

[Shri Jawaharlal Nehru]

Throughout these talks, we reiterated our position as stated during the discussions in the Security Council and elsewhere and stressed that action has to be taken by Pakistan to vacate the aggression in terms of the Security Council resolution of 17th January 1948 and the UNCIP resolutions as defined in detail by our representative in the Security Council. So far as the Government and the people of India are concerned, they have fully complied with, and continue to adhere to, the provisions of the Security Council resolution of 17th January 1948, part I of the UNCIP resolution of 13th August 1948 and the Cease-fire Agreement, the provisions of which have been consistently violated by Pakistan during the last ten years. We expressed the hope that the U.N. representative and the Security Council will take necessary action for the rectification of these violations, for the vacation of aggression by Pakistan and for future compliance by Pakistan with the provisions of the Security Council resolution of 17th January 1948, Part I of UNCIP resolution of 13th August 1948 and the Cease-fire Agreement.

CORRECTION OF ANSWER TO
SUPPLEMENTARIES ON STARRED
QUESTION No. 219.

The Deputy Minister of Finance (Shri B. R. Bhagat): Sir, with your permission, I would like to make a minor correction to a statement which I made on the floor of this House on 18th November, 1957 in reply to supplementaries to Starred Question No. 219 by Sarvashri Morarka and Nathwani regarding the under-writing of shares by the Life Insurance Corporation. At one stage I stated:

"It can be worked out. The statement gives the commission in each case. Before under-writing the shares, the Life Insurance

Corporation satisfy themselves that all those shares which they under-write will yield profit by way of commission."

The statement should read as under:

"It can be worked out. Before underwriting the shares, the Life Insurance Corporation satisfy themselves that all those shares which they underwrite will yield profit by way of commission."

I now place on the Table of the House a statement showing the commission earned by the Corporation by under-writing shares of various companies, as at 30th September, 1957. [See Appendix IV, annexure No. 16.]

RICE MILLING INDUSTRY
(REGULATION) BILL*

The Deputy Minister of Food and Agriculture (Shri A. M. Thomas): Sir, I beg to move for leave to introduce a Bill to regulate the rice-milling industry in the interests of the general public.

Mr. Speaker: The question is:

"That leave be granted to introduce a Bill to regulate the rice-milling industry in the interests of the general public."

The motion was adopted.

Shri A. M. Thomas: Sir, I introduce the Bill.

RAILWAY BUDGET, 1958-59—
GENERAL DISCUSSION—contd.

Mr. Speaker: The House will now resume further discussion on the Railway Budget. Out of 15 hours allotted for the discussion, 11 hours and 28 minutes have already been availed of and 3 hours and 32 minutes now remain.

*Published in the Gazette of India Extraordinary Part II—Section 2, dated 3-3-58.

How long is the hon. Minister likely to take for his reply?

The Deputy Minister of Railways (Shri Shahnawaz Khan): One hour.

Mr. Speaker: Therefore, 2 hours and 32 minutes are left.

Shri T. B. Vittal Rao (Khammam): Does the time left include the time for the Minister's reply also?

Mr. Speaker: Yes, it does. I shall call upon the Railway Minister to reply to the debate at 14.30 hours.

An Hon. Member: At 14.40 hours, Sir.

Mr. Speaker: All right, I will call him at 14.40 hours. Now, Shri Barman may continue his speech. Hon. Members will try to be short and brief so that other hon. Members may have an opportunity. I shall allow ten minutes to each hon. Member.

Shri Feroze Gandhi (Rai Bareli): Only ten minutes?

Shri Raghunath Singh (Varanasi): At least Shri Feroze Gandhi may be given five minutes more.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members who want to make long speeches should come earlier. I shall give half an hour to him.

Shri Feroze Gandhi: Some hon. Members have been given 50 minutes and even one hour. It is only once in a year that we get this chance.

Mr. Speaker: Sometimes it so happens "first come, first served".

Raja Mahendra Pratap (Mathura): May we know the names of those whom you are to call?

Mr. Speaker: It depends upon those that get up and catch my eye.

12.09 hrs.

Shri Barman (Cooch Behar—Reserved—Sch. Castes): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I mentioned on Friday that as early as 10th February, 1957, what is popularly known as a new deal was announced by the hon. Railway Minister. By this new deal certain posts in the upper grade had been increased. But I have to intimate to the hon. Railway Minister, on the information that I have in my possession, that those promises remain unfulfilled so far as the North-Eastern Railway is concerned and especially regarding the newly created North-East Frontier Railway is concerned. I am told that the facts are, by the new deal, in the upper two grades of Rs. 200 to Rs. 300 and Rs. 150 to Rs. 225 the percentage was raised from 1 to 5. So far as the third category is concerned, it was raised from 14 per cent to 32 per cent. I am told that so far as the north-east frontier region is concerned, only 2½ per cent in the upper two grades had been given effect to. But, so far as promotion to the third category is concerned, which was raised from 14 to 32½ per cent, not a single commercial clerk from the fourth category has been upgraded or promoted. This has caused much dissatisfaction. I would humbly ask the hon. Minister of Railways to look into the matter, and to see, that if the facts that I have stated are correct or are substantially correct, the grievances are redressed as early as possible.

Secondly, I am told that there is an invidious distinction in regard to the commercial clerks in the North-Eastern Railway. In other railways, the members of the staff are recruited as commercial clerks. But so far as the north-eastern region is concerned, they are recruited as tally clerks. They have no opportunity for years together to get training in goods and coaching services. As a result, all these years, they remain without any training and so they remain in the same position. Those who get earlier training, though recruited later on, get seniority in terms of service and

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they get earlier promotions and other advantages.

I am told that at the Alipur Duar training school, they have very little scope, and regarding admission as it is now, there is a huge number waiting for training. I would request the hon. Minister to see that special arrangements are made, in addition to the advantage that is to be had in the Alipur Duar school, to give training to the staff so that their grievances may be removed at an early date.

Next, I should like to make a few general observations regarding the service conditions and the working conditions of commercial employees in the railways. In the questionnaire issued by the Pay Commission, there is a definite question put. In regard to pay structure, the question is: "Should salary differentials be based primarily on elements such as education, training and skill required and responsibility attached to different posts of grades and services? Should not importance be attached also to elements such as fatigue, hazards, unpleasantness, etc., associated with employment?"

If the answer to the above question is in the affirmative, I have no doubt in my mind that the claims of commercial clerks in the railways become irresistible. Myself and my hon. friend, Shri Sinhasan Singh, personally visited the Delhi Main Station here last Saturday. We were rather surprised how such conditions of work could exist there in a station which is just in front, and under the nose, of the hon. Railway Minister. As I have no time to relate the conditions that we have seen in detail, I would ask the Minister just to find some time and see how the commercial clerks are working in the Delhi Main station. They are working in the most terrible conditions there. The furniture is almost in a broken condition. In a room 20 feet by 10 feet about 15 commercial clerks

were working, standing, at the time of our visit.

Now, the work of these commercial clerks is very tiresome, because, all along practically, they have to work standing. They have very little occasion to take any rest. In a station where there is 24-hour booking, the booking clerks have to work all along. Though the prescribed or the scheduled hours may be eight or nine hours, they have to work practically much beyond the prescribed hours, to adjust the accounts, to give over charge to the next man, which takes one to two hours. Thus, they have practically to work overtime by about three hours for which they get no extra remuneration.

We also saw the service conditions of the clerks in another sphere. We first of all went to the man who was working in the parcels. There was a heap or a pile of parcels behind his back, and he was still weighing parcels that were coming in a stream which were permitted by the Station Master. His duty hours were from 8 to 5. We were there at about 6, and still he was working. I would draw the special attention of the Minister to one fact. While that man was taking new parcels and weighing them, the heaps that he had already weighed lay behind him. Not a single guard was provided to watch the parcels. In those circumstances, anybody could lift any parcel and walk away with it. But that commercial clerk will be penalised for the loss. In order that the clerk could work—it may be for some extra hours, two hours or so,—with a peaceful mind, should there not be some station guards to see that no parcel is removed and no pilferage occurs while parcels are weighed? I think the conditions that we saw there are hazardous for the clerk in the sense that he is penalised for such pilferages or such missing or loss of parcels while he is engaged in weighment work.

Then we went to the goods shed which was full up to the ceiling, with thousands and thousands of parcels and goods. On the side of the railway line, the shed is completely open. We were told that there is one chowkidar stationed there at night, but if there be any loss or pilferage or if any package is missing, it will be the commercial clerk who is responsible, and who has gone home at that time. But he will be penalised for the loss. No responsibility is attached to the man who is on duty watching over those goods, for any pilferage or loss of the goods. It seemed to us very surprising to see all these things.

Then we went to another place at an open platform. There were a lot of packages lying about there. They said to us that the number was about 4,000 in all. It was all on the platform and one commercial clerk is in charge of it. He despatches them as and when the train comes, to the different destinations, according to the number that has to be despatched. We fail to understand how one man, without any guard could look after such a huge number of packages—4,000 packages—and be responsible for any missing or pilfered package. There should be someone to watch over the parcels. These are examples of the working conditions which we noticed there.

One thing may be stressed here. Due to the continuous work and the strain imposed on them, these people become exhausted towards the end of their duty hours. But then they still have to work. They submitted to us that though the sanctioned strength was there for about 140 men or so, so far as the Delhi Main station was concerned, the number was very short. They are short of staff. Only 100 persons were working, and as a result, they have to do much more work. They submitted to us that the duty hours should be reduced to six hours a day, so that ultimately, with the additional two or three hours during which they have to work the total will come to eight or nine hours a day.

There is a limit to human patience and human energy. These people have to look after their children, look after their homes, their shopping and other work. They are completely exhausted. After going home, they have to strike up the accounts. Practically, the whole time they are engaged in doing the work. For all that, what is the pay that they get? The lowest pay so far as clerks are concerned in the Railway administration.

I find that this matter had been also looked into by the earlier Pay Commission. In 1947, the Central Pay Commission while analysing the jobs of the loading and un-loading goods and parcels laid down that a commercial clerk can handle only 400 packages in the hours of his duty. In fact, the statement is that three to five times that number of packages are handled by the commercial clerk in the course of 8½ hours of duty. At several places like New Delhi, the Goods transit clerk has to un-load 800 packages and re-load the same number, 1600 packages in all.

In considering their work which involves this sort of penalisation every now and then you have to see whether the pay structure and their conditions of service are adequate or not. Considering Question No. 26 in the Questionnaire of the Pay Commission, you have to concede that there is utmost fatigue that these commercial clerks have to undergo. They have to handle military goods also, other inflammable materials and all that. In addition, their work is the most unpleasant of the whole lot. In the present fabric of our social structure, we take little notice of those who have to undergo all these fatigues, hazards and un-pleasantness. But, that is a bigger question. I should humbly ask the hon. Railway Minister, who knows these things well and the worries of those who are placed in the lowest rung of the ladder, to consider the case of these commercial clerks, who are under these conditions, and see whether their pay structure is quite

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right. I am told that some Members of the last Pay Commission had recommended a higher scale for these commercial clerks than for a few other categories, but ultimately the Railway Board turned it down. These commercial clerks are still in the lowest rung of the ladder. If the questionnaire of the Pay Commission has any force, I submit that their conditions of service and pay structure should be made just and fair.

I have submitted the general case on behalf of the unfortunate lot. I know that it involves a lot of money. As I find from the statistics, out of 11 lakhs of railway employees, their number is 25,000 or so. If a certain consolation and consideration is given towards the lot of these in the lowest rung in the ladder of railway service, I hope that much of the loss that the Railway is put to, to the extent of crores and crores will be saved and things will improve, and whatever they pay towards the amelioration of the conditions of those in the lowest rung will be amply compensated.

Shri Feroze Gandhi: Mr. Speaker, the Railways are the best example that we have of a Plan in action. Their working can best be described as a combination of ideas which have got to result in co-ordinated action. The safe running of a train over a distance of a thousand miles requires the performance of more than 2,000 different operations, each one of which has got to be done with meticulous care. Therefore, whilst criticising, and very rightly so, the failures of the Railway administration, their shortcomings have to be assessed against the background of the burdens and the responsibilities which fall on this great transportation machine.

The most vital factor which, today, affects the Railways is that the demand for transport has outstripped supply. The work done by the Railways is assessed in terms of certain operating indices. I would like to

scrutinise some of them before the House. The first amongst these is the passenger mile. Simply stated it means something like this. If ten passengers travel 10 miles, that is equal to 100 passengers travelling one mile or a hundred passenger miles. In the year 1956-57, the index of passenger miles of the Indian Railways stood at 41,878 million. Reduced to a daily figure, it amounts to 114·7 million passenger miles a day. Putting it in another way, this index means that the Indian Railways transported 41,878 million passengers a distance of 1 mile in 1956-57.

Similarly, we have the ton mile. This index stands at 40,000 million. Again, stating it simply, it means that 40,000 million tons of goods were moved to a distance of 1 mile by the Railways. Stated still more simply it means that the Railways moved for every man, woman and child in India, one-third of a ton a distance of 1 mile daily, that is, per head of our population.

I would like to simplify this even more, that is separate the passengers and the miles and see what happens. The number of passengers carried by the Indian Railways in 1956-57, yearly was 1406·6 million. Daily, it works out to 3·8 million or 38 lakh passengers were transported daily on the Indian Railways in 1956-57. Imagine transporting 38 lakhs of people who are on the move continuously. It is something like more than twice the city of Delhi; a city of the size of Bombay continuously on the move night and day. That perhaps explains the difficulties in catering.

An interesting question is,—I have found it rather interesting and I have asked many Members including our great Railway expert Shri Frank Anthony, who, unfortunately, is not here,—how many trains the Railways operate? When I discovered the figure, I was a little amazed.

The total number of trains, passengers and goods, operated in the year 1956-57 is 2,944,000 which works out to 6,971 trains every day, and this represents an increase of 861 trains daily over the figure for 1952.

Passengers load themselves into trains; goods have to be loaded. The number of wagons that were loaded on the Indian railways in 1956-57 was 8,374,000 which means a daily loading of 22,900 wagons. That is done daily.

To give you and the House an idea of the pressure on our marshalling yards, I might mention that the once notorious Mogalsarai, about which we do not hear any more and which was the worst bottleneck on the Indian railways, detaches and despatches 3,500 wagons a day.

This work falls on the railway administration and on them falls the responsibility for the supervision of 6,389 stations, 9,185 locomotives, 22,440 coaches, 2,49,000 wagons and the supervision and maintenance of 34,744 miles of railway track.

I have given these figures just to give the House in brief an idea of the work which the railways have to do daily, and it is in this colossal background; in the daily performance of this gigantic task of operations that accidents take place.

I would like, because the question of accidents has been raised, to submit to the House a scrutiny of the railway accidents, the total number, which have occurred in the last seven or eight years.

The total number of accidents, that is of all categories fall under a hundred different heads, is as follows:

1952	..	16,498
1953	..	13,146
1954	..	11,450
1955	..	10,644
1956	..	10,111
1957	..	9,543

Shri Mahanty (Dhenkanal): What is the number of major accidents?

Shri Feroze Gandhi: I will come to that.

So, you will see that the total number of accidents has gradually gone down, and is less by about 7,000 against the figure for 1952.

I am sorry my friend Shri Anthony is not here, because I had prepared all this for his benefit.

Out of this total of 9,543 accidents, 1,840 accidents consisted of running over buffaloes and cows; 1,671, consisted of the breaking of couplings,—that is something which happens mostly to goods trains.

An Hon. Member: What is a coupling?

Shri Feroze Gandhi: A coupling is a coupler which joins one wagon to another.

Shri Anthony frightened the House by saying that the number of engine failures was mounting up and up and that a number of accidents were taking place because of defects in the track. In the last six years I find that there is one minor accident which was the result of a defect in the track. I am not talking of the permanent way, failure of bridges etc. He mentioned the word "track".

The total engine failures are as follows:

1953	..	3,451
1954	..	3,341
1955	..	3,056
1956	..	3,044
1957 (the year under review)	..	3,090

Here, too, the figure has gradually declined in spite of the fact that almost one-third of our engines today are over-aged. But I would like to go back a few years. What was the position of engine failures in the year 1948-49?—because Shri Anthony said that the railways have started cooking up figures. He says

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all these figures are cooked up. Therefore, I would like to go back to 1948-49.

The annual report states that engine failures were 4,672 in 1948-49. Against this, the figure for the year under review is 3,090. That shows a very substantial drop, but here again Shri Anthony has got to be convinced that these figures are all not cooked up. So, we will move back a little more and go back to the days when the good Col. Emerson was here and see how he used to prepare figures.

The figure for that year, 1947-48, for engine failures is 3,300. So, it appears that since the Indians took over the Railway Board, the figures have substantially increased and, of course, later they have gone down. Against 3,300 engine failures, we have about 3,000 after about 10 years.

Members might say that it is only a drop of 300, but one has to view the total number of failures and accidents against the workload which has fallen on the railways since the last ten years.

Let us see what has happened. The passenger miles have increased in 1957 as compared to 1948, by 12,000 million. The ton miles have increased in 1957, as compared to 1948, by 20,000 million, that is exactly 100 per cent. The figure for 1947-48 is about 20,000 and the figure for 1957 is 40,000 million.

The train mileage operated is something about which some of us have no idea. In 1957 these 6,971 trains ran a total distance of 205 million miles—all the trains put together, passenger and goods. This works out to about 563,000 miles daily. It would interest Members to know that this is equivalent to a trip to the Moon and back, leaving a margin of about 89,000 miles. That is what the railways have to do every day.

Mr. Speaker: Only, they are proceeding horizontally and not vertically!

Shri Feroze Gandhi: You can never tell.

The train miles a year, that is the total number of miles that all the trains put together run, have increased in the last ten years by 68 million annually.

As far as the volume of originating freight hauled goes, it is 55 million tons more than in 1948. Therefore, Sir, you have to see, analyse and scrutinise the total number of accidents in the background of this increased load which has fallen on the Railways.

Mr. Speaker: What is the increase in the number of engines?

Shri Feroze Gandhi: One-third of the stock is overage and two-thirds is new. The total number is 9,185. So, you can figure it out. I am told that half of the one-third overaged have to be cut up and thrown away, but they are still in use. This is one of the reasons why the engine utilisation is low. These failures and accidents have to be viewed, as I said, in the background of the increased load, which has fallen on the Railways.

Now we will come to the statistics, which my friend Mr. Mahanty demanded, i.e., the major accidents which the Government Inspector of Railways enquired into. For the year 1957 I have given the list of the accidents. Now, we will come to gruesome details about the total number of people killed. I think some Members put it at a very low figure of 250 or something like that. The total number of people killed on the Indian Railways in 1956-57 was 5,054, not 250. Out of the 5,054, 3,511 were killed whilst they were trespassing on the track. They either killed themselves or why they did it, I do not know.

Then, in this year the total number of railway servants, who lost their lives, was 283. The total number of passengers, who lost their lives was 645. But all the passengers were not killed because of the fault of the railways, or because of what may be attributed to the Railways and the accidents reported by the Government Inspector of Railways. The number of passengers killed was 276 in this year. But, for some reasons best known to them, 343 persons also committed suicide in this year on the Railways.

Shri Somani (Dausa): How many?

Shri Feroze Gandhi: 343.

So, you will see that out of a total of 5,054 persons, who were killed, 276 persons were killed in major accidents, which my friend Mr. Mahanty referred to. In the year previous to this only 17 were killed, i.e., in 1956. The figure fluctuates from year to year. In some years it is more, in some years it is less. Therefore it is extremely difficult to say that the total number of people killed determine the number of accidents, because in this particular year two accidents have caused the loss of nearly 276 lives.

Now, Sir, against the total number of accidents, which I gave as 9,563 for the year 1957, let us take another country where the Railways are considered to be probably the best in the world, i.e., Japan. Japan has a route mileage of 12,000 miles. Indian Railways have a route mileage of 34,000 miles. The total number of accidents on the Japanese Railways in 1956-57, i.e., the same year, was 19,800. You will be surprised to know the type of accidents that take place in Japan.

Mr. Speaker: Are any due to earthquakes also?

Shri Feroze Gandhi: Not yet.

Out of this 19,800, obstruction and sabotage caused 3,500 accidents in Japan. Car—meaning coaches there-

by—trouble and damage to cars caused about 5,800 of this total. Therefore in a country renowned for its efficiency, where the railways are much more modernised than in India, we find that the total number of accidents are substantially higher than they are on the Indian Railways.

Shri Biren Roy (Calcutta—South West): What was the passenger mile?

Shri Feroze Gandhi: I think it will be less than in India, but I am not sure. You can see it, if you like.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member may give the title of the book.

Shri Feroze Gandhi: I will give that also. It is *The Yearbook of Japanese Railways*.

The occurrence of these accidents poses rather a delicate and a difficult question. It is my firm belief that accident begin exactly where caution ends. Caution ends when disobedience of the rules begins. A large number of accidents take place on the Indian Railways because of the failure of the staff to observe the rules. If accidents have got to be checked, the general and the subsidiary rules have got to be enforced strictly. Where it concerns the public safety, the severest punishment should be given for the violation and the disobedience of the general rules. Even in cases where an accident has been averted, but a rule has been violated, the punishment has got to be severe.

I cannot but emphasise the observance of the general and the subsidiary rules of the Railways. Take these collisions about which we hear almost every fortnight or month. Head-on collisions, i.e. when two engines strike each other, can never take place unless some rule has been violated. Following collision, like what happened in Bombay some time ago, where one train hits another from the rear, cannot take place unless some rule has been violated by the staff. Take the side collision, which

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has taken place at Sealdah. This could never have taken place unless some member of the staff violated some rule. Therefore, Sir, I would say with all the strength that I can bring to bear on this point that the Railways should take every possible step to see that the rules are observed. But this raises another question. If the rules have got to be followed at least they should be understood by the staff. I am sorry to say it but the fact is that the very persons for whom these rules are framed are unable to make head or tail out of them. I cannot say more because I was member of a Commission of inquiry and the report has not been published yet. The rules should be framed in very simple language. They should be revised from time to time and modified. Most important of all they should be in the regional language. It is impossible for the railway staff to follow these rules; they do not understand them. These rules are about a hundred years old. They have got to be revised. They are very important and they are very good. I can assure you that if the rules are followed, no two trains can ever come into contact. That is rather a big statement, to make, but I make it.

Take the case of drivers. If a driver takes it into his head that he is going to violate a signal nobody can stop him; there is no way of stopping him. The entire railway administration cannot stop a driver who has decided that he is going to violate signals and he will meet with an accident. So, these drivers who violate regulations should be constantly reminded that if they drive like hell, they are likely to get there. The officers who demand explanations from drivers for late running should remember that it is better to cripple a schedule than to cripple a human being. I would like to suggest that some of these slogans be pasted in the railway stations and in the loco-sheds. They may be useful. A good

slogan that clicks with the Plan also can well be something like this: "Death is so permanent; save man-power for the Plan."

Mr. Speaker, not all accidents are caused by the failure of the staff. You and me also contribute. We also contribute; others contribute also. I would like to give the House a few typical examples of accidents which have taken place in the last few years because a variety of causes lead to accidents. An electric multiple unit train was moving int' a station in Bombay. A bird was flying over it. The bird dropped a wire from its beak which fell on the pantograph, the bow-like thing which you have on electric trains. This caused a short-circuit which burnt a hole into the roof. The passengers got frightened and jumped out. Another train was coming along and several of them were killed. This is how some accidents take place, which nobody can help. Then some passengers who travelled two years ago decided to make puris in the train and enjoy themselves. They lit a stove and were making puris. Suddenly the train jolted, the stove was upset and the coach caught fire; the whole lot perished.

How do the workshops contribute to accidents? The operating staff would not know about it. In the year 1954, a train was passing between Chepatish and Bettiah. This may be of interest to Mishraji and also to our Railway Minister. This train was passing over a girder bridge. There was a storm and the roofs of three carriages were blown off. The train got derailed on the girder bridge, but fortunately—I do not know why—it turned out to be a minor accident; only 8 or 9 were killed in it. You can imagine the plight of the passengers. The time was about 8 o'clock night, people sleeping in the upper berth; the roof was suddenly blown up, the sky above and the river underneath!! This is not fair to the travelling public. On

enquiry, it was found that the entire sides of the coach were pock-marked with holes and it did not have the strength to hold the roof. This is an instance where the workshop contributed to an accident.

There is another peculiar accident. A gentleman was travelling with a highly flammable material which the other passenger did not know about. He was smoking a cigarette and he threw it. After sometime, the whole thing caught fire and the entire coach was blown up. So, the passengers also contribute towards a large number of accidents which result in the loss of human life.

Having finished with some of the bouquets, I would like to give a few suggestions. In the year under review, the speeds of goods trains have registered a further decline. I raised this question last year and the hon. Minister gave me an explanation that though the speed had fallen to about 9.8 miles per hour, a large volume of goods was carried. That may be so, but the decline is dangerous and I hope that steps will be taken to see that it does not fall further. Engine utilisation has also shown a downward trend, but this has been partly compensated and off-set by the net ton miles per engine hour, which has improved. The punctuality percentage of passenger trains has further deteriorated.

On the other hand, the railways and the railway administration can well claim credit for better wagon utilisation, as is reflected in fairly good increases in the wagon miles per wagon day, the net ton miles per wagon day, the net ton miles per goods train hour, the average wagon load and a substantial increase in the average load of goods trains. These are all very healthy signs. There has also been an improvement in the turn-round of wagons. But I think a very big achievement has been the reduction in the number of outstanding registrations for wagons. On the broad

gauge this has dropped from 89,800 to 67,000 and odd, i.e. 3.5 per cent. On the metre gauge, it has been brought down by 50 per cent, which I think is a very very good achievement.

It is a pity that in this year of more or less all-round achievement on the railways, their record should have been tarnished by a few recent accidents. In spite of these accidents, to the 1 million railwaymen, the men who are today building the future of the Indian railways, I would like to extend my appreciation for a job well done in 1957.

Shrimati Mafida Ahmed (Jorhat):
Mr. Speaker Sir, I am thankful to you for giving me a chance to participate in the debate. I feel myself fortunate to have the chance to speak immediately after Shri Feroze Gandhi, who has so ably commented on the background of Indian railways, its administration and the lack of passengers' sense of responsibility in travelling.

At the outset, I wish to express the deep sense of gratitude of the people of Assam to the hon. Railway Minister for paying due attention to the vital necessities of that under-developed part of the country. I do hope, that the House will join with me in expressing their appreciation for the provisions made to cater to the transport needs of a strategic part of our country. But, Sir, it is a matter of deep regret and utter surprise that my hon. colleague in Opposition, Shri Asoka Mehta has wrongly criticised the Government for creating this new zone.

13 hrs.

The creation of the North-East Frontier Railway Zone, with headquarters at Pandu and the preliminary measures taken for the construction of a rail-cum road bridge over the Brahmaputra are measures in the right direction when the country had taken up the task of great developmental constructions.

[Shrimati Mafida Ahmed]

The creation of this new Zone is really a step forward to the maintenance of high standard of operational efficiency and moreover, I believe, it will lead to substantial improvement of communications in that so long neglected part of India.

The measures taken by the Railway Administration for stabilising the Assam Link and for an alternative alignment are also heartening to the people who were crying hoarse for years past to have an all-weather dependable route.

Sir, in discussing the Budget we can certainly be proud of its impressive achievements. The non-enhancement of passenger fares and freight rates are the most welcome features of the present Budget. But as the hon. Minister has stated in his Budget speech that decisions on the Railway Freight Structure Enquiry Committee's recommendations are to be taken and implemented in the near future, I would appeal to the hon. Minister that while taking the decision and implementing the recommendations of the Committee, the freight rates on perishable articles like vegetables, fruits, fish, milk, etc., should in no circumstances be enhanced. In case of textiles the khadi and handloom fabrics and the various articles of cottage industries should get due exemption. When our Government have taken up an ambitious programme of industrialisation, our railway freight policy should also be to encourage development of industries and not to cause impediment by imposing increased rates.

The stoppage of import of steam locomotives for broad and metre gauge lines and general service wagons are other splendid aspects for which the Railway Ministry deserves congratulations.

The references in the Railway Minister's Budget speech to occurrence of frequent accidents and holding out

no hope for relief of overcrowding in III class travel are matters of real concern. Sir, to quote the words of the hon. Railway Minister "failure of human element largely accounts for the accidents". My submission in this regard is that—if the overtime working hours of running staff such as drivers, firemen and other personnel, in any way, contribute to failure of human element, then their working hours should immediately be reduced and every possible measure should be taken to avoid further mishaps.

While I do not consider myself competent to deal with the elimination of overcrowding in III class travel as a whole, there is room for its improvement in our part of the country. The provision of additional III class coaches to the existing trains and introducing more of shuttle trains will relieve overcrowding to a great extent. I would request the hon. Minister to consider whether it would be possible to run shuttle trains between Furkating and Manipur Road junction, especially on weekly bazaar days. This will, I think, go a long way to reduce overcrowding and relieve sufferings of the travelling public.

In this context I wish to refer to a particular seasonal rush. During the P. W. D. working season, thousands of mazdoors from various parts of Bihar go to Assam for doing earth work and they return to their places with the approach of summer. These travelling labourers' trouble and hardship in the journey are really pitiable. So may I respectfully suggest Sir, to make arrangements for special trains on both the journeys when these labourers go and come back from Assam.

Now, Sir, I would confine myself to certain problems relating to the State of Assam. It is imperative that the Assam Link line should be stabilised. Because, Assam is wholly dependent on the rest of the country for a large

number of essential commodities including foodstuffs; the people of Assam are subjected to serious hardships when the link ceases to function during the floods for several months in a year. Sir, transport is the first essential for the development of an area and when it is apparent that the transport bottleneck has caused economic ruin to the State of Assam, we entertain earnest hope that provisions would be made in the immediate future for construction of new railway lines to develop the under-developed areas of Assam.

In this connection, I would respectfully urge upon the Railway Minister to sanction an additional railway line from Bongaigaon to Pandu via Goalpara through the southern bank of the Brahmaputra river to obviate the probable dislocation of the present railway line during monsoon and to facilitate construction of a branch line to Garo Hills connecting its coal and lime-stone mines. The Garo Hill area is not only rich in mineral resources but also famous for cotton and bamboo plantation. The Railway Minister has mentioned in his Budget speech about the completion of the survey from Pandu to Amjanga. This, I think in view of establishing a Rail-link to Garo Hill and we shall be looking forward to see it established in the near future.

Secondly, I would like to impress upon the hon. Railway Minister to extend the North-Eastern Railway from Rangapara North to North Lakhimpur. It is a pity that this part of the State of Assam (About 130 miles in length) is deprived of railways! Besides this line is essential from two important factors—it is essential for the development of the tribal areas in the NEFA which is under the direct administration of the Government of India; secondly it is essential from the security point of view as the State is situated on the border of foreign territories.

Now, Sir, I come to my own constituency. There is a constant demand for a diversion of the main line trains between Furkating and Mariami, that the main line trains may have the advantage to touch two important towns, Jorhat and Golaghat. I say with all the emphasis that it deserves special attention of the Railway Ministry and the Railway Board.

13.09 hrs.

[MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER in the Chair].

It is important in view of economic development and other considerations.

During my last speech on the Railway Budget, I submitted that waiting rooms should be provided at Jorhat town Station and Baruahamungaon Station, but no provision has been made so far. I earnestly hope that my submission would receive due consideration.

Sir, though I am participating in the general discussion and though the hon. Minister for Railways has indicated clearly that it would be difficult to undertake any new line on account of limited resources, yet I could not help but to air the local demands; because I feel, it is my duty to ventilate the grievances of the people, especially of the constituency which I represent.

In conclusion, I congratulate the Railway administration for the remarkable progress they have made under the Second Plan.

Shri Jhulan Sinha (Siwan): Sir, I rise to offer some observations on the General Discussion. I propose to confine myself in the beginning mainly to the Government Railways. I have something very serious and severe to say about the light railway and I reserve my remarks when my Bill on the subject comes up.

The House has been very aptly reminded by a previous speaker of the onerous duty that the Railway has been discharging in this country.

[Shri Jhulan Sinha]

These Railways carry 1359 million passengers every year and goods to the tune of 125 crores of tons. This is a task which is almost staggering and they have been doing it with a good deal of success and, I may say, security also. I know that the country has been very seriously agitated about the accidents that have taken place very recently and in the recent past. But as the Railway Minister has stated, accidents could not totally be avoided. Although it is a fact and although he says that the number of accidents is lesser in this country than in many other developed countries, it should not be a ground for complacency. However small the number of lives involved may be, the accidents should be avoided. It has been admitted by the Railway Administration that the accidents have been mostly due to the failure of the human element. I agree with him and I, therefore, stress the point of avoiding the human failure. Collisions do not happen by themselves. They have to be guided and conducted and when the guide and conductor fail, naturally accidents occur. There are of course accidents which are beyond the control of the conductor but those cases stand on a different footing.

With these preliminary remarks, I would offer certain suggestions for the consideration of the Railway Minister. Firstly, overcrowding has been a question which has been seriously agitating our minds. The picture which the Railway Minister has presented to us in his Budget speech is almost despairing. He says that it cannot be avoided now. There are very little chances of eliminating this overcrowding in the foreseeable future. If that is the state of things, what are we to do? Are we to be huddled into compartments like sardines? I do not think it is permissible or plausible for us to continue the state of things like this. If the country cannot afford to put more coaches and locomotives on the lines, something has to be done to

lessen this evil. What are we to do? There are other modes of transport obtaining in the country where overcrowding has been avoided. I refer to the case of road transport obtaining in those states where it has been nationalised. Only a limited number of seats are there in a particular bus. The number of tickets issued for that bus cannot go beyond that number. Cannot we have that system in the railways also? Can we not control the issue of tickets and avoid overcrowding?

Shri Shahnawaz Khan: We can control tickets but we cannot control passengers.

Shri Jhulan Sinha: This problem has been tackled by the Government. Cannot we go to any place in U. P. where the transport is nationalised? Are the conductors and guards beaten by the passengers? People would accustom themselves to changes. Nobody would like to be huddled like sardines. They do so because you allow it to be done. My impression is that people get to the roof of the trains

The Minister of Railways (Shri Jagjivan Ram): Are they all ticket-holders?

Shri Jhulan Sinha: My experience is that there are some ticketless travellers but there are also travellers with tickets. I may be wrong or the hon. Minister's experience may be different. But I have got my experience.

The Government have got to do something. I do not say that it will be controlled with the control of the issue of tickets. We should develop the other means of transport—coastal steamers, road transport and other alternative means of transport. So far as the inconvenience to the life of the passengers in this country is concerned, it has to be saved by whatever means available to me. I do not want

to suggest that you should have police constables at all the gates. You have got the capacity of the carriages in your possession. Tickets should be issued only to that extent. If people enter into the compartments without tickets, then it is their fault. There is nobody to blame you for that. You have to do your duty and save yourself from adverse criticism which you have lent yourselves to by the indiscriminate issue of tickets without considering the seats available in the carriage.

Then, there is the problem of congestion in goods transport. I do not know what the hon. Minister's experience is. I do not know how far it is correct but I think the empty wagons are not being handled intelligently or handled with imagination. I got some tangible suggestions during the time of his predecessor and I forwarded them to the then Hon. Minister from a very responsible and experienced officer of the railway service. I could not follow the details. I do not know what happened to those suggestions. But I know that the officer concerned, Shri Harbans Narayan Singh, the N.E. Railway Guard at Chapra has been penalised for making those suggestions. He had the courage to do that and he did it and I forwarded them to the Minister's predecessor in office. There has been a censure noted in his service book which had been all this time free from blemish.

Shri Harish Chandra Mathur (Pali): Is it not a fact that the Railway Administration itself invites suggestions from all persons on payment of suitable awards for worthwhile suggestions?

Shri Jhulan Sinha: That is why it is all the more surprising that he had been penalised. I have already forwarded that case to the Hon'ble Minister and if he says that he has not received it, I shall send to him again.

Shri Shahnawaz Khan: He said he did not quite understand what was contained in that?

Shri Jhulan Sinha: I am not so much conversant with the transport rules as the hon. Deputy Minister who has just spoken against it.

Shri Jagjivan Ram: It is surprising that any official of the Railway should have been penalised for forwarding certain suggestions through a Member of Parliament. We have in fact a system of inviting suggestions from the railway employees. Some are accepted and some employees are rewarded. I would like to know more details about this case and if hon. Member sends those details, I will look into it.

Shri Jhulan Sinha: I have already written a lengthy letter drawing the attention of the hon. Minister. In fact that man had been penalised for forwarding the suggestions. I will certainly send a copy of the letter, if he has not received the previous letter.

I have already sent that letter. But if the hon. Minister has not received it, he may kindly tell me and I shall send him a copy of it.

Shri Jagjivan Ram: Yes.

Shri Jhulan Sinha: As for pilferage and corruption which are prevalent on the railways, the House has already heard the remarks made by my hon friend Swami Ramananda Tirtha. I agree with him cent per cent that the corruption and pilferage which are prevalent on our railways are largely due to the delinquencies on the part of the railwaymen concerned. I cannot make myself agreeable to the suggestion that outsiders come and pilfer goods from the railway platform. Even if somebody comes from outside and pilfers goods, that somebody must be doing it with the connivance, if not the active support of the persons in charge of those goods. The Railway Minister seems to be satisfied that

[Shri Jhulan Sinha]

there has been some improvement in this respect. But I have not been able to follow the report in this connection. The report says that there has been an increase in the number of claim cases. I do not know what these claim cases are for; I believe they must be in respect of goods pilfered or damaged or lost. If the number of claims has increased, of course, they have given their own reasons for it; it is for them to find out reasons just as we are here to find out our reasons. My impression is that the extent of pilferage and loss of goods on the railways has not in the least been minimised. My impression is that in spite of whatever has been done by the initiation of the Railway Protection Force of the watch and ward system, it will go on till the railwaymen appointed for the protection of these things improve their own moral calibre and take it that it is their duty not to pilfer but to protect.

Within the short time at my disposal, I shall not be able to do justice to my suggestions in regard to the non-governmental light railways. The mileage covered by the Governmental railways is 34,291, while that covered by these light railways is only 453. I would, therefore, reserve my remarks in respect of light railways to another occasion, that is, when my Bill on the subject of the light railways, would come up before this House.

Before I conclude, I would like to draw the attention of the Minister to one thing that has taken place on the O.T.R section of the North-Eastern Railway. Recently, there has been a good deal of economy effected on that railway. Of course, it has been shown in the report. My information is that the economy that has taken place there is in respect of smaller men rather than in respect of the higher people. As far as I have come to know, there has been an increase in the number of high officials at the headquarters, while there has been a reduction in the number of field staff

there. One railwayman doing the particular job told me—I do not know what the names of those persons are—that the number of those persons who really guard the line and repair the track has been decreased from four to three for a particular distance. This is how economy has been effected, whereas the number of higher officials at the district headquarters has been increased. Actually, there should be an increase in the number of people who guard the track and maintain it properly rather than in the number of those sitting at the headquarters.

With these words, I congratulate the Minister on performance of the heavy task that he has taken upon himself, and I hope he will bear it successfully and manfully.

Shri Pattabhi Ramam (Kumbakonam): I wish to make a few general observations, and with your leave, shall start with co-ordination of transport, to which frequent reference has been made in this House. I feel that the time has come when there should be a high-powered body to deal with the railways, inland waterways, coastal shipping and roadways in rural and urban areas. Unless that is done, we shall not be able to stop the growing bottleneck especially in goods traffic. When any canal or inland waterway is started or any roadway is started, that must be done in conjunction with the railway programmes. Frequent reference has been made to it, and I sincerely hope that the Railway Administration will bear this in mind, and Government themselves see to it that the co-ordinating body is appointed as soon as possible.

Shri Harish Chandra Mathur: Is the hon. Member aware that these were under one Minister all these years, and as a matter of fact, it was as a result of the Estimates Committee's recommendation that the portfolios were split up?

Shri Pattabhi Ramam: I am much obliged to my hon. friend for having pointed this out. That is so. At one time, all these were under one Minister. Actually, we see the spectacle here quite often of the Transport Minister having to answer questions connected with Railway Administration, when the matter of transport comes up, and there have to be mutual references; actually, a tussle went on in this House once. I sincerely hope that we will be able to avoid this sort of thing, as soon as there is some sort of co-ordination.

I shall now straightaway come to the extension of railway lines. I know that good work has been done in this behalf. I assure the hon. Minister that I am not now going to plead for any new railway line or survey in my part of the constituency in South India or for any extension of railway lines there. But I would like to say that the Minister cannot always have traffic alone as the desideratum or the main consideration. There should not be any rigidity so far as extension of railway lines is concerned. For example, for political reasons, we may have to extend the railway system as soon as possible to Kashmir. I am very happy to find that there is now a new tendency or a new trend in extending Indian laws to Kashmir. I was myself chairman of a Select Committee recently, that is, Select Committee on the Mines and Minerals (Development) Bill, and there the usual phrase 'excepting the State of Jammu and Kashmir' was omitted. In keeping with that trend, I would suggest, as has frequently been suggested in this House, that extension of the railway system to Kashmir should be taken on hand on a high priority basis.

Similarly, there are other areas also where such extension is necessary. Here, I have to refer to my part of the country. There are areas like Mudukalathur, for instance, where recently there were the riots, and

other such places in the Ramanathapuram district. You may have no idea of that place; the whole area is very backward; there is very little of irrigation there. It has more or less been cut off from the rest of the world, which has not much contact with it. If the railway system could be extended into that area, I have no doubt that that area will be opened up, and some more light will be thrown on that part of the world, and there will be less of friction as between one area and another.

So far as Delhi is concerned, I find that Dr. Sushila Nayar has already referred to the ring railway round Delhi. That is another matter where we can straightaway do something. If we can have a railway system round Delhi and New Delhi, it will help in relieving congestion on the one hand, and will also help the officials very much. A huge capital has grown up here and thousands and thousands of people have to come to the capital to work in the various offices and then go back to their houses at the end of the day. So, a ring railway round Delhi will go a long way in relieving the traffic congestion.

With regard to goods traffic, I have already made a reference, and, therefore, I would only say this that we must prevent the growing bottle-neck, and we must see to it that the demand is met, especially with regard to iron, coal and manganese. At present, we see the spectacle of quite a lot of goods not being hauled from one place to another on account of lack of wagons or on account of the track not being free. We must try to cope up with this bottle-neck. Otherwise, we shall be in for more serious trouble.

Reference has also been made frequently to accidents. I myself am aware that the various recommendations of the Railway Accidents Enquiry Committee have not been fully implemented. I feel that a real attempt should be made to give effect to most of the recommendations. After

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all, it is an expert people who have come forward with these recommendations, and, therefore, due regard must be given to the recommendations of this committee. Hon. Members like Shri Feroze Gandhi have been referring to the failure on the part of the railway officials to follow the rules as having been responsible for accidents. Of course, that is also another aspect which must be gone into.

Then with regard to training and maintenance of efficiency of the running staff, that is a matter that needs immediate attention. I must confess I am not original in this suggestion because two references have already been made to this. So far as the running staff is concerned, we must not only see to it that intensive training is given, but there must also be refresher courses, and people like travelling ticket examiners should form part of the running staff. They will help in preventing ticketless travel to a very great extent.

Apart from giving these refresher courses and seeing to it that the efficiency mark is kept up, we must also see to it that promotions and other rewards are given for good record and efficiency, especially in the case of the running staff.

Reference has already been made to the Light Railways. I am really surprised that these have yet to be nationalised. We must nationalise them as soon as possible and see to it that standardisation is effected so far as those railways are concerned.

Then I come to an aspect of railway administration to which I find—subject to correction—that no reference has been made so far. I am personally aware of it; as a lawyer, I have fought cases against the railways. I feel I must refer to it, and that is about railways and legal advice. What really happens or seems to happen now is that counsel are chosen at various places more or less on a patronage basis. Let a serious attempt be made to have a co-ordinating body; let the Chief Justice of India and the

Chief Justices of the various High Courts be consulted, and let there be panels appointed consisting of good and deserving lawyers, especially youngsters, who would be able to do their jobs with zeal. Even on a nominal fee, they would do it very well. Not only in regard to the architecture of it, that is, the procedural aspect, but also in regard to the advisory aspect, if you have a panel for the Madras zone, Calcutta zone, Hyderabad zone and so on with six or seven young lawyers, it will be far far better than to have one man who is chosen because he is known to the General Manager or to the Railway Board. This is precisely what is happening now.

I know that a good many cases are being lost in trying to resist uselessly, where railways are really responsible. For example, a goods clerk in a railway gives a receipt saying that so many goods have been loaded in such and such wagon. At the other end, only half of it is there or, as in one case, instead of asbestos sheets, you get three or four such sheets and the rest all card-boards or stones made up for weight. That is what happens, and there is an attempt to resist claims, and in nine cases out of ten, the railway loses. A commission is appointed to take evidence, an elaborate rigmarole and paraphernalia of going from one place to another follows, and ultimately the railway loses, more especially in insurance cases and where third party risks are concerned.

In all these matters, if instead of one man being in charge of advising and arguing these cases, a panel of lawyers is appointed—who will be recommended by the various Chief Justices, of the various High Courts and the Supreme Court—it will be far far better and it will also help in minimising losses so far as that aspect of railway administration is concerned.

Shri Damani (Jalore): I want to thank the Railway Minister for the

improvements achieved in the past year and for introducing a budget with a surplus of Rs. 27·34 crores without any kind of increase in freight rates or passenger fares.

My hon. friend, Shri Feroze Gandhi, has properly and in detail explained the strain on the railways and improvement in their working. So I will not take the time of the House in repeating those things.

There is a more disturbing feature, that is the frequent accidents in the past year. While we are discussing the budget, we have seen that there was one more accident near Calcutta. These frequent accidents have affected the confidence of passengers to a great extent. Therefore, it is proper that these accidents should be prevented forthwith with early efforts so that the travelling public may get relief and security.

I want to make a few suggestions for economy in the running of the railways. As the hon. Railway Minister said just now, there is a practice of giving rewards for making suggestions. I am very glad that this practice is being adopted and has proved successful. If more importance is given to such suggestions, it will be more useful for the railways.

I want to suggest that railway workshops should be modernised with the latest machines so that they can produce more number of parts at cheaper cost. Also, such workshops should be started at different convenient places so that wagons or coaches can be repaired there without having to be taken long distances to the present workshops. This will not only save time but repairs could be attended to immediately. Consequently efficiency will also increase.

The railways are selling a huge quantity of scrap at reduced rates. If steps are taken to refine and re-use them, a lot of money can be saved. By installing proper machines in the workshops, the scrap can be re-used and a lot of saving can be achieved.

The problem of overcrowding is a great trouble to the passengers. I admit that in the past years, the railways have done their best to overcome this overcrowding problem. But still the difficulties of passengers are continuing. If the railways abolish second class coaches and turn them into third class coaches, the solution can be achieved quicker. This can be done without much difficulty, and it will not affect the revenue of the railways. This suggestion can be considered in detail.

My hon. friend, Shri M. D. Mathur, has explained in detail the position of the railways in Rajasthan. Again, I do not want to repeat those things and take the valuable time of the House. Passengers coming to Delhi in the Delhi Mail from Rajasthan, and also those coming to Delhi from Ahmedabad as well as those who go to Rajasthan from other parts of the country, have to face considerable difficulties. The accommodation provided to them is quite insufficient. I have seen on several occasions passengers at Delhi station being thrown into the mail train by way of windows by coolies, or their relatives. They suffer considerably on account of thus. This is a daily occurrence. The crowd is so much that there is hardly time to get in in the proper manner.

In view of this, requests have been made to introduce a *Janata* train from Delhi to Ahmedabad. But no attention has been given to this request. I think last year more than 100 trains have been introduced on the lines. But this simple demand of the Rajasthan public is ignored. I hope the hon. Railway Minister will give proper attention to this genuine demand for a *Janata* train from Delhi to Ahmedabad.

At Ahmedabad, when the Delhi Mail reaches, passengers get hardly 15 minutes to catch the *Janata* train for Bombay or 45 Minutes to catch the Gujarat Mail. In such a short time, it is very difficult for the passengers to

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get their accommodation in the train. Therefore, I think, if some coaches are reserved for the passengers coming in Delhi Mail at Ahmedabad in the Janata or the Gujarat Mail, it will give some facilities.

In the Delhi Mail, there is one compartment reserved for Bikaner passengers, passengers going to Bikaner. The passengers are too many in number. If, instead of one, two coaches are reserved, that will be very helpful and appreciable.

I would request that in order to get public co-ordination and efficiency on metre-gauge, it would be advantageous to have zonal officers appointed. These officers would be in a better position to look after passenger amenities and welfare. At present there is one General Manager to look after all the metre-broad gauge; therefore different metre gauge zonal officers would be very helpful. I hope the Railway Minister would try his utmost to remove the transport bottle-neck in the country with its expanding economy and will try to provide more amenities to the passengers.

Shri D. R. Chavan (Karad): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I am going to make only two or three points, and, if I get some time, then, I would like to refer to the regional demands and disparities that have been caused in making certain allocations under the Railway plans.

The largest single allocation in the Plan is the allocation under Railways. It is proposed to spend about Rs. 1,125 crores out of a total plan frame of Rs. 4,800 crores. For the steel plants which are being proposed to be erected by Government, the allocation is about Rs. 480 crores.

It had been said that our Second Five Year Plan is a Steel Plan. It is said that it is a plan to manufacture machinery. Furthermore, this has been described as the hard core of the Plan. The Prime Minister recently said, referring to the Second Five

Year Plan, about its implication, that agriculture will be and is always number 1. But, my submission about the Second Five Year Plan is that it is neither a steel plan nor an agricultural plan, but it is a railway plan.

If we study some of the aspects of the Plan, we will find that the railways are the largest drain on the country's foreign exchange resources. The total foreign exchange requirements of the Plan in the public sector are estimated at Rs. 1,050 crores; and, of this, Rs. 425 crores, or nearly 40 per cent., are to be for the railways. The railways have been increasing their foreign exchange consumption and, I am afraid, when the final reckoning is made, it will be that they have spent Rs. 700 crores of our foreign exchange.

Besides, a substantial proportion of our investments in the private sector undertaken by our large and heavy engineering concerns in India is intended for the railways. There is going to be an acute shortage of foreign exchange; and this acute shortage has arisen since the railways have proceeded to make use of this foreign exchange allocations. The result is that the country's foreign exchange resources have fallen to a low level—I say, a perilously low level.

Imported consumer goods are rapidly disappearing from the country and from the market; and, imported raw materials which are necessary to keep up the production of Indian goods are not available. Almost totally impossible credit conditions have been imposed for the import of all kinds of machinery needed by the Indian industry.

Then, the railway plan will consume the greatest amount of steel that is likely to be imported from foreign countries for satisfying the total requirements of the Plan. If I am right—to quote certain figures—it is like this. The Second Five Year Plan envisages imports of steel for the Plan period of about 7 million tons.

The Railways, if I am correct, have sent a mission abroad with instructions to buy five million tons of steel. The licensing of steel imports for all industrial uses have been practically suspended for the last so many months; and, I am quite confident that there are no prospects in future of this being liberalised for the next coming years.

The railways, again, consume the greatest amount of steel that is available locally in the country. The railways are the largest single consumer of the available supplies of steel within the country. Our engines and wagons are all made of steel. In addition to that, railway lines, sleepers, marshalling yards and signalling equipment also consume steel in a fantastic quantities.

Recently, the railways established huge factories for the manufacture of railway equipment. If I remember aright, in 1956, the Railway Ministry estimated that the railways would require about a million tons of steel. But, by 1961, when our workshops and installations like the Chittaranjan Locomotive Factory and the Integral Coach Factory are expanded and working in full swing, their demand is likely to be in the region of 3 million tons per year. In other words, at the end of the Plan period, the enlarged and expanded railways will absorb 3 million additional tons of steel that is likely to be produced by the steel plants which are going to be erected.

The result would be that there would be very little left for the houses, schools and other purposes. If the railways are rationed at the end of the Plan period, to say, a million tons of steel, then, it will only mean that the giant workshops and the factories which we have established and worked, in which the nation has spent crores of rupees will stand idle.

In the meanwhile, the housing problem in the country would deteriorate. If I may be permitted to give certain

figures, I may point out that the U.N. Report on housing predicts that the shortage of houses in urban areas by 1961 will be 3·3 million units or a shortage of twice as many units as in 1951.

The Railway Administration, through various pamphlets and articles, give the impression that the Railways are making superhuman efforts to carry coal and other raw materials for the steel plants. But, Sir, the facts are rather different. If I am allowed to quote certain figures, I may say that out of the total production of 39 million tons of coal per year the existing steel plants require only two million tons while the Railways, on the other hand, require 13 million tons of coal.

Again, the Railways give the impression that they are co-operating in a gigantic effort to increase coal production from 39 million tons to 60 million tons in the Second Plan, so that the new steel plants and other industrial units, which are likely to come up in the Second Five Year Plan, can have an adequate supply of coal. In fact, the three new plants altogether will require only six million tons of increase for themselves.

Then, I would like to refer to steam traction. We are importing steam locomotives and other railway equipment from foreign countries. Concerning that my submission is, so ridiculously obsolete and uneconomic is the steam traction of railways that it has been abandoned in most of the western countries like, for example, the United States of America, Great Britain and Russia. In fact, the industries in western countries manufacturing steam traction rail equipment continue their existence on the orders that are placed by the Indian Railway Board.

This is certainly an old state of affairs. But it is justified on the alleged ground that if India is to industrialise and, specifically, if Indian steel production is to be increased from 1·3 million tons to 4·3 million tons as is planned, then the Railways

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must be expanded accordingly. This sounds very plausible. But the picture painted by the Indian Railway Board is far from true.

The United States of America increased her steel production from 15 million tons in 1932 to 117 million tons in 1953 and increased her industrial production enormously, while the total railway mileage, the number of passengers, goods, wagons and locomotives all declined. The Americans moved their traffic by road and road transport.

All the goods that industrial development requires in the Second Five Year Plan could have been moved by road and road transport at the expenditure of a small fraction of the real resources. To have relied on road transport would have much simplified the matter of raising capital.

Concerning road transport I may be allowed to quote certain figures in regard to its employment potential. It would have also made a major contribution to our employment problem. Shri F. C. Badhwar, ex-Chairman of the Indian Railway Board, writing in the *London Financial Times* of 13th August, 1956 wrote about the employment potential of road transport. He says:

"It has been calculated that under existing conditions one whole time employee is required in road transport for every 50 ton miles or 300 passenger miles. On the Railways one full time employee is required for every 300 ton miles plus 30,000 passenger miles, i.e. roads and road transport provide between 80 and 100 times more employment than do the Railways to carry the same volume of goods or passengers."

He further points out:

"To carry the additional goods traffic of the Plan, the Railways will provide additional employment for 2·53 lakh persons. If this traffic has been carried by

road it would have given employment to 80 times more people; that is, created about 202 lakh more jobs—more than a complete solution of our unemployment estimated at 153 lakhs."

About the First Five Year Plan it has been observed by the Planning Commission: "The employment position worsened to some extent during the period of the Plan". About the Second Five Year Plan they say: "Even with the larger efforts envisaged, the total volume of unemployment during the period of the Plan may be of the same order as at present".

Now, the question is, why is this not being done? My opinion about this is that this is largely the result of the extremely influential position that is being occupied by the Railway Board. Secondly, they are the largest single industrial undertaking in the country, and the largest single governmental organisation. Besides, the Railway Board is staffed by some of the ablest men in the country. I, therefore, suggest that some of these persons should be transferred to the Ministry of Transport and Communications.

Recently, Sir, the Railway Minister on the floor of the Rajya Sabha stated that, "if we are expected to carry 180 million tons of goods traffic at the end of the Plan we should be given more funds, more money should be placed at our disposal". My submission in this respect is that the Railway Minister has an insatiable appetite for more money. As for me, I am not prepared to sanction any amount unless there is some integrated well thought out plan between the Ministries of Railways and Transport and Communications. For that purpose my proposal is that both the Ministries should appoint a committee consisting of representatives from both the Ministries for the purpose of bringing out an integrated plan to put our transport economy on a sounder and firmer basis.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: The hon Member should conclude now

Shri D. R. Chavan: Sir, If I am given two more minutes

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: It appears the hon Member's appetite for time is also insatiable

Shri D. R. Chavan: Sir, there is only one more point and I will conclude. My only grievance against the Railway Ministry is that out of the total Plan, out of the colossal amount that is being spent, almost the whole amount is being spent in the north. The people from Maharashtra have placed certain demands before the Railway Minister, which have been referred to by some of my hon friends. I would like to remind the hon Minister that his distinguished predecessor had visited my part of the country and assured the people of Maharashtra that he would consider their demands sympathetically and see if something could be done to include some of the schemes in the Second Five Year Plan.

May I remind the hon Minister that there is a demand for the conversion of the narrow gauge section between Poona and Miraj into a broad gauge section? There is another demand for the conversion of narrow gauge section from Miraj to Kolhapur into broad gauge. If these schemes are not undertaken it will certainly retard the progress of that part of the country, people will remain backward both politically and economically. The result would be that the whole of that part of the country would be converted into one labour camp for the purpose of catering to the needs and requirements of the industrialists in Bombay and surrounding areas. Therefore, may I appeal to the Minister to be more than human and look into the demands of the people of Maharashtra, because there is nobody from my side to exert any political pressure and our demands are, therefore, going unheeded?

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Shri Biren Roy

Raja Mahendra Pratap: Sir, I have to say just a few words

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Order, order. I have called Shri Biren Roy

Shri Biren Roy: Mr Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I am thankful to you for giving me a few minutes to participate in the General Discussion on the Railway Budget. I shall try to be as brief as possible, and without criticising I will go straight to a suggestion about the fuel problem.

This matter of fuel was raised, as I understand, when I was absent, by my friend on this side, Shri Bimal Ghose. I find from budget estimates and from grants that nearly Rs 57 crores, which represent approximately 25 per cent of the total operating expenses on the Railways, are spent on fuel, that is, coal. He has also raised the problem of the best quality of coke that is used by our locomotives.

India, in order to save foreign exchange, has started the Chittaranjan Locomotive Plant

14 hrs.

I can mention in this connection that when I was in Europe during the period of 1948 and again in 1950, I had brought out a suggestion which I subsequently placed before the then Minister of Commerce and Industries, who, I think, was Dr Shyam Prasad Mukerji. Messrs Krauss Maffei were helping at that time the Chittaranjan Locomotive Works, and the same firm suddenly jumped to help the Tatas too, i.e., the TELCO, so that a private sector can compete with the Government one. While visiting that firm, I came into touch with a certain gentleman who invented what was called in Germany at that time KOHLENSTAUB TURBINE, that is, coal dust turbine. He was a friend of mine, and actually, his invention was patented long before the war but it was taken away from Berlin after World War II. This gentleman made a turbine of that type and it was later produced in Switzerland, I think, by Oerlikons or by some such firm and also, in America.

[Shri Biren Roy]

These turbines run practically on coal dust which is not used for any practical purposes. That gentleman wanted to develop the same engine for aircraft. And we had a long discussion with certain other very prominent aero-engineers. I am not going to mention names and make it very long. He wanted to prove that if he got sufficient opportunity and money, he could make it even as successful as the aircraft turbine engines of the present day.

But leaving that aside, coal dust turbine for locomotives is now a practical proposition, and if it is developed in Chittaranjan, in our country, it would be good. Of course, we may later on have our electric engines and electric traction, but we cannot certainly afford to have that traction scattered throughout the whole of India over such a long mileage. So, for a long time to come, either diesel or coal will have to be used and such types of engines produced. Therefore, if we can find that this coal-dust turbine can be economically produced—such dust can be very cheaply procured and in vast quantities—and other kinds of coal which are of very low grade can also be used in a dust form to run bigger turbines, and these locomotives could be made to work with great satisfaction. I think that the Research and Scientific Department of the railways and also the development department of the Government should take up this scheme and start an experiment on it in Chittaranjan and have such a locomotive out, so that we could not only later on save the foreign exchange drain by not importing any more steam engines or even fuel but have our own coal dust locomotives to run the other part of the traction, i.e., apart from the electric traction. That is one suggestion.

Coming to the other problems, the problems of the region of West Bengal, I have one suggestion to

make, and that is a demand of West Bengal. The northern area of West Bengal was long cut off, and now, after the added areas, has to be connected with railways. The areas of West Dinajpur and Malda and so on should be connected and the region brought under the Eastern Railway, to have a uniform administration. I think this suggestion should be considered soon. The hon. Minister is smiling at it. Of course, he can have his own ideas, and we have ours.

The other problem is the problem of electrification round about Calcutta. There is so much population over there and it is moving every day. Shri Feroze Gandhi wanted to give some figures. Well, statistics can always be twisted and I can also twist if I had the time. Now, if we do not have that circular railway round Calcutta—it has now practically been shelved—and if we do not have also the Sealdah division at least connected by electrification to Bandel through Naihati and Kanchrapara, it would be very uneconomic, and the development of Calcutta and the surrounding area would be retarded.

In fact, the hope of the people there that the whole of the suburban region is going to be developed is already going down, in fact vanishing because there is no quick communication around Bhatpara and other mill areas where the population density is so high. I think the density of population there is among the highest in India and the people cannot simply move in the streets. Further, there cannot be any alternative road traffic, because there are no Roads.

In this House, the hon. Deputy Minister, replied to one of my questions on a similar subject re-closure of Kalighat-Fulta railway in South suburbs that alternative means of communication are being arranged around that area. I wanted to put a question at that time that instead of closing down, why not the railway

lay a broad gauge line so that in future, it could be connected with the electrification schemes and it would have developed all the southern Calcutta areas up to Sealdah and Diamond Harbour. But the reply was that by road transport etc. these alternative arrangements would be made. However, there is no sign of that. The West Bengal Government will not be able to provide any alternative route to these poor people. At present, most of the people have to travel on tops of the buses. You can understand the plight of about 50 persons on the top of a bus travelling for twenty-five miles, going along the Diamond Harbour road so narrow and not thought to be widened. That is the alternative arrangement that has been made.

I now come to the very simple problems regarding amenities on the railways. Some of the problems are still pending. For example, I may mention the kitchens of the restaurant cars. I hope the hon. Minister or some of his officers should inspect them and find out whether any improvements can be made by way of cleaning them and keeping them well. It is really disgusting that when we have such nice railways such as air-conditioned coaches, food is being served in a place which is insanitary and dirty. Really, the plight of those who cannot go to the restaurant cars, is much more miserable.

Then, I would like to make some suggestions regarding the new fast expresses which they have now introduced. They are very good. In some cases, namely, on the Calcutta-Delhi and Delhi-Bombay routes, I think there should be more frequency. Instead of two, there should be three weekly. The types of coaches should also be modified. I tell you why. You will find that the people who use these coaches, most of the time have to just rest in an inclined position. Why not these seats be made removable or be adjustable to be in three positions as in the planes? Then it may be much more convenient for

persons to sit upright, comfortably, and to have even food. It could be so made as to be inclined, say, at 45 degrees. The seats could be such that there will be no trouble in sleeping at night, as also proper rest could be had in the seats.

Another suggestion would be that the passage, instead of being at the centre, should be at the side, which is done universally on all railways, so that the kind of coaches could be used also as sleeper cars, and sitting cars, i.e., the same coaches could be manufactured, with partitions for 1st class sleeper cars, which are popular and could be more paying. Again sleeper cars are very convenient and more sleeper cars should be introduced, and one such car should be attached to each such fast de-luxe long distance train, because those who do not or cannot pay for the full air-conditioned trains can go even in the sleeper cars.

Shri Naushir Bharucha (East Khandesh): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, I desire to touch only those aspects which so far have not been touched. As I was listening to my friend Shri Feroze Gandhi, who gave statistics regarding accidents, I was rather surprised when he said that only 5,000 odd people were killed in the railway accidents. And that took my mind to various battles where the casualties have been much less and which have decided the fate of the world or the course of Indian history. Even so, in the battle of Dunkirk only 30,000 people were killed, a figure which the railways can aspire to reach during the period of the second Five Year Plan. Therefore, let us not minimise the number of accidents.

Shri Shah Nawaz Khan: Shri Feroze Gandhi also made it clear that about 3,000 people were killed, for which the railways had nothing to do, because it is not the fault of the railways when they were killed while crossing or approaching the railway track.

Shri Naushir Bharucha: The second point.....

Shri B. S. Murthy (Kakinada—Reserved—Sch. Castes): Does the hon. Member say that there should be more accidents?

Shri Naushir Bharucha: The hon. Member will please hear. My time is running short.

Coming to page 9 of the Explanatory Memorandum of the Budget, you find that Goods earnings have been put down at Rs. 250 crores in the Budget year as compared with a revised estimate of Rs. 231 crores, an increase of only Rs. 19 crores. Comparing the actuals of 1956-57 with the Revised estimate, there was an increase of Rs. 27 crores I should like to ask the hon. Minister how is that the more we invest and the more trains he runs, we are having less earning especially when the 6½ per cent surcharge will work for the whole year. I should like to have an explanation why, if in the preceding year we can have an increase of Rs. 27 crores in Goods earnings, only Rs. 19 crores now. This calls for explanation.

If we examine the working expenses, we find on page 11 of the Explanatory Memorandum, Repairs and maintenance have again jumped up from the actuals of 1956-57, which was Rs. 88 crores to the Budget estimate of 1958-59 of Rs. 104 crores; a sudden jump in two years of Rs. 16 crores. Repairs and maintenance alone cost Rs. 16 crores more within two years for which there is no satisfactory explanation.

Then also, if we come to Operation costs with regard to fuel, last year, speaking on the Railway Budget, I pointed out that in two years, there was a rise of Rs. 12 crores. If you see the actuals of 1956-57, it was Rs. 45 crores. The Budget estimate is Rs. 57 crores. In another two years, Rs. 12 crores more on fuel. Last year, I protested that there was

no satisfactory explanation. The hon. Railway Minister was frank enough to admit that he had given an explanation with which he himself was not satisfied and that he was going to appoint a Committee. He has appointed a committee. I should like to know whether the committee is going only to probe into what the Railways are going to do with quality coal or it is going to suggest drastic remedies for bringing down the fuel costs. I am inclined to think that there is tremendous leakage in this matter. Leakages occur in one hundred and one ways. Any quantity of coal is stolen first by the Railway servants: public afterwards. I would like to know, now that we have created a Railway protection force which costs Rs. 2½ crores per annum, what is going to be the result, whether the same repetition in the increase in fuel costs? When the public suffered a loss of Rs. 37 lakhs in the Mundhra deal, the whole community was upset and exercised. When we are shouting year after year, where do crores go, not even a dog barks. That is perhaps one of the phenomena of democracy. What I say is, it is high time now that the hon. Railway Minister instead of laughing away crores, took serious notice of it. It is not a small item of expenditure—fuel costs—an item in which leakage is heavy.

In Repairs and maintenance, you have Rs. 16 crores more. What is the position that you find with regard to the vehicles? Even first class coaches are in such a ramshackle condition that you may think that they do not belong to anybody, let alone the Indian Railways.

The hon. Minister has said that you have made a profit of Rs. 27 crores. I say this is an illusory profit. This Budget is window dressing. There is no real profit at all. I will tell you how. If we turn to the Depreciation Fund, Rs. 45 crores are set aside. Last year also, I asked the hon. Minister, how do you arrive at this figure of Rs. 45 crores to be set aside for

depreciation every year; is it on a straight-line basis or is it on the basis of replacing the assets that are wearing away. There is no reply. For the last 3 or 4 years, Rs. 45 crores are set aside. In the last three years alone, we have invested Rs. 674 crores: Rs. 178 crores in the first year, Rs. 235 crores in the second year and Rs. 260 crores in the Budget year, making in all Rs. 674 crores. If your Railway assets have appreciated by Rs. 674 crores, where is the corresponding increase in the Depreciation fund? Does the hon. Minister think that the new assets that he has bought are not going to wear away at all? The point is, inadequate and negligible depreciation is being set aside so that profits can be shown. If a correct depreciation were shown, there would have been no profit at all from the Railways. It is a mere jugglery of figures. I must tell the hon. Railway Minister that the position is really very bad. I shall presently show how.

If we turn to the Development fund, you will find that in the course of his speech, the hon. Minister has said that Rs. 27 crores surplus will all be transferred to the Development fund. In the same breath, you do not tell us that the same year Rs. 36 crores are going to be taken away from the Development fund, knocking completely the bottom out of the Development fund, leaving only Rs. 68 lakhs there. At a time when the Railways are growing, when they are expected to carry much more by way of goods and passenger traffic, you have Rs. 68 lakhs in the Development fund. I am surprised. In the beginning, the Development fund was Rs. 10 crores. At the end of a surplus year, it is less than Rs. 1 crore. May I know wherefrom the hon. Minister is going to get development money if the Development fund no longer exists? That is not the only story. Because, the Depreciation fund has been raided to the tune of Rs. 21 crores. Depreciation which is taken at a niggardly and inadequate basis is being raided to the extent of Rs. 21

crores. In other words, we take out more from the Depreciation fund than we are putting in. When the assets are growing, more depreciation should be set aside and not a few crores. In the last two or three years, investments have increased by Rs. 674 crores. The Depreciation Fund should be nearly doubled. Instead of that, there is a Rs. 21 crore raid on the Depreciation fund. I ask, where is it all going to end. What is the position with regard to our Railway assets? They are deteriorating faster than your depreciation fund is being built up. It may be that the impact may not be felt for another five years. By that time, the Railway Minister may not be here and the baby may be passed on to the future Railway Minister. These are aspects which require to be looked into.

Coming to the question of efficiency, it has improved from 570 ton miles to 630 per wagon day which really works to, if we take a four wheeler wagon carrying 20 tons, that the wagon moves only 30 miles in the course of one day. I am surprised, I really cannot make out exactly how our wagons move. We say we have improved efficiency. The full utilisation is not there. I do not know what is that due to. It requires a close probe. We are told that the Perambur factory produces 88 coaches in the course of a year. Not that it has not got the capacity. The planned capacity has not been utilised. Why? Nobody's business. Still we say, there are no coaches. I should like to have an explanation from the hon. Railway Minister.

From Robertsganj to Garwah Road, a distance of 100 miles, the cost of new line, Rs. 17 crores, is excessive; Rs. 18 lakhs for a mile of railway is very excessive. I should like to have breakdown of figures for that. Also I should like to know what has happened to the Diva-Dagaon line which is an important link: whether the hon. Minister has thought about it or not.

[Shri Naushir Bharucha]

There are other points to which I shall refer when we come to the Demands for Grants. For the present, I have drawn the attention of the hon. Minister to these aspects. I hope these points will be considered.

Raja Mahendra Pratap: May I say a few words, Sir? As one of the oldest Members of the House, I always consider it my right and duty that I should present my suggestions to the House.

Here, four points have been brought out by fellow-Members. Firstly, something about accidents. Of course, some people said that there have been too many accidents; some brought out figures to show that perhaps they are not so bad. The question is how we can stop accidents.

I have heard from railway servants that the running staff are made to work for 14 hours a day—13 hours and 40 minutes. It is too much. Sometimes they are asked to work a few hours more. I think this is one great cause of the accidents.

I am told by some other friends that sometimes some drivers and some guards drink a bit too much, and that also causes accidents. I think that we can have a department to control all these people who drink a bit too much. Trucks also sometimes have accidents on roads, and most of these accidents are due to drinking.

Some other friends have brought out the fact that trains are as a rule overcrowded. There is no doubt about it. The third class passengers have very great difficulty. How to overcome it, how to cure this disease, so to say?

I think we can consider two suggestions. One is doubling of the line so that more trains could run, and the other suggestion can be that the railways run some buses from station to

station and take some passengers by road. I think that will also help and make the trains less crowded.

There are always many complaints from the railway servants that they are not getting sufficient promotion or that there is some kind of favouritism. They have many kinds of complaints like that. I think all these complaints can be removed if we take some representatives of railway servants in the Railway Board. It is very essential, very important.

Shri Shah Nawaz Khan: All the Members of the Railway Board are railway servants.

Raja Mahendra Pratap: I think even the coolies' representatives must come in. I may tell you something here which may not be pleasant to some of our friends. We are also observing a kind of caste among ourselves. That is to say, we are getting Rs. 400 per month and we have got something like a brotherhood with people who are getting between Rs. 200 and Rs. 600. So, we always speak for those who are getting like pay. But what about those poor people? I think that whenever some people are asking for higher pay, they should be shown the beggars and asked to see how those poor people are living. If we develop this habit of looking down instead of looking up, I think we shall have less complaints.

The fourth point is about corruption. It is really very serious. There are many ways of corruption. Sometimes some people are detained or arrested they are charged some more money and they are let off also. All these things happen. We all know about it.

One thing that is very important is that sometimes tickets are not issued till the train arrives. Now, it is very serious. Then they issue tickets immediately, and sometimes they have no change, and sometimes

the booking clerks take away some money themselves. I think it should be taken into consideration.

I have two more points. You have made waiting rooms upstairs. That is the case in Delhi itself. It is inconvenient for passengers to walk up or go by the lift to the first floor. It would be better.....

Shri B. S. Murthy (Kakinada—reserved—Sch. Castes): Under-ground?

Raja Mahendra Pratap:if the waiting room is on the platform. Sometimes it is very inconvenient for the people who are going from another platform where there is no shelter. So, I suggest there should be some small room even on the platforms where they get into some other train. This is by way of suggestion.

Only two or three points more. I must say about my constituency, that they want a railway bridge at Vrindaban. I spoke about it some time back, and it was not accepted. They said there was not money enough, but the voters from my constituency are pressing me that I should bring this point before the House, that there must be a bridge at Vrindaban. So, I appeal to those Hindu-minded people who have any respect for their Braj to help us. I do not say Congress people, Congress Members or others. It is a question for all Hindus, and also it is very important really. It will also help the railways if they connect Vrindaban metre-gauge station with Aligarh via Igles. I think it will bring more money. And from Aligarh they can take the line to Kasganj. It will be very helpful and bring more money.

I may repeat that this fad of nationalisation should stop. I have said before and I repeat that it is not nationalisation, but it is governmentisation, and Government people get more chances to get more money, and they divide money among themselves. I think it is better to give freedom to

the people who have money; they can start business and they can build railways. I am quite sure that if the Marwari people, who have also the religious spirit, are allowed to build this railway, they will be very glad to do it.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: The Hon. Member should conclude now.

Raja Mahendra Pratap: One more point. The Railway Ministry promised me after three years of correspondence that they would have one coupe reserved with chairs for those passengers who travel by night for short distances. They thanked me for this suggestion, but in spite of all that, it is not done.

One thing with all respect to the Chair, I say this House should set an example. If we can not have order here how can we have order in the country.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Never did I allow the hon. Member. He began himself.

Raja Mahendra Pratap: If you had told us who were to speak, we would not have jumped like students and be quarrelling among ourselves.

Shrimati Ila Palchoudhuri (Nabdwip): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I am very grateful to you that you have given me a little time at the fag-end. So, I will not take any time but come to the point, because I feel that there is much to be congratulated about the Railways.

The gross traffic receipts amounted to Rs. 347.5 crores in 1956-57 and are estimated to be Rs. 384 crores in the current year, i.e., 1957-58 and everything has boomed and gone up. Perhaps, the Railways have every cause to congratulate themselves and the public has cause to congratulate the Railways. But, Sir, there are certain things that certainly crop up here, particularly to people who come from

[Shrimati Ilia Palchoudhuri]

certain districts and there are three things in respect of West Bengal that have not been considered. But, before I come to them, there is one point that I would like to mention, viz., about accidents which have been ably dealt with by my hon. friend Shri Feroze Gandhi. That there are more accidents on the Japanese Railways than there are on the Indian Railways does not give cause for complacency! Whatever accidents we have, after all we have no cause to sit back and think that we are doing well. I think that some measures must be taken so that these grievous accidents do not happen.

One of the causes that causes accidents has been put as the failure of personnel. It has also been stated that the failure of personnel is due sometimes to quite long hours of work and also that all railway work involves a certain amount of tension. It is true that sometimes workers are expected to work not only for 13 hours and 40 minutes as the hon. Member opposite has said, but I believe there have been cases where they have been asked to work for 36 hours! I do not know if this is really so, but this has been brought to my notice.

Shri Jagjivan Ram: If the hon. Member brings any concrete case to my notice, I shall look into it. I cannot imagine how possibly it can happen.

Shrimati Ilia Palchoudhuri: I also cannot imagine that. It may not be 36 hours, but it may be longer than it was really right or safe for any person to work.

If for the railway staff there could be some sort of relief period so that their relief could come in time and they could take advantage of that relief, that would more to their cater and efficiency. There should be some place where they could go away for a holiday. Surely, the Railway Ministry could have some sort of a sana-

torium where its workers could go, spend some time and thus recoup because the work entails a lot of nervous tensions.

Shri Jagjivan Ram: We have got that.

Shrimati Ilia Palchoudhuri: I am very glad if you have got it, but all the poorer people do not seem to be able to get there nor get a chance to recoup themselves.

Secondly, Sir, there is this point that when insurance has been nationalised, there could be some small fare that could be put up and we could get some sort of insurance for passengers when they got on to trains automatically. If that could be done, I think the money that is proposed to be paid for accidents now—the Railway Minister is going to pay Rs. 400 for the accidents to the families—sometimes when a bread earner has been killed, the family might have got more tangible benefit. I hope the Railway Minister will consider this.

Shri Jagjivan Ram: Compensations are paid to all.

Shrimati Ilia Palchoudhuri: Compensation of Rs. 400 in this last case, you have said.

Shri Jagjivan Ram: Rs. 10,000.

Shrimati Ilia Palchoudhuri: Even more substantial. Rs. 400 or Rs. 500 is not enough to compensate a family for the loss of the bread-winner.

Shri Jagjivan Ram: It is up to Rs. 10,000.

Shrimati Ilia Palchoudhuri: If it is Rs. 10,000 then it will be very good and in every case it will be given promptly. I am very glad to hear that.

Thirdly, about corruption, I have to bring to the notice of the Railway Minister that he has said that 3,518

cases of corruption were brought to light and examined and disciplinary action has been taken. In answer to a question in Parliament, the Railway Minister had said that there were on the 3rd December, 1957, 1,028 cases but by the time the Budget was presented it is 3,518 cases! So, it seems that there is an increase of almost double the amount. That is rather disconcerting and I hope the Railway Minister will look into this.

Shri Goray (Poona): This is the revised estimate.

Shrimati Ilia Palchoudhuri: However, when corruption occurs, I know it is very difficult to detect it, but particularly where booking clerks are concerned and wagons are to be allotted particularly goods wagons in tea districts, I will ask him to look into things in the tea districts of Siliguri and places like that, where in the booking of tea wagons there is a lot of corruption. I hope some action will be taken about them.

Sir, I do not know whether the railway bridges and railway engines like old wine and old tobacco get better and better with age, but the Minister himself has said that there are two railway bridges that are 95 years old! I know that on the Ranaghat Section there are railway engines that are 80 years and 90 years old. I would only say that railway bridges that are positively dangerous should have by now been not only looked into but repaired. I was told by the Railway Minister himself on the 19th December, 1957 that they are 95 years old and that bridge is positively dangerous. The bogies shake and there are huge ditches under that bridge. I hope it will be repaired before it gets very much older. The bogies and the whole train rock in a terrible way when it passes over that bridge.

Then, Sir, I have to bring to your notice the light railways. Light railways constitute a part of travel in India, which, I think has a great deal to say for itself. Whether it has to be nationalised or not, or what is to

happen, I do not know, but they should not be closed down and such companies as can keep on doing something for the light railways should have every support from the Ministry and the Government. Components for the light railways need no foreign exchange and the public can get 15 to 20 miles of light railways for each mile of broad gauge. So, the closing down of light railways wherever it has caused so much disruption and discontent should, I think, wherever they are existing, get every help from the Government.

Also, it is true that we have very little petrol. We have coal but the stock is not unlimited. In the case of electric power it is almost unlimited. So, if there are light railways and electric power can ultimately come to them that will mean bringing electric power very near the villages. 100 miles of light railways could be electrified any time, but in places like West Bengal 50,000 villages can come nearer electricity than they are today.

Sir, I just want two minutes more so that I could put my point about West Bengal and Nadia particularly. West Bengal has really been neglected when electrification itself came. In Sealdah Ranaghat Section, which is supposed to be the busiest section, the figures of average density on the Sealdah Ranaghat Section will tell you that this Section has on an average density per mile within 15 miles it is 45·0, on an average between 15 and 24 miles it is 23·8 and beyond 24 miles it is 10. So, in spite of that this section has been neglected and other sections have been considered. But we are glad that the Burdwan Section has been considered. I have no quarrel with that but I hope the Sealdah-Ranaghat Section will soon come in for its own.

In my own constituency, Sir, the Karimpur line was surveyed at the time of my hon. deceased predecessor, Shri Lakshmi Kant Maitra. The line was surveyed but it has been laid in cold storage. Sir, Karimpur is a border town. I know you are not

[Shrimati Ila Palchoudhuri]

going to consider lines in the present year, but I hope you will soon consider it because the process of getting to Karimpur is very difficult and all people cannot travel by buses. It takes practically six to eight hours.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Shri T. B. Vittal Rao.

Shrimati Ila Palchoudhuri: One other point about amenities.

Shrimati Renuka Ray (Malda): Mention Khajuriaghata also.

Shrimati Ila Palchoudhuri: I am afraid I have no time now, but I hope it will be done. When you get a chance please mention Malda also.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: I have already called the next hon. Member

Shri T. B. Vittal Rao (Khammam): Sir, during these few minutes at my disposal, I would like to draw attention to one or two points. Sir, in the Budget papers that are given to us we find that there has been an increase in the performance of railways, both in the passengers carried and the goods transported. But from them we cannot get any idea about the goods traffic available. This should also be made known to the people so that we can properly gauge the performance of the Railways. In 1956-57, there has been a drop in the goods traffic earnings by about 2·5 crores between the Revised Estimates and the actuals. During the Plan period, we should concentrate on the movement of the goods traffic and the way these calculations have been done is not satisfactory and such a drop of Rs. 2·25 crores should be looked into very carefully. That shows that even from the calculations made by the Railway Board, they could not keep to that schedule. That is clearly shown by this drop in goods traffic.

One method of calculating this goods traffic carried is by way of registration of goods cleared. This system does not give us any clear

idea of the traffic moved because every one who wants to transport goods is asked and instructed to apply only for a certain number of wagons. No consideration is given to the stocks lying at the station. Especially in the matter of coal, what are the pit head stocks lying? We are not told of this. The Minister has said that we have been able to move six per cent. more of goods traffic during the year. What was the increase in coal production? The increase in coal production in this very year has been to the tune of ten per cent. or so. Thus in the first place, we are not able to move all the coal raised and we improve our position only by six per cent. as against the ten per cent. increase in coal production.

This is a very serious matter because in the next three years the coal fields in the public sector are expected to raise ten million additional tons. They have been able to raise only two lakhs tons more. I think we will be in a terrible transport bottleneck if this is the rate of moving the goods when the coal target allotted to the public sector is ten million tons.

Now, I come to development. We have been told that 842 route miles will be constructed during the Plan period. During the first two years of the Plan, we have not opened even five per cent. of that target. I do not know what the Railway Board will do to clear up the rest of the 95 per cent. in the three years period. We are told about the improvements in the procurement of steel and other track materials from abroad. But I do not know how we are going to make up for these arrears. Until and unless some energetic and effective steps are taken, I am sure that these 842 miles included in the Second Plan period will not be open either to goods or passenger traffic.

Much has been said about accidents. There is going to be a special discussion and many hon. Members have

spoken about it. So, I shall not take much time on this. But there is a lesson which one would like to draw from the increasing number of accidents. The administrative structure as it is at present is unable to meet the situation of increased movement of passenger and goods trains. The hon. Minister should go into this question very deeply and seriously because the structure as it is has not been able to meet the situation.

I know that in one section, there were derailments every third or the fourth day. After a certain officer took charge over that section and after he discussed this problem with the Railway Board, he revised the formula of the placing of sleepers N plus 5 and I find absolutely no case of accident in that section after that. That is in one section of the Southern Railway.

I would very briefly refer to one or two matters pertaining to the staff. A few days ago, I asked as to how many essential workers were there who had not yet been provided quarters. Two lakhs was the number. These people are liable for transfer from one junction to another. Special efforts should be made for providing housing facilities to these men. Once I had occasion to write to the Railway Board. I had a very interesting reply stating that this matter was engaging attention. They have written that they are doing it on a phased programme and that they cannot do anything more than that. We have at last decided that the essential staff should be provided with quarters—not all the ten lakh workers. But even on this day, we have got about two lakhs of them without any quarter.

I shall now refer to the grievances of the staff. The Barsi Light Railway employees had been absorbed in the Central Railway. Recently, their seniority has been settled. I would like the Minister to consider their increments and other facilities and extend to them the same facilities that have been given to similar railway employees.

Finally, I would like to refer to the case of Scheduled Castes Gazetted Officers. Out of 3460 gazetted officers in the railways, there are only nine belonging to the Scheduled Castes. It is a very serious matter and I would like the hon. Minister to look into it.

Shri Jagjivan Ram: Sir, I have listened to the debate with great care and attention and I am thankful to the Members of the House both for the bouquets and brickbats that have been thrown at me. I will first start by taking notice of my friend, Shri Anthony, whom I find is not in his seat. To be fair to him, he wrote to me, as Mr. Barrow and Mrs. Parvathi Krishnan, that due to certain engagements outside, they would not be present in the House.

Shri Feroze Gandhi: That always happens with Mr. Anthony.

Shri Jagjivan Ram: Mr. Anthony has specialised in a particular type of words and phraseology . . .

Shri Feroze Gandhi: Bhavani Junction phraseology.

Shri Jagjivan Ram: . . . that it is very difficult for me to emulate. I was also tempted to quote a few words from the well-known novel *Bhavani Junction* which is so typical of the language which he has specialised in.

14.49 hrs.

[**SHRI BARMAN** in the Chair]

He started by speaking about regimentation of the workers on the Railways. I do not know what led him to think so except a very recent development when he wrote to me about the some privileges being granted to his association or union or what not, which are normally granted to only recognised unions either in the Railways or other industries. There is no doubt that our Constitution guarantees freedom of association. But freedom of association cannot be confused with recognition as well. Mr. Anthony is free along with his associates to

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form as many associations as he likes, but it is up to the Railway Administration to recognise those associations or not to recognise them. We have certain conditions, certain rules and regulations, for the recognition of the unions on the railways.

What happened was that one of our officers of some railway issued a confidential circular to some of his subordinate staff that these are the facilities which are to be given to the recognised unions and not unrecognised unions. Mr Anthony got a copy of that confidential circular and he sends a copy to me asking, "How is it that your officers are behaving like this? Why not this facility for my association?" I wrote back to Mr. Anthony saying that "there is nothing unjustifiable and as one who is taking interest in trade unionism, you should know the primary principle of trade unions, recognised and unrecognised. What the officer has done is nothing but bringing to the notice of the subordinates the rights and privileges of the recognised unions." Certainly I wrote to him that "as a public man and as a respected Member of this august House, you will agree that it is not desirable that copies of confidential papers are passed to outsiders".

An Hon. Member: How did he get it?

Shri Jagjivan Ram: How it was made available to him, it is for him to say . . .

Shri Tangamani (Madurai): Confidential documents have been placed on the Table of the House.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Labour and Employment and Planning (Shri L. N. Mishra): Theft is committed everywhere.

Shri Jagjivan Ram: It was not in the House; he wrote to me a private communication and that is what I have said, generally that it is not desirable on the part of any employee to divulge any confidential circular or communica-

cation or letter; if any confidential communication or letter becomes available to any employee, he should not pass it on to outsiders.

This question leads me to the general question of labour policy of the railways. Fortunately the question has been raised and many other Members have dealt with it. In a nutshell the labour policy of the railways has been to encourage united trade unionism among the railway workers. Multiplicity of unions of employees in any industry, apart from causing complications and difficulties to the administration, breaks the unity among the ranks of the employees. I have always tried, wherever opportunity has arisen, to work for unity among the ranks of the employees. That has been my attitude and policy on the railways also. I am not guided by the ideologies of the unions. I want to make it clear that I am not only professing it; I have put that into practice wherever occasion has arisen. Last year I granted recognition to unions on two or three railways where recognised unions existed even before. Even at that stage, I felt that in the interest of the railwaymen, it will be to their advantage if there is only one united federation for all the railways.

Mr Anthony threatened that if his association is not given recognition, he will join the ranks of the Communists. I do not know whether it is a compliment to the Communist Party or not. Perhaps Mr. Anthony regards the rank of the Communist Party as something with which he will not ordinarily associate. Therefore, he gave this reply.

Shri Feroze Gandhi: His constituency is Rashtrapati Bhavan.

Shri Jagjivan Ram: I think Mr. Anthony should have given more thought to that threat. I do not know whether this utterance by Mr. Anthony is going to create some impression amongst his followers or not. It is for his followers to think whether to heed

the advice given by a person whose loyalty to his followers is so deep as to threaten the Government to join the communist party. One can understand what his loyalty to labour is, but I want to make it clear that this threat of Mr. Anthony has no meaning.

Shri Hem Barua (Gauhati): That is his last resort.

Shri Jagjivan Ram: I want to make it clear that the railways will steadfastly pursue the policy that they have been pursuing till now, the policy of having one united federation for all the railwaymen. It is not that multi-policy and duplication of unions cause embarrassment and difficulties for the administration. It also adversely affects the interests of the employees and any genuine trade union leader knows it very well that if there are two rival unions in one industry, it is not good for the workers who even sometimes force the leadership to indulge in activities which the leaders regard as not very desirable, because they have to maintain the numerical strength of the unions. They are afraid that if they do not take up the case of certain employees, even though they are convinced that the demands are not justifiable, they will walk over to the other union and that is what is happening. So, in the interests of the workers themselves, we are convinced that one federation is necessary, desirable and to their advantage.

I am glad that this realisation has dawned upon all ranks of railwaymen and they are making earnest efforts for having one Federation. I shall give any help and assistance, whatever worth it is, in effecting unity among the railwaymen, but it is for them to effect the unity and have one federation. This in a nutshell is the labour policy of the railway administration. We have on most of the railways more than one union—two unions. It is not desirable to have more than two unions. Even two unions are not to the advantage of the employees.

Then, I will come to the question of accidents, which is uppermost in the minds of Members and others also and naturally so. I want to make it clear that I do not want to quote figures and statistics to show what is the trend of accidents on the Indian Railways during the last few years or how the incidence of accidents on the Indian railways compares with the incidence of accidents on the railways in far more advanced countries in the world. I do not propose to do so. Whenever any accident takes place on the Indian railways, it causes anxiety to us and it is always our earnest effort to see how far we can minimise the number or possibility of accidents on the railways. Therefore, I do not propose to produce the figures. If any hon. Member is interested in seeing the figures of the accidents on the Indian railways for the last four or five or six years, they are all available, and they can very well compare them.

15 hrs.

In this connection, questions have been raised about the training of the staff or the shortage of spares in the workshops. I want to make it clear here that whenever there is any major accident, an inquiry is held. Either there is a statutory inquiry by the Government Inspector of Railways, or a court of inquiry is set up.

I have been examining the reports on the accidents that have been taking place in recent years, and I find that in very few cases—perhaps in none—has it been brought out that the accidents did take place on account of defective training of the person concerned or on account of any defect in the engine or the coach. Therefore, the question of training or spares is not relevant in this context. They have their own importance, of course, and I shall deal with those aspects also presently. But they are not relevant in this context. Wherever the accident has occurred, it has occurred because of human failure. In this connection, the question of longer hours

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of work has been raised. In every case, I make it a point to examine that aspect also and I have found that in no case was there any occasion for undue fatigue or strain having been caused to the person concerned by having worked for longer hours.

We have the award of Justice Rajadhyaksha determining the hours of work of different categories of employees on the railways, and all the employees are called upon to perform duties for the hours that have been laid down in that award. Justice Rajadhyaksha went into great details devoted much time and attention and then gave his award.

I am mentioning these things in order to emphasise that when the accidents took place, all these factors, important as they may be in their own places, were not materially relevant to those accidents.

Shri Feroze Gandhi has very nicely and beautifully emphasised the responsibility of the workers. I would like to refer to one thing which he has emphasised. I was myself thinking about it, and I have already asked the Railway Board to take action in that matter. That is about uniformity in the rules and subsidiary rules, and also about the translation of those rules in the languages understandable and intelligible to the staff concerned. That is very necessary. I have found that though the basic instructions and rules are the same on all the railways and on all the sections, yet in subsidiary rules, there are slight variations on the different railways and on the different sections also. So, we want to have, in the near future, uniformity in the rules and also the subsidiary rules—maybe, with slight variations according to the conditions or terrain of the section concerned—and also in a language which will be intelligible and understandable to the staff concerned. My idea is also to simplify these rules, regulations and subsidiary rules as far as possible.

So, in the matter of accidents, what is required is that everyone must be alive to his responsibility. When I find a certain employee with long experience, with very good record and with very good reputation being involved in an accident, it is very difficult to find out the cause. There cannot be dereliction, and there cannot be any wilful negligence, because he knows that he is also likely to fall a prey to the accident. There must be some human psychology which alone can explain it. I have asked the General Managers to make the staff alive to their responsibility. The tremendous and gigantic work they are engaged in, and the thousands of miles, and the millions of passengers, and the millions of tons that are being handled by them speak eloquently of the efficiency with which they are discharging their work. All the same, there are lapses on the part of some persons here or there, and we have always to emphasise the necessity of their being fully alive to their responsibility. Whenever we find cases of gross indiscipline or negligence, we shall have to take action, and I am sure, in those steps, we shall have the full support of the House and of the public.

As I have said, whenever any accident takes place, it is a cause for concern to the Railway Ministry, and it will be always our endeavour by all possible means to see how far we can minimise the possibility of accidents on the railways.

Again, the question has been raised about the efficiency of the railways. I do not propose to tire the House by quoting figures. If hon. Members will go through the various reports that have been published, they will find that figures have been given there which will show that the efficiency of the railways as compared with the past years has increased, but, as I said on previous occasions, there is scope for further improvement.

Though we have handled more goods traffic and passenger traffic and

though the utilisation of wagons has increased, the question has been raised that speed has suffered. It has. Again, I am not proposing to quote figures. In certain areas, the density of traffic has increased; in certain sections, heavy engineering work is in progress. These are some of the relevant causes owing to which speed suffers. But, as I said earlier, we shall always be making efforts to see how far we can increase the speed also in order to handle more traffic, either goods or passenger.

Shri Asoka Mehta is not present here now, but he raised the question about the regrouping of the railways, divisionalisation or district administration. I am not dogmatic about any particular pattern, nor can one afford to be so in a developing economy. Whatever pattern is best suited to the area concerned will have to be introduced. The occasion for his provocation was the bifurcation of the North-Eastern Railway and the creation of a new zone known as the North-East Frontier Railway, and the abolition of the regional office from Muzaffarpur which happens to be his constituency.

I want to make it clear, as I did on previous occasions, that no political considerations were taken into account for the creation of the new zone, and no pressure of any sort, political or otherwise, was brought to bear on this question.

Shri Hem Barua: There was no pressure from any quarter whatsoever.

Shri Jagjivan Ram: The quarters might have felt that they were exercising pressure. But I want to make it clear that no political or other pressure was taken into consideration in taking this decision. This was taken purely for operational reasons. When the bifurcation of the North Eastern Railway was decided upon and the new zone was created, it was felt that there was no necessity of the regional offices. The district pattern was

there. The regional offices were a superimposition upon the district pattern. Of course, there was necessity for them when the railway was a long one. But with bifurcation, there was no necessity for the regional offices, and the district offices could very well function and discharge the duties entrusted to them. The restoration or the continuance of the district pattern has given satisfaction in many quarters. I want to reiterate that while taking this decision, no extraneous factor was taken into consideration. It was purely on the consideration of the operational necessities of the railways concerned that this decision was taken.

What should be the future pattern of the different railways? Decisions were taken only recently. They are functioning quite satisfactorily. I do not feel there is any occasion for revising or reviewing the pattern that has been introduced on the railways except that where minor readjustments may be required, that may be done. More than that, at present there is no intention and there is no occasion for any large-scale revision or review of the patterns that are functioning on the different railways. I will say again that whatever modifications are made are made only for operational reasons of the railways and for no other consideration.

In this context, the question of administration also arises. The Railway Administration has stood the test of time. They have been functioning; they have faced the burdens of the expanding economy of the country when the traffic and the work-load have increased manifold. I do not think there is any occasion for any large-scale disturbance in the pattern of the Railway Administration that we have at present.

Then the question of working expenses has been raised. I would like to deal with this aspect in a little detail because it is a very important aspect and the point has been raised by more

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than one Member. It is said that the working expenses have risen inordinately steep and are not warranted. No doubt, there has been an increase in working expenses of the order of 30 per cent. from 1950-51 to 1958-57, while from 1955-56 to 1958-59 the increase is anticipated to be as high as 25 per cent. There is no doubt that in recent years, there has been a considerable increase in working expenses, particularly during the Plan period. But the rise is fully accounted for by increases in the price levels of stores, levels of wages etc., and is not in commensurate with the increasing volume of traffic handled.

The increase in working expenses from 1950-51 to 1958-59 is of the order of Rs. 100 crores. The main causes of these increases are: increase in the number of staff Rs. 28 crores; increase in the emoluments of staff due to increments and various concessions given from time to time,—that is, the implementation of the adjudicator's award,—grading of posts, redistribution of posts in different grades and the recent interim relief increase in dearness allowance recommended by the Pay Commission, Rs. 32 crores; increase in the price of coal, increase in sea freight, sales tax etc. Rs. 10 crores; increase in consumption of coal etc. Rs. 9 crores; increase in repairs to assets including rolling stock Rs. 21 crores.

It is obvious that with increased economic activity all over the country and the enormous additional traffic which the railways have to handle, the strength of the staff in the railways cannot but increase. While the originating traffic is expected to increase from 91.4 million tons in 1950-51 to about 145 million tons in 1958-59, an increase of 58.6 per cent., the number of staff is expected to increase during this period from 9.14 lakhs to 11.61 lakhs, an increase of 27 per cent. This can hardly be described as an unwarranted increase.

A reliable index of the work done by the railways is the gross ton miles. The figures of 'thousand gross ton miles' per employee have gone up considerably over the period of the last six years. These are: 1951-52 111.6; 1952-53 112.9; 1953-54 111.1; 1954-55 115.2; 1955-56 119.8; and 1956-57 125.5. Thus the allegation that the increase of staff in the railways is effected by the rule of thumb is wholly unjustified.

As regards the increase in emoluments—some Members wanted the breakup of these figures; so I think it will be useful if I give these figures in detail—annual increments to staff alone account for Rs. 8 crores over this period; adjudicator's award, a further sum of Rs. 8 crores; regarding dearness allowance, there were two increases, first in May 1951 to the extent of Rs. 4 crores and again in the current year, at the rate of Rs. 5 per month as recommended by the Pay Commission; these two increases in dearness allowance account for an additional annual expenditure over Rs 10 crores.

It is hardly to be expected that in a Welfare State, the emoluments and service conditions of the staff will remain static.

The average price of coal has risen during this period from Rs. 16.25 per ton to Rs. 20.40 per ton, an increase of 25.5 per cent. This alone has accounted for an increase of Rs. 4 crores. There has also been an increase of 15 per cent. in the transport charges of coal by sea. Similarly, prices of iron and steel and almost every item of stores have increased very considerably during this period. With the increased traffic and due to other reasons—variations in the grades of coal supplied—consumption of coal has gone up. Against 9.4 million tons consumed in 1950-51, the consumption in 1958-59 is estimated to be 13.62 million tons or an increase of 48.7 per cent. In respect of this, as a result

of the persistent efforts towards more economic use of fuel, the coal consumed per thousand gross ton miles has gone down from 164.1 lbs. in 1950-51, for goods on the broad-gauge to 152.4 lbs. in 1956-57 and for passenger services from 191.8 to 185.2. On the metre gauge, the consumption on goods services has gone down from 198.9 to 178.6 and for passenger services from 229.9 to 218.6. I think, this meets some of the observations made by my friend, Shri Bharucha also.

While on the question of coal, I want to make it clear that there is no doubt that there are ample opportunities for leakage of coal. That is why I set up a committee. The committee is going into this question, as regards the quality of coal, the future consumption, how far we can seal the possibility of leakages—and there is considerable percentage of coal which is wasted—either pilfered or otherwise. But, all the same, we are keeping constant watch on the consumption of coal and seeing how far we can reduce the quantity.

Our capital assets have increased quite appreciably during this period as evident from the fact that in 1950-51, the capital at charge was Rs. 8,27 crores, while it is expected to be Rs. 1,348 crores in 1958-59. These assets have to be maintained properly and this means larger expenses on repairs and maintenance. To give more details, though the figures are available—

In 1950-51, there were 8,237 locos, 17,284 coaches and 2,05,087 wagons; while at the end of 1957-58, the figures are estimated at 9,740 locos, 22,546 coaches, and 2,66,292 wagons. In spite of the increased holdings of rolling stock, the average number under and awaiting repairs has gone down. As against, 5.65 per cent. of the engines awaiting repairs in the shops in 1950-51, the percentage came down to 5.33 in 1956-57.

Similarly, the percentage of goods wagons in workshops awaiting repairs has gone down from 1.31 to 1.22, while that of passengers coaches has gone down from 7.33 to 6.34 at the same time. The capacity of the workshops for periodical overhauls has also increased, as evident from the figures that I am quoting below. And, all this means more expenditure on repairs and maintenance.

In 1951-52, the number of standard first-class repair of the locos was, broad gauge 2,153 and metre gauge 664. The number of wagons, broad gauge 53,132 and metre gauge 19,960; the number of passenger carriages, broad gauge 12,182 and metre gauge 7,050; number of other coaching vehicles, broad gauge 2,902 and metre gauge 1,464. As compared to these, the numbers in 1957-58—8 months are—locos, broad gauge 1,789, metre gauge 575; wagons 43,904 and 16,658; passenger carriages 10,148 and 6,172; and other coaching vehicles, 2,078 and 1,178.

Our expenditure on the maintenance of way and works has also risen considerably during this period owing to various factors. The number of staff quarters and other staff amenity buildings have increased very considerably during this period. New lines have been constructed and doubling sub-sections undertaken which require maintenance. Maintenance of track and parts have to be given particular attention on account of the deadlock accumulated for many years. To get an overall picture, the operating ratio, that is, the proportion of the total working expenses to the gross traffic receipts was 79.9 per cent. in 1950-51, actuals; while, it is anticipated to be 76.9 in the Budget estimates of 1958-59. This would show that in spite of increased emoluments to staff and increase in the level of prices of coal and other things over which the Railway Ministry have hardly any control, the increase in expenses necessitated by the increased quantum of work to be

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done has been kept well under control. So, one cannot say that there has been an unjustified increase in the working expenditure on the railways. But, we are constantly reviewing where we can effect any economy.

Allied with the performance of the railways, the question has been raised about the future capacity of the railways to handle the traffic that may be generated. There also, we are alive that the railways will be called upon to handle increased traffic and that the target of 162 million tons for goods movement provided for in the Railway Second Five Year Plan is inadequate. We also realise that.

It has also been mentioned—it was perhaps Shri Anthony who said that—that the additional goods traffic would be of the order of 80 million tons, out of which the traffic generated as a result of the development of the private sector and miscellaneous goods traffic would be about 30 million tons. The total volume of goods traffic that can be carried within the funds provided for the Railway Second Five Year Plan is 162 million tons which allows an increase of 42 million tons over the First Plan. The inadequacy of this provision is appreciated in all quarters; and, increased line capacity is already being provided to cater for 181 million tons, which includes an additional amount of 61 million tons. Additional funds would, no doubt, be required for achieving this target and the trends of traffic are being watched carefully so that action can be taken at the proper stage to ensure that the necessary transport capacity is provided on the railways to cater for the requirements of the vital goods traffic for the fulfilment of the national Plan. As regards the figure of anticipated traffic, I can only say at this stage that it is difficult to say firmly whether the increase in traffic by the end of the Second Five Year Plan will reach the level of 80 million tons of additional traffic.

Question has been raised in this connection that we have said that we have moved larger quantities of coal. Just now some hon. Members referred to the question as to the accumulation at the pit-heads. I deliberately did not give those figures because those figures are available in authorised publication. And, what has been the performance of the railways can very well be judged if one compares what was the accumulation at the pit-heads at a particular period last year and what is the accumulation at the same period this year. If one compares, one can very well judge what has been the performance of the railways; whether the railways have been able to move larger quantities of coal or they have been able to move smaller quantities. I will give certain figures.

In this connection I would refer to the figures of pit-head stocks at the end of October, 1957 as compared with the corresponding figures of the previous year. The total stock of coal on 31st October, 1956 at the pit-heads throughout the country was 2,664 million tons, and on 31st October, 1957 it was 2,536 million tons. In the Bengal and Bihar coal fields the corresponding figures were 2,578 million tons in 1956 and 2,438 million tons in 1957. Day-to-day fluctuations in the supply of wagons is incidental, but over the year all the coal production has been lifted; in fact, slightly more. I have given the figures up to the end of October. The slack season ends on 31st October and the busy season begins from 1st November. It has been the age-old practice in the case of coal traffic that some stocks are built up during the busy season in order to cope up with the general goods traffic which has been created during the slack season. I may say that even at the points which were regarded as difficult bottle-necks there has been improvement; especially as Mandwadi and other places are concerned. It is always our effort to move more and more. As far as my information goes, the stock at the pit-

heads of coal is slightly less at present than what it was during the current season last year, which means that we have moved more coal. The production has increased. There is no doubt that the Railways are the consumers of coal to the extent of nearly 30 per cent. to 33 per cent., and we have to move all that for ourselves.

Then, Sir, about the amenities for the railway employees. We have been always trying to do as much as we can for the welfare of the employees on the Railways. As far as housing is concerned, if the hon. Members will go through the figures they will find that there is increased housing activity on the Railways. I know that we will not be able in the near future to provide accommodation to 100 per cent of the employees. Even in the next two, three or four years it will not be possible to provide housing accommodation to all the essential staff. I am aware of that but you will also agree, Sir, that every year we are constructing larger number of quarters for the railway employees in this country.

Somebody raised the question—perhaps, it was Shri Frank Anthony—why not allow advances to be taken by the railway employees from their provident fund for the construction of their own houses. I may tell here that I will ask the Railway Board to make provisions so that advances can be taken by railway employees from their provident fund for the purpose of constructing their own houses.

Shri T. B. Vittal Rao: That is being done now.

Shri Jagivan Ram: No, it is not being done; I was just looking into that. Another thing that I will suggest is that the railway employees should, and it will be better if they do it, take advantage of the various housing schemes like the industrial housing scheme and the low-income group housing scheme and own their

own houses. That will also to some extent relieve the pressure on the railways for the construction of houses.

About hospitals, Sir, as compared to the hospital facilities available for the general population our standard is much higher. I was surprised when Shrimati Parvathi Krishnan was making the complaint that in some of the hospitals only coloured water is given instead of medicines; perhaps, it was exaggeration to a point which becomes unbelievable. Our standard on the railway hospitals, admittedly, is much better. The number of beds in the railway hospitals is also much higher than what is available to the general population. We have nearly more than three beds for every 1,000 population, whereas in the country it is perhaps 0·3.

While talking about the staff, there is no doubt that I want to associate the staff and officers as much as possible in all matters. Last year I said that I will have joint committees at all levels. Shrimati Parvathi Krishnan reminded me of that and asked as to what has been done. The Railway Administrations have been asked to implement the formation of joint committees at various levels. We are going to pursue that from the Railway Board and follow that up to see that that scheme is implemented as quickly as possible. So, it is my intention to take the workers into confidence in all matters and, especially where the question of efficiency and safety of the travelling public is concerned they have to be taken in and associated at all levels.

Another thing is, much was said about the victimisation of the railway employees. That is one topic which some of my friends must bring in at every session. Last time some hon. Member raised this question and said that a few hundred railway employees had been suspended, discharged or dismissed without assigning any cause. I requested the hon. Member to give

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me a list of the few hundred workers so that I could look into those cases and do the needful. I am still waiting for that list; I do not know how long I will have to wait, and whether that list can be ever produced or not. But, as I assured the hon. Members on some of the old cases pending since 1946, 1947 or 1948 where certain actions were taken, I undertook to review those cases personally. I am engaged in that process, because it takes time to get a report on those cases from the different Railways and from different States. But I have taken up a review of those old cases; they are not a few hundreds but only a few dozens. I am reviewing those cases and something will be done very soon.

The questions of recruitment of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe candidates was also raised. There is no doubt that the representation of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes on the Railways is much below the percentage fixed for them; in the officers' cadre, well, practically there are none at this stage. Attention of the recruiting authorities is being constantly drawn to the necessity of filling all the vacancies meant for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes by the candidates belonging to those classes. There is no reservation in promotion, but the question is being examined. There are certain classes and categories of services in the Railways where there is no direct recruitment and the posts are filled by promotion from the lower ranks. It is being considered whether in those categories of posts reservation should be made for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes; if so, in which way. I think a decision is going to be taken very soon providing reservation for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in such categories of promotions. A Special Officer has already been appointed in the Railway Board to look after the recruitment and

appointments of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes; and a decision has been taken to have Special Officers on all the Railways to see to the recruitment of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. A few individual cases of alleged injustice were mentioned by Shri Ganpati Ram and some other friends. The Railway Board will look into those cases.

Then Shri Barrow raised the question, as also some other Member, about the training facilities for the different categories of railway employees. We have training arrangements, but I must frankly admit, Sir that with the rapid expansion of the Railways and the recruitment of a very large number of staff on the Railways, I feel that the training facilities are not adequate to our requirements. Steps are being taken to extend the training facilities for all categories of railway staff.

In regard to the nationalisation of the Light Railways, that is a question which comes up at every session of the House. It is an important question, no doubt. But, as I explained in the Rajya Sabha, a decision was taken two years back not to nationalise the Light Railways and not to expend our resources on taking over a facility which was already in existence but rather to expand, if we have the resources, for opening up new lines or for the construction of new lines; and that is why we are not at present very enthusiastic about nationalising the Light Railways. But wherever we find that the condition of a particular Light Railway has so deteriorated and the people and that locality will be greatly handicapped if that particular Railway either closed down or is not in serviceable condition, we consider whether or not to take over that Railway and provide the people of that locality with the facility. So, that is our policy so far as Light Railways are concerned.

Then, Sir, we come to the construction of new railway lines or undertaking new surveys. I will not say that we have finally decided not to undertake any survey of any railway line or we have finally decided not to undertake the construction of any new railway line. We have postponed it, and postponed it for lack of resources.

An Hon. Member: For how many years?

Shri Jagjivan Ram: Till our resources position improves. And as soon as our resources improve, we will undertake surveys and we will undertake construction of new lines. There are many areas in our country where construction of railway lines is necessary. Whether it is taking a railway line from Pathankot to Jammu or further north or it is a question of constructing the coastal line from Bombay to Goa or it is undertaking some other railway lines in Maharashtra or it is the question of the conjunction of the three States of Orissa, Madhya Pradesh and Andhra for opening up Dandakaranya and Bastar for the transport of iron ore, there are many areas where there is necessity for the construction of new railway lines for developing those areas industrially and economically. But the resources today do not permit us to undertake these.

As regards surveys, some of them have been completed. I do not like the reports of the surveys to be lying down in the archives of the Secretariat or of the Railway Board for many years; it will cause more disappointment to the people concerned where surveys have been held and no lines are to be constructed. But, as I said, we cannot take any decision that there will be no further survey and no further construction. We will undertake as many surveys and as many constructions as our resources permit.

There have been demands from many Members for the stoppage of certain trains at certain stations or the

introduction of certain new trains in certain areas or the introduction of express or fast trains between certain stations or the speeding up of certain trains in certain areas. We will get all those questions examined by the Railway Board. I do not want to take the time of the House in giving a reply to all those individual questions: I will get all of them examined by the Railway Board, and wherever I find that we have enough locomotives or coaches for providing an additional train in a particular area or a particular section we will no doubt introduce it. And wherever we find that stoppage of a particular train can be introduced without affecting adversely the speed, we will do that.

A complaint has been made regarding the timings etc. That is our difficulty, and I do not know how to solve that difficulty: while framing the time-table we invite suggestions from the Members of Parliament concerned in those areas. I am not disclosing a secret when I say that, more often than not, conflicting suggestions are coming from the Members of Parliament—and naturally so. One Member looks to the locality or the area from which he comes, and the other Member looks to the convenience of the area from which he comes, and therefore there are conflicting suggestions. And then, these conflicting suggestions have to be reconciled by some person. If we reconcile these, some Members feel that their suggestions have not been accepted while others feel that theirs have not been accepted.

Shri Braj Raj Singh (Firozabad): So nothing is done!

Shri Jagjivan Ram: Therefore, Members say, "Though we send suggestions, they are not accepted". As a matter of fact, if we accept the suggestions of all the Members we will be producing something—you can just imagine what it will be!

Then, Sir, there are many stations where even the basic amenities are

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not available. We have a programme to provide these basic facilities at all the stations. But, as you know, the number of stations in our country is not inconsiderable, and providing all these basic amenities at all the stations may take some time. But we are trying to speed up and trying to provide at least the basic amenities at all stations.

Catering has also been mentioned. And, as on all matters, on departmental catering also the opinion is divided in this House. There are some exponents of private catering, and others are for whole hog departmentalisation. Well, in this matter we in the Railways believe in mixed economy.

Shri Braj Raj Singh: As everywhere.

Shri Jagjivan Ram: We have departmental catering, and we have also the private sector flourishing there. Some exponents say that private caterers are better; others feel that departmental catering has been a boon to the public.

Shri Feroze Gandhi: Both belong to the Opposition.

Shri Jagjivan Ram: I do not think Shri Feroze Gandhi thinks that the Opposition is not a heterogeneous element. Therefore, opinion is bound to be divided. So, here also, it is not the intention to departmentalise all the caterers. It is the intention to encourage co-operatives as far as possible. Instructions have been issued to the Railway administration that in matters of contract and in things like that, wherever possible co-operative societies should be given preference. It should be a co-operative society of actual workers, or a co-operative society of the vendors themselves or a co-operative society of the workers engaged in handling the work themselves. Otherwise there is no difference between a contractor and

a co-operative society, for clever people can form a co-operative society employ the vendors and others as employees, and themselves take the place of a contractor. Instructions have been issued to the railway administrations for giving preference to co-operative societies wherever possible.

Then about cleanliness in the railways and the railway stations. There should be a co-operative endeavour on the part of the railway administration, the travelling public and the leaders of the public opinion to create a sense of cleanliness among our people. It is a social problem and it will have to be tackled in that way. We have undertaken some sort of a social education on a very modest scale. In that connection, the co-operation of everybody is necessary, unless a sense prevails among the people that the railway and the property of the railway, everything in the railway, belongs to the nation and everybody has to take care of the national property. Railways by themselves cannot do much.

In the end, as I have said, I will take all the suggestions into consideration. Many suggestions have been made—how to minimise the chances of pilferage, how to have a judicious use of the stationery and forms of the railways, etc. I will get all those suggestions examined and adopt as many of them as are practicable.

Last of all, I shall mention the pension scheme. The pension scheme has been introduced. I personally feel that the pension scheme is very beneficial to the railway employees, and especially the Class IV employees, should without any exception opt for the pension scheme. I have asked the Railway Board to extend the time for option till the end of June, 1958. It has been further decided that the pension scheme, in an explanatory form, should be issued in all the regional languages so that every

employee can understand it and intelligibly opt for it:

But, at the same time, apart from the administration, it should also be the work and the duty of the unions and the leaders of public opinion and Members of this House, to make the workers understand the pension scheme, so that they can intelligibly opt for the scheme

I think I have covered most of the important questions that have been raised here. I will again express my thanks to all the Members for what they have said about the railways. We have taken the criticisms in a constructive light. They also helped us. The encouraging words only make us keen and alive to our responsibilities and duties.

Let us expect that we never grow complacent. It will always be our duty, Sir, to see how best we could serve our people and to contribute our mite to the fulfilment of the great undertaking that the nation has embarked upon, the fulfilment of the Second Five Year Plan.

Let me take this opportunity of sending my best compliments and congratulations to more than a million of the employees of the railways who are toiling hard, day and night, all the 24 hours round the clock, for maintaining the nerve-line of the nation, the nerve-line which, if dislocated, if it does not work, will not only adversely affect but paralyse all the development schemes in the country. They expect a few cheering words from this House and the words of encouragement that have been uttered here will put heart into those more than million employees and they will engage themselves in the task with faith, energy and enthusiasm.

I thank the hon. Members for all that they have said.

Shri Hem Barua: The hon. Minister has said about the basic amenities and extension of railway lines and pointed out that they have been held up for want of resources. Then, may I know how it was possible, during the Congress session at Gauhati, to put up immediately fluorescent lights, in way-side-cum-railway stations, and build bridges across railway crossings and introduce so many other amenities there by spending some lakhs of rupees? How then was it possible, all of a sudden? The Minister has himself admitted that due to want of resources, things are held back.

Mr. Chairman: The Members can deal with all those details during the debate on the Demands for Grants.

DEMANDS* FOR SUPPLEMENTARY
GRANTS (RAILWAYS) 1957-58

Mr. Chairman: We shall now take up the Supplementary Demands for Grants. Do I understand that some modification is suggested by the hon. Minister?

The Minister of Railways (Shri Jagivan Ram): Yes, I do not want to move Demand No 3.

Mr. Chairman: So, the House will now take up the Supplementary Demands for Grants for expenditure of the Central Government on Railways—1957-58, presented on the 25th February, 1958. There are in all, after the elimination of Demand No 3, as mentioned by the hon. Minister, 14 Demands. I would like to take the sense of the House as to how much time should be allotted for discussion and voting on these Supplementary Demands for Grants. As general discussion on the railway budget has just finished and discussion on demands will go on for another two days, I think not much time would be required for the consideration and passing of these Supplementary Demands. I

*Moved with the recommendation of the President.