ghani suggested that accidents were on the increase. But I do not think that there is really any foundation for that suggestion. He compared certain accidents with those of the previous year. I have not, unfortunately, been able to study the figures for a number of years back, except in one case. I think, if he will turn to page 84 of the last Annual Report of the Railway Board, he will find a comparison of passengers killed and injured in train accidents for the last six years, and this suggests that the accident rate both for killed and injured was lower than it had been for some years. One factor, of course, which contributes to accidents is the number of passengers travelling

Maulvi Muhammad Abdul Ghani: I have quoted the figures from the reports.

The Honourable Sir Andrew Clow: Yes, and I would ask him to turn over the page and to the table in the report itself which gives the figures, because the figures he cited from the report compared only this and the year preceding

Maulvi Muhammad Abdul Ghani: I have given the figures of the year 1937-38 also.

The Honourable Sir Andrew Clow: There is also a reference on page 82 of the report to the leading accidents of the year. One of these has already received some attention in the House, and that was a very regrettable accident owing to the malicious removal of a rail on the Eastern Bengal Railway. Another was a very curious accident because that was due to a cyclone which just happened to hit the spot in a very limited area where the train was passing. I am afraid that there is always a danger as you work at a greater strain and your permanent way gets a bit older, that accidents may increase; but I do not think that the figures before us give any room for believing that we have yet reached that stage. At the same time, when men are worked, as they

are at present, under considerable strain, no one is infallible and I am afraid errors must arise from time to time. We all regret them, but I think I can claim that the Indian Railways carry passengers with a very high degree of safety indeed, and I am quite sure that every railway passenger is a great deal safer than the rich man in his private car

Qazi Muhammad Ahmad Kasmi: Have you any comparative tables for foreign countries?

The Honourable Sir Andrew Olow: Yes; you can certainly study those, and I would not be in the least afraid of the comparison.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Does the Honourable Member want the question to be put?

Maulvi Muhammad Abdul Ghani: Yes, Sir.

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

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

The motion was negatived.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Has the Muslim League Party any more motions to move?

Some Honourable Members: No more.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Then we must go back again to the list in the order noted there. Does any Member wish to move any of his motions?

(No Honourable Member got up to move.)

I take it that no Member who is present here wishes to move any of his motions.

The Honourable Sir Andrew Olow: I have already moved the first one.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The first one has been moved. The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 11,96,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1943, in respect of 'Railway Board'."

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 2—AUDIT.

The Honourable Sir Andrew Olow: Sir, I move.

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 14,31,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1943, in respect of 'Audit'."

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

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 14,31,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1943, in respect of 'Audit'."

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 3—MISCELLANEOUS EXPENDITURE.

The Honourable Sir Andrew Olow: Sir, I move.

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 11,75,000, be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1943, in respect of 'Miscellaneous Expenditure'."

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

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 11,75,000, be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1943, in respect of 'Miscellaneous Expenditure'."

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 5—PAYMENTS TO INDIAN STATES AND COMPANIES.

The Honourable Sir Andrew Olow: Sir, I move.

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 3,27,50,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1943, in respect of 'Payments to Indian States and companies'."

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

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 3,27,50,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1943, in respect of 'Payments to Indian States and companies'."

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 6-A.—WORKING EXPENSES—MAINTENANCE OF STRUCTURAL WORKS.

The Honourable Sir Andrew Olow: Sir, I move.

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 8,80,33,000, be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1943, in respect of Working Expenses—Maintenance of Structural Works'."

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

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 8,80,33,000, be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1943, in respect of Working Expenses—Maintenance of Structural Works'."

The motion was adopted.

**DEMAND No. 6-B.—WORKING EXPENSES—MAINTENANCE AND SUPPLY OF
LOCOMOTIVE POWER.**

The Honourable Sir Andrew Olow: Sir, I move.

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 20,48,46,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1943, in respect of, ‘Working Expenses—Maintenance and Supply of Locomotive Power’.”

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

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 20,48,46,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1943, in respect of, ‘Working Expenses—Maintenance and Supply of Locomotive Power’.”

The motion was adopted.

**DEMAND No. 6-C.—WORKING EXPENSES—MAINTENANCE OF CARRIAGE AND
WAGON STOCK.**

The Honourable Sir Andrew Olow: Sir, I move.

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 6,27,28,000, be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1943, in respect of Working Expenses—Maintenance of Carriage and Wagon Stock’.”

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

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 6,27,28,000, be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1943, in respect of Working Expenses—Maintenance of Carriage and Wagon Stock’.”

The motion was adopted.

**DEMAND No. 6-D.—WORKING EXPENSES—MAINTENANCE AND WORKING
OF FERRY STEAMERS AND HARBOURS.**

The Honourable Sir Andrew Olow: Sir, I move.

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 32,33,000, be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1943, in respect of ‘Working Expenses—Maintenance and Working of Ferry Steamers and Harbours’.”

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

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 32,33,000, be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1943, in respect of ‘Working Expenses—Maintenance and Working of Ferry Steamers and Harbours’.”

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 6-E.—WORKING EXPENSES—EXPENSES OF TRAFFIC DEPARTMENT.

The Honourable Sir Andrew Olow: Sir, I move.

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 11,09,43,000, be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1943, in respect of ‘Working Expenses—Expenses of Traffic Department’.”

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

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 11,09,43,000, be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1943, in respect of 'Working Expenses—Expenses of Traffic Department'."

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 6-F.—WORKING EXPENSES—EXPENSES OF GENERAL DEPARTMENTS.

The Honourable Sir Andrew Olow: Sir, I move.

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 4,24,88,000, be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1943, in respect of 'Working Expenses—Expenses of General Departments'."

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

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 4,24,88,000, be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1943, in respect of 'Working Expenses—Expenses of General Departments'."

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 6-G.—WORKING EXPENSES—MISCELLANEOUS EXPENSES.

The Honourable Sir Andrew Olow: Sir, I beg to move:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 4,83,62,000, be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1943, in respect of 'Working Expenses—Miscellaneous Expenses'."

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

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 4,83,62,000, be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1943, in respect of 'Working Expenses—Miscellaneous Expenses'."

The question is

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: Sir, I have got a cut motion under this head.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): All those motions were called, and no Honourable Member got up.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: Before this demand is made, I cannot be called.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): I thought no Member wanted to move any other cut motions. What is the number of his motion?

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: No. 67.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): It is the practice to give notice to the Government of the motion that is to be moved. Otherwise, it is not expected that the Government will be prepared to meet all the motions of which notice has been given.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: We all were under the impression that the cuts were so divided in watertight compartments that we would not have the time

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): That is the practice. If the Honourable Member does not know, it is his fault.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: It is my fault, but now that I have got an opportunity, I want to move my cut motion. That agreement is based on the fact that time is not available, but if time is available, that agreement does not hold good.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The Honourable Member has given notice of other motions also.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: Yes.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): All right. Let the Honourable Member move his cut motion.

Growing Drain in respect of Ecclesiastical Expenditure on Railway Revenues.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: I move:

"That the demand under the head 'Working Expenses—Miscellaneous Expenses' be reduced by Rs. 100."

I did not know that the expenditure on ecclesiastical was such a serious drain on railway revenue. But I found to my horror that in the accompaniment to the budget it is stated that the ecclesiastical expenditure has grown by five lakhs. I was surprised as to what was the nature of that expenditure, why was it a charge on railway revenue. When was the House required to give its sanction to an expenditure which has nothing to do with the working of a commercial organisation, and what is the total expenditure on this ecclesiastical? The country is entitled to know how much of the railway revenue is being diverted for "ecclesiastical". It may be perhaps that under the Government of India Act ecclesiastical expenditure is not voted, but I want to know whether this is within that mischief, or whether it is a regular charge which this House is bound to vote. Failing that, I also raise a point of order whether ecclesiastical expenditure can be a charge on railway revenue. In any case, I wish to invite the serious attention of the House to the fact that nothing of a denominational character should be made a burden on people of other religions. I have every sympathy and fellow feeling with my Christian fellow citizens, but I am sure they will be the first to agree that we cannot here patronise any particular religion at the expense of another. Otherwise, we might be called upon to pay to other religions also, in which case the enormity of this item of expenditure will be obvious.

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

"That the demand under the head 'Working Expenses—Miscellaneous Expenses' be reduced by Rs. 100."

The Honourable Sir Andrew Olow: I was ignorant that this subject was going to be brought up, and so I have not fortified myself with the exact figure, but I am told that it is of the order of about six lakhs. It has increased substantially, I think, within the last two or three years, and I can explain the reason for that. I think it was the Public Accounts Committee that called attention to the matter. At any rate it engaged the attention of the Auditor General who called attention to the question of the allocation of ecclesiastical expenditure. There is an ecclesiastical establishment maintained and referred to in the Government of India Act and he felt that the allocation of this sum among the departments which mainly benefitted from it did not correspond with the facts. A small Departmental Committee was appointed over which I myself presided. I should explain I had nothing to do with the railways in those days. Our duty was not to deal with the actual justification for the expenditure which obviously was a question settled otherwise, but to deal with its allocation among the departments concerned. And as far as I recollect, we found that the railways were not paying their due share. Consequently, the share of the railways was put up and I found this boomerang on me when I came over to the Railway Department. But actually I do not think I would really be in order in dwelling on the question of ecclesiastical expenditure because it is a joint expenditure and comes up separately in the General Budget, but this is an allocation from the railways proportionate to their share of the persons who benefit. I will go a little outside my brief and mention that there are arrangements by which the ecclesiastical expenditure is reduced at regular intervals, I think intervals of five years. It is partly a survival of expenditure of an earlier age.

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

"That the demand under the head 'Working Expenses—Miscellaneous Expenses' be reduced by Rs. 100."

The motion was negatived.

Maulvi Muhammad Abdul Ghani: I oppose the whole demand. On one side there is so much generosity and so much latitude as to provide money to look after the faiths of a particular class of Railway employees. On the other hand, I find that at Jamalpur the Muslim employees are not allowed even to offer their annual prayer, called *Id* prayer. They have to work on that day also. See the difference in treatment between one class of employee and another working on the same railway. Not only that, but on Friday, no time is allowed to offer their Juma prayer—a weekly congregation although they ask for a short leave for Juma prayers, they are not granted, and the East Indian Railway has been turning a deaf ear to the grievances of the Muslim employees at Jamalpur (E. I. R.) workshop. As this is the proper opportunity for me to urge the grievances of the Muslim employees there, so that their legitimate grievances about the annual prayer and also about the grant to the Muslim

employees of an hour and a half leave for Juma prayer be heard and I have done so, and I hope that they will be heeded to. I oppose the motion.

The Honourable Sir Andrew Olow: I have listened to the Honourable Member. We try to meet the desires of employees in every reasonable way we can but I think I should explain to him that the actual Ecclesiastical Grant which Mr. Jamnadas Mehta has referred to is non-voted. So that the voting or the non-voting motion before us will not affect it in any way. I am not at all sure that I was strictly in order in speaking on the subject.

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

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 4,83,62,000, be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1943, in respect of ‘Working Expenses—Miscellaneous Expenses’.”

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 6-H.—WORKING EXPENSES—EXPENSES OF ELECTRICAL DEPARTMENT.

The Honourable Sir Andrew Olow: Sir, I move:

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 3,64,71,000, be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1943, in respect of ‘Working Expenses—Expenses of Electrical Department’.”

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

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 3,64,71,000, be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1943, in respect of ‘Working Expenses—Expenses of Electrical Department’.”

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: Sir, years ago we had an electric power station erected at Kalyan in spite of the advice of the elected section of the House. This was intended to extend the electrical line between Kalyan and Igatpuri on the one hand and Kalyan and Poona on the other. The cost of that was something like 98 lakhs of rupees, to be exact 97 lakhs in all and, at that time, the Tatas who had so many hydro-electric schemes, offered to supply to the Great Indian Peninsula Railway electrical power cheaper so that it was unnecessary to put up this plant at Kalyan. I think its name is Chola Power station. The Tatas said that: ‘We have enough supply. We can increase it if you give us only a loan of a crore and a half. We have a plant and other assets worth seven crores of rupees by way of security and why put the State to the expenditure of another power plant at Kalyan for the sole purpose of giving you electrical supply when our supply lines were running all along from the Ghats to Bombay’. Secret session of the Railway Standing Finance Committee was held. Even the European Members opposed it. The late Sir Darcy Lindsay opposed this. Still this Kalyan Power Station, whose name is Chola, was put up. A stand-by was erected in order that, if the main plant fails, power could come from the stand-by and how was it to be erected? From coal to be brought from Jharia and from the Central Provinces and from anywhere else, because there is no

[Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta.]

coal at Kalyan and all the wagons that came loaded with coal, which can be turned into electrical power, went empty; and, ultimately, years after this plant was erected, I find now that the Chola Power Station has been abandoned and that electrical supply is being obtained from Tatas and capital charges and the interest charges have come to naught and that the original scheme was entirely misconceived. I should like to be enlightened and if I am wrong I shall accept your statement and stand corrected but those are the facts which I know from my own knowledge. I now read that the Chola Power Station is about to be abandoned or has already been abandoned. I want to know what is the total cost of construction. I want to know how many thousands of wagons went empty. What was the total cost of these empty wagons being taken back to Jharia or the Central Provinces or wherever the coal came from. What were the interest charges paid for the construction of this power station and where do we stand now. I want to know the total loss and I want to know who was responsible for it. Sir, I oppose the demand.

Mr. J. H. F. Raper: I am very sorry it is impossible to carry in one's head all the figures that Mr. Jamnadas Mehta has asked for. The history of the Chola Power House goes back some years. I think it began somewhere in the region of 1925 and at about that time I understand there was some difficulty about the Kundli dam and fear that Tatas might not be able to supply sufficient power for the Railways. Apart from that, the justification for the power house was a financial justification. The power house has been working up till February, 1940. In February, 1940, it was used as a standby and we took all power for the Railways from Tatas at a satisfactorily low rate and the saving to the Great Indian Peninsula Railway and the Bombay, Baroda and Central India Railway has been very substantial. Now, at the present time, the power house is again in use. It is supplying power for the combined Railways and industrial load carried by Tatas. There has been inadequate rainfall, I understand, in the Ghats during the last monsoon and, therefore, it was necessary to bring this power house into use to conserve the Hydro Electric Water Supply and although I do not know the exact details I understand that it is in full use. It uses coal which is obtained from the Central Provinces and not from Jharia. Those are the facts in brief as far as I am able to tell them at the present time without reference to records. The figures I cannot give but the power house is actually in use.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: It was put out of use?

Mr. J. H. F. Raper: Just for a short while but it formed a very necessary standby to supply power for the Great Indian Peninsula Railway and the Bombay, Baroda and Central India Railway and also, under the agreement to assist in supplies to the city of Bombay. It is a most valuable standby, which has now come into its own and it is being used fully.

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

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 3,64,71,000, be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1943, in respect of 'Working Expenses—of Electrical Department'."

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 7.—WORKING EXPENSES—APPROPRIATION TO DEPRECIATION FUND.

The Honourable Sir Andrew Clow: Sir, I move:

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 12,63,00,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment, during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1943, in respect of ‘Working Expenses—Appropriation to Depreciation Fund’.”

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

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 12,63,00,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment, during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1943, in respect of ‘Working Expenses—Appropriation to Depreciation Fund’.”

Various Wrong Debits to Revenue in the name of Depreciation.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: Sir, I move:

“That the demand under the head ‘Working Expenses—Appropriation to Depreciation Fund’ be reduced by Rs. 100.”

Sir, it has been my perennial complaint that the Depreciation Fund is a great drain on the railway revenues. I am one of those who would provide full depreciation for our plant, etc. I believe that a depreciation is a very necessary part, an essential part, of any commercial or industrial undertaking and it would be unsound in principle to have no depreciation fund for an asset like the railways. I, therefore, do not object to depreciation as such. In fact, I would be sorry if the Depreciation Fund was not in existence. But it is one thing to have a Depreciation Fund and it is quite another thing to have a Depreciation Fund without regard to the necessities of the case. My perennial complaint is that the amount allocated to our Depreciation Fund is far in excess of the requirements. The proof of it is provided by the fact that by now the surplus in our Depreciation Fund is somewhere in the neighbourhood of Rs. 80 crores, after replacing for 18 years all assets that were wasted.

The rules of the Depreciation Fund are that when an asset is to be renewed, you should pay the renewal cost from the depreciation. But if an asset is wasted and you replace it by a new and a better asset, then the original cost should be met out of the Depreciation Fund and the additional cost should be met out of capital. The Depreciation Fund has swollen to 80 crores of rupees after providing for perhaps an equal amount for the renewal of wasted assets. Thus in the course of 18 years, you have taken out of the railway revenues something like 200 crores of rupees in the name of depreciation of which a little over 100 crores has been spent and 80 crores are available in balance. I want to know why should that amount be so large? Why is it that you cannot do with a smaller amount for depreciation? The Depreciation Fund is, after all, like an Insurance Fund. In insurance the premia are fixed on a life so that in the course of a certain period the premia accumulating at compound interest are equivalent to the amount of the Policy. Here also you have a number of years that a particular asset will be in existence and in working order. In that case you should provide an amount equivalent each year

[Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta.]

to the 1/30th or 1/40th or 1/60th or 1/200th as the case may be. Accumulating at compound interest, the premium will be little yet at the end of it the necessary amount will be available at the end of a certain number of years. But here that is not the case. We often find that the life of a particular asset has been larger than the amount period in providing for the Depreciation Fund. What is the meaning of that? When you say that the life of a particular asset is found to be larger than the assumed amount, then it is clear that that asset is working and is still earning, and yet year after year you have provided as if it was to go out of the working order at the end of a particular period. This can only be a drain on railway revenues.

My second complaint is that without any authority from this House they have changed the rule about the charges on the Depreciation Fund. The rule was that all charges for renewals were to be met out of depreciation. What do we find now? On somebody's report, small renewals and replacements, whatever the additional cost, should be charged to revenue and that capital should escape the additional cost.

The test of a sound and scientific Depreciation Fund is the operational expenses of the year and not merely the amount of the assets and their assumed life; our railway assets are not merely 800 crores. One crore of rupees is paid every year by amortization as the Acworth Committee points out. I know that there are several railway sinking funds under which the capital is being repaid. For instance, some of the annuities are being reduced. I won't go into the question of the concealed capital of the railways. The railway assets are really far more than the amount of the capital at charge. The theory of over-capitalisation is simply calculated to mislead, and merely to show that the railway undertaking is earning better than it really may be, because today the returns are counted on the capital at charge. But the railway assets are not 700 crores. I say the railway assets are nearly Rs. 1,200 crores and we want to count the return of 1,200 crores. For these reasons I think the Depreciation Fund tends to be an unnecessarily heavy charge on the revenues. It tends to keep rates and fares high; it keeps the railway trains overcrowded; it does not give better amenities to the passengers; scientifically this charge is unduly heavy and is against the rules laid down in the Convention itself. Sir, I move.

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

"That the demand under the head 'Working Expenses—Appropriation to Depreciation Fund' be reduced by Rs. 100."

Mr. T. S. Sankara Aiyar (Government of India: Nominated Official): Sir, my Honourable friend, Mr. Jamnadas Mehta, has raised rather a vast question at the fag-end of this railway debate. We are aware that there exists in certain quarters, to which our friend belongs, a wrong impression that both the rate of contribution to the Depreciation Fund and the balance in that fund are kept at a high level. I will try my best in the very short time at my disposal to dispose of this wrong impression. There are three principal considerations which will show that the rate of contribution is not high. First, when we started the fund on the 1st April, 1924, we had not made any provision for the arrear depreciation which must have accrued on all the assets then in existence. I made a

recent investigation in the office, and it revealed a most interesting and illuminating fact. In the 17 years from 1924-25

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): It is now 5 O' Clock and all the motions have now to be disposed of. The cut 5 P.M. motion will not be put to the House as the matter has not been sufficiently debated.

The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 12,63,00,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1943, in respect of 'Working Expenses—Appropriation to Depreciation Fund'."

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 8.—INTEREST CHARGES.

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

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 1,54,000, be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment, during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1943, in respect of 'Interest Charges'."

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 9-A.—REPAYMENT TO DEPRECIATION RESERVE FUND.

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

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 7,81,89,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment, during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1943, in respect of 'Repayment to Depreciation Reserve Fund'."

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 11.—NEW CONSTRUCTION.

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

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 5,000, be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment, during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1943, in respect of 'New construction'."

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 12.—OPEN LINE WORKS.

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

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 30,49,80,000, be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment, during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1943, in respect of 'Open Line Works'."

The motion was adopted.

The Assembly then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Friday, the 27th February, 1942.