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# RAILWAYS

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## EFFICIENCY OF RAILWAYS—AN APPRAISAL\*<sup>£</sup>

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Sir, I am thankful to the Members for the kind words they have said and references that they have made to the Railway Ministry and to the Railway Board. It will not be possible for me to reply to all the points that have been raised here but I will take the broader questions and try to meet them.

The Budget has been appreciated that financially it is a sound budget. It has been suggested from certain quarters that the surpluses could be increased if more economy is effected in certain items of expenditure. I have been trying, and the Railway Board too, to see whether we could further economise in the various sectors of the running of the railways and we will continue to do that. It has been appreciated—and it is encouraging for us—by the whole House, that the importance of the transport capacity of the country cannot be over emphasised. I am fully aware that what I have proposed in the Budget, that is, the enhancement of the capacity for the transport of goods traffic in addition to what has been provided in the Second Five Year Plan, will not be enough to meet the requirements of the country. It is not that we are not aware of that but we have, at the present moment, to try to increase the capacity only according to the resources that may be available to us.

And I was saying that when we were thinking of resources we had to keep in view not only the monetary resources but the material resources also. We have never made it a secret that we are in very tight corner as regards steel, cement and timber. Dr. Kunzru\*\* asked what we were going to do about that and some hon. Members asked whether we cannot think of alternative materials. As the House is perhaps aware, we are sending a Steel Mission to Europe and other countries to try whether we can secure rails, sleepers and other steel materials in larger quantities. We are also trying to use more and more wooden sleepers in place of steel sleepers. But there is shortage of wooden sleepers also. Then we are thinking of using concrete sleepers in some of our yards. So, we are always trying to replace the materials that are in short supply by material which may be in somewhat easier position. But what I want to emphasise is this that taking into account all the developments in the country, we are quite conscious of the fact that even this increased capacity for transportation of goods traffic will not be sufficient to

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\* *R.S. Deb.*, 28 May 1957.

<sup>£</sup> Replying to the General Discussion on Budget (Railways), 1957-58.

\*\*Dr. Hirdey Nath Kunzru, Hon'ble Member, Rajya Sabha.

meet the requirements of the country. Of course, we are concentrating on the important basic materials like coal, iron and steel, cement and foodgrains, but I am afraid that we will not be in a position to create capacity which will be sufficient for the general merchandise. That was ignored even in the first Plan. Though we are trying to increase it to some extent, that will not be enough. So, it comes to this that the Railway Ministry will approach the Planning Commission again, argue with them and try to impress upon them the necessity of creating additional capacity for the railways and if we are fortunate to secure some additional allotment from them, we will try our best with our advisers and officers to create additional capacity with the resources available.

In this connection it will not be out of place to make a mention about the various demands that have been made in this House for opening new railway lines in various parts of the country. Sir, I have got briefs about each one of these demands but I will not take the time of the House in giving reasons why one of them may be taken up during the course of the Second Five Year Plan and why the other may not be taken up. I will only say that demands have been made practically from every State—Andhra, Mysore, Orissa, Madhya Bharat, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Kerala, Assam—and I do appreciate that there is necessity of new railway lines practically in every State. There are areas which are far away from existing railway lines and if we open up that area even if nothing is done in that area for development, if only a railway line is provided, that itself adds to the progress of that area. But we are not in a position to do that at present. As you are aware, the Second Five Year Plan provided for the construction of only 800 and odd miles of new lines and those too mostly in areas where we are going to have new plants located, like Rourkela, Bhilai, or where are going to open up new coal fields like Champa-Korba. So, we were not left with additional mileage to enable us to undertake new railway lines elsewhere. Some Members have complained that even surveys were not being carried out. That is true; I have stopped all new surveys. Unless I know that we are in a position to undertake new lines, there is no use wasting manpower, technical manpower of which we are so short today, over surveys which will be of no use at the present time. If we get some additional allotment and if we know that we are, in the course of the Second Five Year Plan, likely to take up construction of a new railway line in a area, then only it will be worth having a survey of the area. Many surveys have been completed. I made a mention of those in my Budget Speech. Now once a Survey starts there is some satisfaction in that area that the railway line is coming. And when the survey is completed and we say that there is no chance of that railway line being taken up during the course of the Second Five Year Plan, well, it causes disappointment in that area. So, I feel that this allotment i.e., allotment for new lines, should also be increased

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so that we can take up the construction of some new railway lines in certain areas. Especially, the case of Kashmir was very ably pleaded. Then there are Manipur and Tripura, isolated more or less. Unless one travels by air, there is practically no link. They deserve some consideration and I think something should be done in those areas. Again, the inability is due to the paucity of funds. I will plead their case and if I can secure some additional allotment, I will try to do something in such areas, which are backward from the railway point of view, to provide some new railway lines.

Complaints have been made about the punctuality of passenger trains or the slow speed of the goods trains. If their speed increases, there is greater turn-round and we can perform better work. And that leads us to the operational efficiency of the railways. Dr. Kunzru has analysed some of the statistics and he has tried to prove that the speed of the trains has gone down and been continuously deteriorating. From the statistics that he has quoted that conclusion is inevitable; but I have never pleaded that the speed of our goods trains or passenger trains has deteriorated only on account of the density of traffic on the lines. There are several factors which contribute to the slowing down of the speed of a train and density is one of the factors. That is not the only factor or the sole factor which slows down the speed of a train. There are several factors on which the speed of a train depends. These are the main determinants of the speed of a train: tractive effort; class of locomotive gross load behind the engine; density of traffic; sectional capacity; stage of utilisation of capacity; and shunting and loading and unloading time in the case of goods trains.

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..... As I said in that House also, the Railway Board is constantly seized of this problem and it has been the subject of two special studies as to how we can increase the speed of our goods trains. And we will further look into the matter, because any increase in the speed will give us better results and we can move a larger traffic. So, it is a question which has to be constantly watched and we are constantly watching it. So, I do not want to labour this point very much. But one thing I will point out. That is about the sectional capacity and the engineering works. It may be that this capacity is not congested throughout the railway but only on certain sections of a particular railway and if the density on a particular section of a railway is very high that affects the movement on the whole railway. It is not that movement only on that particular section is affected. We have got sections practically on all the railways where the density of traffic has increased during the course of last few years. The percentage of increase in the density has been very appreciable, very large. And they affect the speed throughout that railway. If the speed is affected on that of railway, the all India average of railway is also affected. All the same I have got figures to justify that what has been inferred

from these statistics does not prove the inefficiency of the railways, but it proves the operational efficiency and increased efficiency of the railways. Still, as I said, it is a factor which should be constantly watched and we are going to look further into the matter as to whether we can improve it.

Then, as the House is aware, during the war years, very little of the normal rehabilitation work and maintenance work of the railways was done and war years threw the greatest strain on the railways. The work of rehabilitation and the normal work started in the post-war years. As a matter of fact, the First Five Year Plan was nothing else but putting together all the normal rehabilitation and maintenance work of the railways. But all the work was not completed during the course of the First Five Year Plan. Much of the work is still being continued during the course of the Second Five Year Plan. And if engineering work is going on in a particular section on a particular railway, speed restrictions have to be imposed. That also contributes to the slowing down of the speed of the goods trains and also affects the punctuality of the passenger trains. Though these factors are there, we will further investigate whether we can in any way increase the speed of goods trains. Here also co-operation from the public is necessary especially in the case of goods traffic. Our wagons do not travel more than four hours in twenty-four hours. For the rest of the time they are at some station or some siding. Unless the time taken in loading and unloading is minimised, our wagons do not travel much. We are also constantly watching whether we can increase the utilisation of the wagons, and in the same way we are keeping a watch over the utilisation of the locomotives. I do not want to make a secret that though we increased the number of our locomotives and the number of our wagons and coaches, there has not been proportionate increase in the capacity of our workshops, loco-sheds and sick lines. Therefore, the locomotives, the coaches or the wagons are held up for a longer time than what normally should have been the case in the workshops or the loco-sheds or in the sick lines.

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If my friend will have a little patience, he will hear it. We are trying to see whether we can have greater utilisation of all the rolling stock. We are short of these stocks and we will try to have greater utilisation of each of the items on the railways.

Dr. Kunzru also raised the question of rail, road and river co-ordination. That is being done. As a matter of fact, a Committee has been set up to go into that matter. But even for more road transport my hon. friend forgets that we require roads for running buses and motor trucks.

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We very conveniently forget that our roads are very narrow throughout the country. We think it to be a good road if it is 25 feet wide. If we have

goods traffic on a road which is only 24 feet or 16 feet wide, the question is whether we will be in a position to run motor buses in any appreciably larger numbers. But, all the same, there is no conflict between rail and road traffic. There is so much traffic and there is so much scope that the road transport can be developed to any extent. Similarly, there is enough scope for river transport also. There are certain rivers which are quite navigable, and the Transport Ministry has set up a committee to find out the rivers which are navigable throughout the year and what steps should be taken to fully utilise them. So, we are trying in the Ministries of Railways and Transport to co-ordinate the various means of transport and increase the overall capacity of transport in the country. But I cannot say in greater detail about that because that pertains to the Transport Ministry.

Then it was also said that there was great congestion at the ports. Well, there is. We have in the Railway Ministry placed officers to co-ordinate the movement between the ports and the railways. But, sometimes difficulty arises in this way. I found when I visited the Bombay port that in the case of some of the consignments it is not known to the port authorities or even to the Ministry concerned when a particular consignment is arriving, and, therefore, it is not possible to give prior intimation to the Railways which would enable the Railways to arrange for a particular number of wagons to be made available at that particular port. Sir, it will not be fair to them if I do not further inform the House that sometimes the port authorities do not know themselves who the consignees are, and therefore the goods are lying at the ports for weeks and weeks together, adding to the congestion at the ports. That question is being further looked into.

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I know of a few consignments of steel. When I visited Bombay, I found them lying there and I was told by the port authorities that nobody was coming forward to clear them. I said "you require the steel, why don't you use it? When the claimant comes, you pay him the price." These are the things which require some co-ordination.

Dr. Kunzru also said something about the functioning of the Railway Board. It is too early for me to give any detailed reply to that question. But I may say that on the Railway Board, whether they are the full Members of the Board or the Additional Members, I have got very fine, efficient, competent officers who never shirk responsibility and never regard any work too hard for them. They work day and night, long hours. I myself usually sit in office late, and I find even at that time at seven o'clock or half past seven, some of the officers working, daily. So, we have got a very fine team of workers in the Railway Board and they have produced results. Sir, sometimes to a layman like me it appears like a wonder how a train goes on the track. If the track

is neglected even for a few hours, the train cannot move, and it is something like a miracle. We are in a very tight corner—shortage of everything as I have said. The complaint in many of the sections is that the requisite number of sleepers has not been made available to them. In spite of these things the trains are moving, moving with a little slower speed, moving not with that amount of punctuality which we in the Railway Ministry would like to give to our patrons and customers, but all the same we are moving, and moving in very difficult times. But I will very carefully go into the suggestions of Dr. Kunzru and see how best we can have greater co-ordination, greater efficiency among the Members of the Railway Board, and also decentralization of work among the various zonal railways. It may be that in certain respects we may require some centralisation and in others we may require greater decentralization, so that there may be more diffusion of authority among the various zonal railways. After some times, when I have studied the various aspects, I will go into this question in further detail, and I shall try to profit by the suggestions made by Dr. Kunzru.

Then, another point has been raised while demands for new lines were made. One or two members suggested “why don’t you stop electrification and doubling of tracks so that new lines may be constructed?” Perhaps members forget that this electrification and doubling of tracks is inevitable. We want electrification not because we want to provide additional amenities to those areas and those zones, but because the economy of the whole country will be affected if these schemes are not put through in those areas. Take, for example, the coalfields of Bihar and Bengal. At times there are complaints, and some hon. members here complained about movement of coal. You forget that if coal does not move quickly, it is not only Bengal and Bihar which are going to be affected. Perhaps, Bengal and Bihar will not be affected, it is the other parts of the country which are going to be affected if coal does not move quickly from the coalfields of Bengal and Bihar. If electrification of lines is thought of as a necessity, it is because steam traction will not give that amount of speed to the locomotives. And unless we move quicker, we will not be able to move more traffic. Therefore, these schemes are to be executed as a necessity and not as a luxury, not as providing additional benefits to the areas concerned. The same argument applies to the doubling of lines also. I do not propose to go into this matter in detail.

I would like to say something about the Mehboobnagar accident because that has exercised the minds of some hon. members in this House, especially as to why the findings of the High Court Judge were set aside. It is not a question of fixing responsibility on somebody. Perhaps, hon. members may think that the Railway Board and the Railway Minister have not been able to see their way to accepting the findings of the Judge because he held some officers of the railways responsible for the mishap. That is not the position.

It is immaterial whether one or two or three officers are punished or are not punished; whether responsibility is fixed on them or not. The whole question here was whether the bridge that was affected was according to the technical specifications, held to be sound or not. That is the most important factor in the whole enquiry. And If, according to the overwhelming technical opinion of people who are regarded as experts on this subject, it is held that the bridge, according to accepted technical specifications, was sound, it becomes very difficult for the Government to accept any other finding. Shri Rajagopal Naidu argued quoting some extracts from the report. Well, some impression was created that it was perhaps the opinion only of the railway engineers which was different from that of the Judge and one of the assessors who was not a railway engineer. That is not the position. The opinions of many people were taken. It is important to note, in this connection, that the Enquiry Commission was set up after the accident and everything that followed was after the accident.

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I would like the hon. member\* to read the Report; if he had done so, he would perhaps not have used the words that 'the bridge was broken.' I say that members have not understood what the accident was and one hon. Member comes here and says that the bridge was broken. It is far from the fact. It was never broken. This is how we treat the subject. The bridge was not broken.

Well, whenever we appoint any judicial officer or a High Court Judge, we give all consideration to the opinions expressed by him.

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The matter involved in this case was of a technical nature regarding the design of the bridge and was of considerable complexity in the field of hydrology.

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If Dr. Sapru\*\* wants an answer from me, it is very simple because High Court Judges are appointed to decide all matters—technical, non-technical, scientific, non-scientific, professional, non-professional, legal, non-legal and everything.

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The opinion of Shri Thirumale Iyengar, on his own admission, is in the possession of the Judge before he wrote his report. It is not the one case in

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\* Referring to Shri B.B. Sharma, M.P.

\*\*Referring to Dr. Prakash Narayan Sapru, M.P.

the world where the opinion of a High Court Judge has been rejected. And the hon. Member should not forget that it was not a judicial tribunal. It was a Commission of Inquiry under the Commission of Inquiry Act, where the findings are only recommendations; nothing more, nothing less.

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I am giving the facts. After due consideration of the local data, they, I mean the experts, came to the conclusion that the vent-way of the bridge—and this is the most important factor—was sufficiently sound; and was adequate for all foreseeable situation, having been designed on the basis of the Dicken's formula for the discharge of 2,500 cusecs. The Government Inspector of Railways and Shri N.K. Mitra, one of the Assessors, have corroborated the views fully. Dr. K.L. Rao, the other Assessor, has also stated that for a hilly country such as Pochani, Ryve's formula with a Co-efficient of 850 is generally adopted.

This gives a maximum discharge figure of 2,413 cusecs which is within the designed discharge by Dicken's Formula. So there was the weight of opinion by technical experts which the Government could hardly be expected in the circumstances to have overlooked. So this was the only point about the bridge, and the question before the Government was whether the bridge, according to accepted engineering formula was provided with sufficient vent-way for all foreseeable future or the vent-way was not sufficient and the engineers failed in their duty because they did not increase the vent-way. The crucial question before the Government was this. On the one hand there is the recommendation of the Judge supported by only one man, and on the other hand there is the opinion of so many engineers. And I attach great importance to the opinion of Shri Thirumale Iyengar, who has spent most of his time in that area and who knows the topography of that area and who has studied the hydrology in that area.

Another misunderstanding perhaps in the House is, Sir, that the Government Inspector of Railways is a railway employee. That is far from the fact. He is neither in the Railway Ministry, nor in the Railway Board. The Inspector of Railways is in the Communications Ministry which is a different Ministry. That I must say for the information of the House.

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Well, we had not to form any opinion before this Commission of Inquiry was appointed. We had to go into the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry and also the opinions submitted to the Commission by various experts and technical people and then to come to a decision whether to accept the recommendations of the Commission or not to accept them.

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Then, Sir, the case of Bihta was raised here. Perhaps in the history of the railways, there have been only few judicial inquiries like Bihta and Mehboobnagar. In the case of Bihta also the recommendation of the Judge was not accepted by the Government.

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Sir, here the whole question before the Government was whether to accept the recommendation or not. It is said that the vent-way of the bridge was not sufficient, thereby disproving all the accepted formula. There was also this question before the Government whether to accept the opinion of the expert and technical people who can speak with authority on that subject. And we thought it proper to go by the opinion of the experts in this field of science.

Then, Sir, several points of local importance were raised, apart from the construction of new railway lines and railway crossings. Well, with regard to the railway crossings, I do not know how many man-hours are lost in this country, or will I say, how many million man-hours are lost in this country on account of the railway crossings. Sir, today the railways are not in a position to provide over-bridges on all the railway crossings in big towns and cities. We have certain principles fixed that their municipalities might bear a certain proportion of the cost. Then the question naturally arises that the financial conditions of most of the municipalities is not such as to meet expenditure for the construction of over-bridges. In that case the municipalities may approach the State Governments, and the State Governments may approach the Centre for subsidy or loan in this behalf. But I attach great importance to the construction of over-bridges on the railway crossings. Today we are surplus in manpower and we do not attach great importance to the loss of manpower. But I do not know how many crore of rupees we lose every year on this account *i.e.* by the loss of millions of man-hours every year.

Then, Sir, I come to staff relations. On the whole, Sir, the staff relations on the railways, I should say, are happy. But when we work together, sometimes some differences arise. We meet and discuss and we settle those differences. And whether we settle those differences for all times, that will be too much to say or to expect. But there is one thing that I would like to emphasise in this connection and that is that when there is a nationalised undertaking, the distinction between employer and employee ought to cease because all the employees are the employees of the taxpayers. Whether he is the Chairman of the Railway Board or a Member of the Railway Board or even an ordinary gangman on the railway track, all of them are equally the employees of the tax-payer.

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According to capacity, capacity to work, the position will be different. Even in societies which claim to have enforced equality in all walks of life, those distinctions do exist and they will exist, distinctions in position, distinctions in salaries and other distinctions. They do exist. But what I was emphasising was this that in a nationalised undertaking the distinction between the employees and employers should not exist because all of them are employees.

Shri Bhupesh Gupta talked so much about democracy. Well, I am one who stands for democracy, but democracy pure and unalloyed, which I think Shri Bhupesh Gupta may not like. His grievance was that democracy means that all the railway employees should be members of this party, that party or the other party. But, I say that they should be members of no party, whether it is the Communist Party or the Congress Party, whether it is the Socialist Party or the Praja-Socialist Party, whether it is the Jan Sangh or the Hindu Mahasabha. They should be members of none of these parties, which are political parties.

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.....Another thing which Shri Bhupesh Gupta forgets, is that when a citizen undertakes to join the Government service or the service under the Railways, he voluntarily agrees to abridge his citizenship rights to some extent. What the Railway Service Conduct Rules say, I will read to the House, because much confusion was sought to be created:

*“Taking part in politics: No railway servant shall be a member of, or be otherwise associated with, any political party or any organisation which takes part in politics nor shall he take part in or subscribe in aid of, or assist in any other manner, any political movement or activity.”*

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Unless any particular party tries in subterranean ways to infiltrate into the service. Much capital was made out of this. I would read further for the benefit of the House to see whether there is anything to which exception can be taken. It reads like this:

*“It shall be the duty of every railway servant to endeavour to prevent any member of the family from taking part in, subscribing in aid of, or assisting in any other manner any movement or activity which, is, or tends directly or indirectly to be subversive of the Government as by law established.”*

I take it that my hon. friend does not preach subversive activities in the country. I am sure he will not have the courage to say that he stands for subversive activities.

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I also stand for trade union rights, but I have always felt that right can never be separated from responsibility. There is no right worth the name if it is not accompanied with responsibility. There cannot be any right without responsibility. If there is any right without responsibility, then that right is illusory. My friend wants only rights, rights, and rights, without any responsibilities.

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I have not discriminated between trade unions. I do not want to mix politics with trade unionism.

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I have recognised all sorts of trade unions on the railways whether they are affiliated to the Vasavada group or the Guruswamy group, whether they are led by the Communist or anti-Communists.

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On the Southern Railway there is no union.

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Practically, I agree with Shri. B.K. Mukerjee that there is no union on the railways. Every day in the newspapers we read about Station Masters' Unions, Line Staff Unions, Khalasi Unions, Gangmen's Unions, etc. Well, the whole thing is disintegrating. If you regard me as an employer of railwaymen, perhaps I will be very happy to have 200 unions on the railways and play each against the others. I do not want that.

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If my friend will apply his mind and try to understand trade unionism, he will find that it is detrimental to the workers to have so many unions on a functional basis. If you seek a little more enlightenment on trade unionism, I should say that the whole process of the unions on the railways is already in a state of disintegration, and this is a very painful thing. I want to have one union of railwaymen. I want to have one federation. When I called a meeting of the representatives of the various unions on 10 February,

it was a very encouraging feature that all of them were very enthusiastic about establishing one federation for railwaymen.

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Railwaymen feel that one federation may give them better unity and greater strength. There is no denying that fact. It is a matter of ordinary commonsense that one federation will be more powerful than two federations, and I have been persuading railwaymen to have one union on the railways and one federation too. I do not want to interfere in the working of their trade unions. I offered them that if at any stage they required my services, they would be available to them to help them to form one federation. I am making earnest efforts to persuade them to have one federation and one union on each railway. There should not be two unions. I know a little bit of the history of the unions on the Southern Railway. One railwayman tries to decry the other railwayman. One railwayman speaks against the other railwayman. This is not a very desirable thing. From your standpoint it may be, but I do not regard it as a very desirable thing. That is what I feel about railwaymen's unions. My friend quoted quite a number of names of Secretaries and Presidents of this union and that union, discharged and dismissed, and things like that. When we have an undertaking having nearly a million people, it will not be unusual for some people to be discharged or dismissed or punished. I say some people and when I say some, it means .001 per cent. Not more than that.

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It does not mean that an office-bearer or a member of a union becomes immune from the disciplinary rules of the undertaking in which he has undertaken to work. It does not mean that. He does not cease to be under the rules of conduct framed for that undertaking. He continues to be under that, and if anybody feels that being office-bearer of any union means putting premium on indiscipline and inefficiency, that will not be tolerated.

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This type of allegation is not proper and if any hon. Member has got any proof, I will request that let him pass it through you, Sir, to me and I am prepared to investigate into the case.

I say that Government servants, railway employees, should not take part in politics, whether it is of the Congress or of any other brand. One may believe in Communist or Congress ideology. We cannot regiment the minds of the people. He is free to think, he is free to feel in any way he likes but in his action he should not be involved as a member or take active part in the Congress or in the Communist or any politics. That is what I have to say.

So, as I was saying, in a huge organisation like the Railways, if a few people are dismissed or discharged, there are proper channels for representation of their cases and it is open to them to represent through them. There are certain powers given to the General Managers like, where, they find that an employee is palpably guilty of some actions, he can forthwith dismiss him. If he finds an employee is caught taking bribe, the power is there with the General Manager to dismiss him and I know of certain cases where the General Managers have exercised those powers and exercised those powers with discretion and caution. I would like that where there are cases of corruption and bribery, when there is so much complaint in the House about corruption in Railways and things like that, when there are complaints of collusive pilferage of railway property some action should be taken.

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As regards employees, certain rules are provided for them. If they are aggrieved, they can represent to their superior officers. They can appeal, they can approach the Minister, they can represent to the President and all the channels are open to them.

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I am saying this because that question was also raised in this House and I was explaining to the House that there are established channels for representation open to the employees to ventilate their grievances and seek redress of their grievances. Normally, I would say that it should not be encouraged by hon. members of this House to take up the question of individual grievances with the Minister or with the Railway Board. I have experience of these things. What happens is, one employee is not satisfied with certain things that have been done in connection with his lapses. He goes to one Member of Parliament. The Member writes to me. I send a reply to that particular Member. The employee does not feel satisfied with that reply. What does he do? He goes to another Member and that Member also writes to me about the same employee. I get letters at least from a dozen Members of the House, whether of this House or that House. That is so much of time wasted of the Members of the House and also of the Government. I have to send replies to all the Members. So I say that this thing should not be encouraged.

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Then about break-in Service and things like that, when employees go on illegal strike, they take the consequences. But we have been, I have been, quite considerate in that matter and where I have felt that this break-in service will be rather a heavy punishment for the employees, I have removed that. Well, where they indulge in violent activities, naturally the arms of law

will extend to them and legal actions according to the established law and practice will be taken against them and naturally there will be proceedings against them in court. Some workers are being prosecuted because they indulged in violent activities.

There have been a few cases and the cases are quite old. Some workers in the Railways indulged in activities which were not desirable from any standpoint. Their conduct in 1948-49 was bad and during all these years did not improve. Action has been taken.

Now I come to the New Deal. I do not know how it came to be so called. Neither Government nor the Railway Minister ever called it a New Deal. I made certain announcements for upgrading certain posts among Class III employees. My friend disputes that and says that it will benefit only 30,000 or 35,000 employees..... I say it is ultimately going to benefit a lakh and seventy thousand workers.

Then comes the point about recruitment of the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe candidates. I must admit that their recruitment has not been according to the quota fixed for them. I had been looking into that question and there is an earnest desire among the Members of the Board and among the various Railway Administrations that the quota reserved for the members of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes and also for the Anglo-Indians should be fully filled by them.

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Shri Akbar Ali raised the question of efficiency. Perhaps he forgets that everything is done consistent with and commensurate with efficiency.

Dr. Kunzru raised the question about the announcement that was made by my predecessor, Shri Lal Bahadur Shastriji, about scholarships to the children of the Railway employees and he wanted to know whether that scheme has been implemented.

I am glad to inform the House that it has been implemented and scholarships have been awarded to 930 students. The annual amount of scholarships will be more than Rs. 2,81,956. I think in years to come this will increase along with the increase in the number of students.

Sir, a reference was made to three procurements which were regarded as defective, namely, diesel locomotives, axle boxes and narrow gauge locomotives. Well, Sir, it has been noticed that there were some defects in all these three procurements. This was pointed out by the Railway Audit Report of 1956. The question will be taken up by the Public Accounts Committee..... but, apart from that, we are also looking into the matter. I would also like

to say one thing in this connection. The Audit Report has said that the extra expenditure involved in those three cases is about six lakh of rupees. We should not forget that the procurement of stores and equipment during the course of these years was to the tune of Rs. 514 crore..... Out of this huge sum, the sum involved in the purchase of defective items, is of the order of six lakh of rupees. I do not want to minimise the thing. Even small parts may hold up the implementation of the bigger plan. So, I propose to go into the matter and fix the responsibility. I would also take appropriate action in the matter.

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Then, Sir, about the hill railways, it has been said that they have to pay passenger fares and freight charges at an inflated rate and grievances have been voiced in this House and that House also that if the Supplementary surcharge and tax on passengers are not withdrawn, then the passenger fares will increase the burden on the travellers and users of those hill railways. I propose to go into the whole question and examine how far the inflated mileage rates in the hill railways can be reviewed. I will hold out that hope at the present time. The question of the Darjeeling-Himalayan Railway was very ably pleaded.

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But that arose of a misapprehension that this Railway was going to be dismantled. I do not know how this news spread throughout Darjeeling. I have received quite a large number of telegrams and letters. Of course, that has added to the revenue of the Communications Ministry but there is no foundation for that. Though the Railway is running at a loss, there is no intention at present to dismantle it.

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I propose to do another thing. We have got a number of hill railways. They are not very efficiently run which is in the very nature of things. What I propose to do is to send some officers to Switzerland where they have got quite a number of hill railways to see their working so that we can also improve our railways accordingly.

Questions were raised about Assam and the North Eastern Railway. The North Eastern Railway is in a special area and requires some special consideration. What I have decided is that we should pay greater attention to the development and stabilisation of the railways in the Assam area. Assam is our frontier and it has become strategically important. I am thinking of creating it into the Assam Zone so that better attention can be given to the railways in the Assam area.

I have another thing and that is about the supplementary surcharge of 6.25 per cent. When it was first imposed, though certain commodities were exempted from the surcharge, strangely enough milk was not exempted. Now, it has been pointed out to me that this additional surcharge of 6.25 percent, which means a surcharge of 12.5 percent, will fall on milk but I want to exempt milk not only from this surcharge but even from the original surcharge also.

Then it might have been noticed that I mentioned in my Budget Speech that I proposed to grant the concession of a single ticket to cover a blind passenger and his attendant and a similar concession to persons suffering from tuberculosis for their journeys for admission to and on discharge from hospitals and sanatoria, those concessions being subject to production of appropriate certificate to avoid misuse. I have since received representations explaining that on many occasions persons suffering from tuberculosis travel alone for their journeys for admission to and on discharge from hospitals and sanatoria and that in such cases the new concession will give no benefits to the individual and similarly that blind persons may sometimes travel alone or in groups with one or two attendants and in such cases also little or no benefit will be obtained from the concessions. Now for such cases I propose to extend the scope of the concession which I have already announced so that persons suffering from tuberculosis travelling for admission to and on discharge from hospitals as well as blind persons when unaccompanied by attendants are charged one-fourth the usual rate subject of course to production of appropriate certificates.

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Then about catering, which is a special preserve of Dr. Seeta Parmanand, I have a few words to say. She claimed to have specialised in catering, I do not know whether she has specialised in catering done on the railways or in catering as such.

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Well, Sir, she complained that the accounts of the catering department were not given in the Budget. I am afraid that she has not devoted that attention to the Budget papers as she ought to have..... I will refer her to page 97 of the Demands for Grants for expenditure of the Railways for 1957-58 and she will find the information there.

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I have no hesitation in admitting that we are running at present at a loss. The main reason for this loss is the heavier wage bill in departmental catering as compared to contract catering. The staff under departmental catering are on the Pay Commission's scales of pay which are much higher than those paid by the contractors and we have also much better service conditions generally. But the position should not be judged solely from the angle of

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profit or loss without any relation to the higher standard of food and service which is aimed at under departmental catering. We do not claim that at present we are giving higher standards though on certain sectors I have no doubt that the standard of food has improved. Our aim is to provide a higher standard of food and service under departmental catering. Catering is an important amenity to passengers and even if there is some loss, it is counterbalanced by the greater satisfaction which departmental catering renders to the travelling public. I would assure the House that there is no complacency over this matter and that the question of reducing substantially the present losses, if not eliminating them altogether, is engaging our attention and will continue to do so.

Dr. Parmanand also suggested that while terminating catering contracts for introducing departmental catering, certain contractors have received favourable treatment. I am sorry that such an impression should have been shown. I would assure her that this is not the case. If she has got any specific case and if she brings it to my notice, I shall look into it. Then there was the question of the supervisory staff of the contractors who are retrenched by their employers. As far as the other staff are concerned, we absorb them in departmental catering. It is only supervisory staff, managers and people like that, that we have not been able to absorb. We will try to absorb as many of them as possible and where it is not possible, we may give them some vending and catering contracts somewhere.

Then there were other questions relating to amenities on stations like waiting rooms, platforms, etc.

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It also depends on the laws of economics as to whether or not to go on increasing the charges for service or goods supplied. My hon. friend should remember that no prudent businessman will ignore those patent facts and rules of economics.

Sir, I have practically covered all the important points. I am once again thankful to hon. Member...

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As I have said, many suggestions have been made. I will have all those suggestions examined and I will implement as many of them as are feasible and practical.

I am thankful to the House for having said encouraging words and I assure the House on behalf of the Railway Board and the Railway Ministry that we will contribute our best to implement the Second Five Year Plan so that we also can add to the prosperity of the country.

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## RAILWAY AMENITIES\*<sup>‡</sup>

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If my hon. friend\*\* had made enquiries to satisfy himself he would have found the answer. We are giving a full meal for 18 annas or even 14 annas. If some hon. Members of this House have taken that meal they will testify that the charges that are levied as compared to the quality of food served is very reasonable. Even private contractors will hardly afford at that rates that quality of food.

As regards sweets, I know in Delhi we are preparing most of the sweets ourselves. It is only in the case of some specialised sweets that at times we purchase from the market. That we do and I will not deny that, and we will continue to do that in certain cases of specialised items—which some times are a speciality of an individual or a family. I know in Delhi the Railway restaurant has become so popular that even for private parties people are inviting those caterers. If they are not comparatively cheaper and also of better quality, I do not think why people should patronise them. As they are cheaper why the travelling public or the Delhi public should not patronise.

So, there is not at all any monopolistic tendency in charging the rates either of *puri* or sweets. I will leave it to my hon. friend to taste the *puris* supplied by our railway catering and to taste the *puris* of others. He will find then whether, if there is any higher price for railway *puris*, there is any justification for the high price charged or not.

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There have been some losses. My hon. friend has conveniently forgotten one of the paragraphs of the Catering Enquiry Committee. I will read that out for his benefit and for the benefit of this House. I shall read that portion of the recommendation which has not been read by my hon. friend. The Committee says:

“Refreshment and meals on trains should be provided at popular prices by the department. Departmental catering should provide a wide range of food and snacks. The aims should be to run the catering establishment on a no-profit-no-loss basis in the long run”.

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\* *L.S. Deb.*, 12 August 1957.

<sup>‡</sup> Replying to the Half-an-Hour Discussion on the Departmental Catering in Railways as the Minister of Railways.

\*\*Shri Harish Chandra Mathur, M.P.

I will draw his attention to the words "in the long run":—

"To start with, if the departmental catering suffers any loss, it may be considered as expenditure on advertisement and partly to be on account of passengers' amenities".

I wish my hon. friend read this portion and pointed it out to this House.

In the initial stages, nowhere in the world departmental catering on the transportation has been a paying thing. I was the other day looking into an article on the catering on the railways in the United Kingdom, and I was surprised to find the colossal loss that they incur on this account. The main thing I again reiterate is this: that the salary that we pay to the employees is several times higher than what a contractor pays to his employees,—the same category of his employees. I may tell the hon. Member for his information that the bearers and cooks under the private contractors were getting Rs. 30 plus food, and as soon as the department took over those employees, we began to pay according to the Pay Commission's recommendations, and immediately the salaries shot up to the minimum of Rs. 75. That makes a difference. That is also one main factor for the loss.

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That question may be put to the quite large number of people who are serving in this country even at Rs. 1 as daily wages. But I have explained the position. Since we took over, the salary bill has increased.

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I have again explained what is the reason for the loss on the Eastern Railway and for the profit on the Central Railway. If my hon. friend does not want to understand it, I cannot help it. I have said it is because of historical reasons; the western style of catering on the Eastern Railway has been the main cause of this loss. We are gradually going to replace it. The intention of the catering should be that it is patronised not only by the passengers of the first and second class but also by the third class passengers who may take advantage of that. At present, the style of catering on the Eastern Railway is not of that type, and unless we replace that, I am afraid there will be loss. I am going to take certain steps in this direction and I think in course of time the losses will be minimised.

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## उत्तर-पूर्व रेलवे प्रगति की पटरी पर\*<sup>‡</sup>

उपाध्यक्ष महोदय मैं ज्यादा वक्त नहीं लूंगा। यह बता देना आवश्यक है कि इस निश्चय पर पहुंचने की जरूरत किस तरह से पैदा हुई। जो आजकल नार्थ ईस्टर्न रेलवे है इसमें पहले कई एक रेलवेज थीं। पहले ओ.टी. रेलवे थी, असम रेलवे थी और मथुरा की तरफ एक छोटी लाइन थी। इन सब को मिला कर एक क्षेत्र बनाया गया। उसके बाद इसका काम ठीक से चल सके इसलिए इसमें रीजनल सिस्टम भी लाया गया और कुछ उपक्षेत्र बनाये गये। एक उपक्षेत्र मुजफ्फरपुर में था। लेकिन यह अनुभव हुआ कि इस उपक्षेत्र का निर्माण करने के बाद भी रेलवे का काम जिस दक्षता के साथ होना चाहिए वैसा नहीं हो रहा था। उसके बाद डिवीजन बनाने का भी निर्णय किया गया। लेकिन असम की अपनी एक निराली परिस्थिति है जिसका सम्बन्ध सिर्फ असम के साथ ही नहीं है बल्कि जिसका असर सारे देश पर पड़ता है। असम का एक स्ट्रेटिजिक इम्पोर्टेंस बन गया है और यह आवश्यक था कि असम का सम्बन्ध देश के दूसरे हिस्सों के साथ ऐसा बनाया जाये कि आवश्यकता पड़ने पर हम असम से देश के दूसरे हिस्सों में या देश के दूसरे हिस्सों से असम में तेजी के साथ यातायात का प्रबन्ध कर सकें। हम चाहते हैं कि ऐसा प्रबन्ध हो कि यातायात में कोई रुकावट न हो। असम के लोगों की जो राजनीतिक भावना है उसका स्थान इस निर्णय करने में गौण है। यह मुख्य विषय नहीं हो सकता। और मैं यह साफ कर देना चाहता हूं कि जो मैंने यह निश्चय किया है उसमें असम की राजनीतिक भावना का ख्याल नहीं रखा बल्कि देश की राजनीतिक परिस्थिति का ध्यान जरूर रखा है और किसी भी रेलवे का विस्तार करने में या उसको मजबूत करने में यह विचार तो हमको अपने सामने रखना ही पड़ता है कि सारे राष्ट्र पर इसका क्या असर पड़ता है। यह देखा गया कि हम असम रेलवे को सुदृढ़ नहीं कर सकते अगर असम के साथ उस रेलवे का सीधा सम्बन्ध न जोड़ा जाये। इस अनुभव के आधार पर यह सिद्ध हुआ कि जब तक हम असम में ही उस रेलवे का हैडक्वार्टर नहीं रखते हैं तब तक उस काम को तेजी के साथ नहीं कर सकते। इसलिए मैं यह बता देना चाहता हूं कि हमने यह निश्चय असम की राजनीतिक भावना के कारण नहीं किया है। बल्कि जब मैंने यह निश्चय किया था उस समय वह चीज हमारे सामने थी ही नहीं।

एक चीज और मैं बता देना चाहता हूं कि जिस वक्त डिवीजनल स्कीम चल रही थी उस वक्त जिन-जिन जगहों पर उपक्षेत्रीय दफ्तर खुलने की सम्भावना थी वहां के लोगों को तो कुछ प्रसन्नता थी लेकिन मैंने साथ ही साथ यह भी देखा कि उत्तर प्रदेश और बिहार दोनों स्थानों में जहां से डिस्ट्रिक्ट हटने वाले थे वहां के लोगों में काफी बेचैनी थी और मुझ से पार्लियामेंट के सदस्यों ने और वहां के दूसरे बहुत से लोगों ने भी अनुरोध किया कि हमारे यहां से डिस्ट्रिक्ट न हटाये जायें। लेकिन

\* लोक सभा वाद-विवाद, 14 अगस्त 1957।

<sup>‡</sup> रेल मंत्री के रूप में उत्तर-पूर्व रेलवे से नये जोन के निर्माण पर हुई चर्चा का जवाब देते हुए।

डिवीजन और डिस्ट्रिक्ट एक साथ नहीं चल सकता था। इसका अभी भी कुछ नजारा सदन में माननीय सदस्य देख सकते हैं। दो-दो पंडित, श्री डी.एन. तिवारी और श्री विभूति मिश्र, यहां बैठे हैं पर एक मत नहीं हो सकते। मैं तो हर वक्त इस बात का स्वागत करता हूँ कि पार्लियामेंट के सदस्य मुझ से मिलें.....

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लेकिन ये दोनों आपस में यह निर्णय नहीं कर पाते कि वह सोनपुर में होना चाहिए या मुजफ्फरपुर में होना चाहिए। अगर ये दोनों सदस्य आपस में निश्चय करके हमारे सामने पेश कर दें तो हमारा काम आसान हो जायेगा।

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जनाब, मैं आपको बता देना चाहता हूँ कि लोगों को काफी परेशानी हो रही है कि उत्तर बिहार का ट्रेड, कामर्स और इंडस्ट्री सब कुछ बरबाद हो जायेगा लेकिन कैसे हो जायेगा यह किसी सदस्य ने नहीं बतलाया है। मैं बताना चाहता हूँ कि आज स्थिति क्या है? यह सोचना कि देश के किसी भी प्रदेश में केवल एक ही रेलवे चले यह असम्भव है। आप किसी भी प्रदेश को ले लें, चाहे आप बिहार को लें, या बंगाल को लें, या उत्तर प्रदेश को लें, या मध्य प्रदेश को लें, आपको मानना पड़ेगा कि उस प्रदेश में दो, तीन या चार रेलवे सिस्टम चालू हैं। और बिल्कुल मुनासिब बात भी है क्योंकि हमारा मुल्क इतना बड़ा है। यहां पर कई रेलवे सिस्टम हैं। आप छोटे से राज्य बंगाल को लें। उसमें भी नार्थ ईस्टर्न, साउथ ईस्टर्न और ईस्टर्न रेलवे सिस्टम हैं।

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पंजाब में भी थोड़ा सा दूसरा रेलवे सिस्टम आ जाता है। तो मैं कह रहा था कि आपको सभी को कई रेलवे के साथ डील करना पड़ता है। बिहार के बारे में मैं अभी ईस्टर्न और साउथ ईस्टर्न के सम्बन्ध में नहीं कहूंगा, नार्थ ईस्टर्न के सम्बन्ध में कहूंगा। अभी भी बिहार में जो रेलवेज हैं उनमें से 274 मील पांडू रीजन में हैं और बाकी मुजफ्फरपुर रीजन में हैं और कुछ लखनऊ के इलाके में पड़ती है। मैं यहां बतलाना चाहता था कि सदस्यों में यह काफी गलतफहमी है कि हमारा काफी हिस्सा पांडू में चला जा रहा है। मैं उस गलतफहमी को दूर करना चाहता हूँ। आज भी नार्थ ईस्टर्न रेलवे का बिहार में 1268 मील का माइलेज है। इसमें से 274 मील अभी भी पांडू जोन में पड़ता है। अब जो नया जोन बनाया जायेगा, जिसका अभी हमने नामकरण नहीं किया है, उसमें यह 274 से बढ़कर 455 हो जायेगा। यानी 181 मील और चला जायेगा। पंडित द्वारकानाथ तिवारी ने कहा कि हमारे यहां इतनी रेलवे माइलेज है तो उसको नया जोन बना दीजिये। शायद उनको आंकड़े नहीं मालूम हैं या उत्तर बिहार की लम्बाई को उन्होंने इनप्लेट कर दिया है। जैसा मैंने आपसे कहा टोटल माइलेज 1268 है जिसमें से अभी भी कुछ दूसरे हिस्से में है।

लोग यह कहते हैं कि अगर क्षेत्रीय कार्यालय पांडू चला जायेगा तो लोगों को गोरखपुर के बजाय पांडू जाना होगा और इसमें दिक्कत होगी। लेकिन अभी भी तो बिहार के कई सेक्शन हैं जिनको पांडू जाना पड़ता है। आप कहेंगे कि यह भी गलत है। लेकिन जैसा मैंने आपसे कहा कि यह तो सम्भव नहीं हो सकता कि हम इस तरह का जोन बनायें कि एक प्रदेश के लोगों को एक ही स्थान पर जाना

पड़े, दो स्थानों पर न जाना पड़े। रेलवे के फंक्शनिंग के हिसाब से यह असम्भव है। यह बदकिस्मती की बात है कि हमारे यहां रीजनल भावना इतनी प्रबल है।

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जो प्वाइंट यहां उठाये गये हैं उनको तो मुझे कुछ यहां जवाब देना ही है। मिलने के लिए तो जो मैम्बर जब चाहें वे मिल सकते हैं।

श्री श्री नारायण दास जी ने कहा कि पार्लियामेंट के सदस्य, बिहार विधान सभा के सदस्य और मिनिस्टर साहब मिल कर इसका फैसला करें। लेकिन अगर जिस प्रदेश के सम्बन्ध हो उस प्रदेश के विधान सभा के सदस्यों से, पार्लियामेंट के सदस्यों से और दूसरे लोगों से मिल कर ही हम कोई फैसला करें तब तो हमारे लिये कोई निर्णय करना सम्भव ही नहीं होगा। इसलिए मैं इस सुझाव को तो किसी भी हालत में मानने के लिए तैयार नहीं हूँ।

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मैं इस सिद्धान्त को मानने को तैयार नहीं हूँ कि हमको अगर किसी राज्य के सम्बन्ध में निर्णय लेना हो तो उस राज्य की सरकार से ही नहीं बल्कि वहां की असेम्बली के सदस्यों से मिल कर निर्णय करें। इस तरह से हमारा काम करना असम्भव हो जायेगा। कहां तक हम यह कर सकते हैं कि हम हर मौके पर वहां के असेम्बली के सदस्यों से राय लें और चैम्बर्स आफ कामर्स से बात करने जाएं? उनके लिए रास्ता खुला है, उन को जो कहना हो उसके लिए वह मेमोरेण्डम या रिप्रेजेंटेशन दे सकते हैं। हम जाकर उन से राय लें, यह बात कोई मेरी समझ में नहीं आती, और मैं इस सुझाव को मानने के लिए तैयार नहीं।

हां, मैं यह कह रहा था कि दिक्कत है। पहले तो यही बात मेरी समझ में नहीं आती है कि कितने लोगों को हेडक्वार्टर्स में जाने की आवश्यकता पड़ती है? बहुत कम लोगों को वहां जाने की आवश्यकता पड़ती है, यह मैं नहीं कहता कि बिल्कुल नहीं पड़ती, और उसका उपाय किया जा सकता है। डिवीजनल सिस्टम को तो हमने तय कर लिया है कि वहां नहीं करेंगे। छोटी रेलवे है, इसलिए वहां डिस्ट्रिक्ट सिस्टम ही रखेंगे। हां डिस्ट्रिक्ट के लोगों को जो अधिकार होते हैं वह डिवीजन वालों से कम होते हैं। लेकिन मैं इस चीज को भी देख रहा हूँ कि किस तरह से हम डिस्ट्रिक्ट को लिबरलाइज कर के उन्हें अधिक अधिकार दे सकते हैं।

एक चीज दूसरी भी है जो हम सोच रहे हैं। यह प्रश्न पैदा किया गया कि सिर्फ असम का जो हिस्सा है फकीराग्राम तक वह असम में रहेगा। इस की तह में एक पर्निशस प्रिंसिपल (pernicious principle) उठाया गया है और वह पर्निशस प्रिंसिपल (pernicious principle) यह है कि जिस प्रदेश में जितनी रेलवे है वह उसी में रहे बाहर न जाए। मैं इसे कबूल करने को तैयार नहीं। इस चीज को कबूल करने से रेलवे प्रशासन जो है वह कभी भी एफिशिएंटली फंक्शन (efficiently function) नहीं कर सकता है। हमें रेल को एक से अधिक प्रान्तों से हो कर ले जाना पड़ेगा। हमारा एक ऐसा रेलवे सिस्टम भी है जो मुल्क के एक हिस्से से लेकर दूसरे छोर तक पहुंचता है। अगर

इस तरह से हर प्रान्त वाले सोचने लगे कि जहां एक प्रदेश की सीमा खत्म होती है वहां पर उसकी रेलवे की सीमा भी खत्म हो जाए और दूसरे राज्य से दूसरी रेलवे प्रारम्भ हो, यह असम्भव है, और चल नहीं सकता है।

एक यह बात उठाई गई कि बरौनी नये जोन में जाये या न जाये। तो हमने यह निश्चय किया है कि फिलहाल कटिहार तक ही पांडू में जाएगा। मोकामा ब्रिज बन जाने के बाद बरौनी का महत्व बहुत बढ़ जाएगा। शायद यह हमारे देश में बड़े मार्शलिंग यार्ड्स में से हो जाएगा। मैं सदन को यह भी बता देना चाहता हूं कि बरौनी से जो हमारा आयात-निर्यात होगा वह अधिकतर बरौनी से पूर्व के हिस्से में रहेगा। जितना हमारा सामान जाएगा, गुड्स ट्रैफिक होगा वह अधिकतर पूर्व को जाने वाला या वहां से आने वाला होगा। वास्तव में रेलवे को एडमिनिस्ट्रेटिवली एफिशिएंटली चलाने के लिए बिल्कुल मुनासिब सी बात जान पड़ती है कि बरौनी का हिस्सा भी पूर्व के साथ चला जाए। लेकिन यह अभी प्राविजनल फैसला समझिए, इस तरह देखते हुए कि जब तक गंगा ब्रिज पूरा तैयार नहीं हो जाता है, तब तक इस सम्बन्ध में कुछ निश्चित फैसला करना मुनासिब नहीं है। लेकिन रेलवे के एफिशिएंट फंक्शनिंग के लिये ऐसा लगता है कि यह कहना जरूरी है।

एक चीज मैंने और भी सोची है, और वह यह कि इस समय बिहार का कुछ हिस्सा पड़ता है या उत्तरी बंगाल का कुछ हिस्सा पड़ता है, जब तक असम लिंक नहीं बढ़ जाता है, तब तक वहां के लोगों को पांडु जाने में ज्यादा वक्त लगेगा या उनको परेशानी होगी। हम कोई ऐसा भी इन्तजाम करना चाहते हैं कि उन्हें पांडु न जाना पड़े और उनका अधिकतर काम कटिहार में निकल जाया करे। इसका स्वरूप क्या होगा, यह मैंने अभी निश्चित नहीं किया है, लेकिन मैं कुछ इस तरह का इन्तजाम करना चाहता हूं कि इस इलाके के लोगों को पांडु न जाना पड़े, चाहे वह नार्थ बिहार के उस हिस्से के ही क्यों न हों जिस का सम्बन्ध पांडु में अभी भी है। मगर मैं एक आश्वासन देना चाहता हूं कि यह फैसला किसी राजनैतिक वजह से नहीं हुआ है। हां, आसाम का एक अपना महत्व है, हमारी अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय सीमा बन जाने की वजह से उसका स्ट्रैटेजिक इम्पोर्टेंस (Strategic Importance) से उसका महत्व और बढ़ जाता है। इस दृष्टिकोण को हमें नहीं भूलना चाहिये, और इसलिए हम लोगों को यह निर्णय लेना पड़ा कि असम रेलवेज को हम मजबूत बनायें, दृढ़ बनाएं और ऐसा बना दें कि आवश्यकता पड़ने पर देश के किसी हिस्से से भी असम में हम लोगों को और चीजों को जल्द से जल्द पहुंचा सकें। इसलिये हमें यह निश्चय करना पड़ा। हां, इस पुनर्गठन से रेलवे कर्मचारियों का थोड़ा सा डिस्लोकेशन जरूर होता है, लेकिन हम प्रयत्न करेंगे कि कम से कम डिस्लोकेशन हमें करना पड़े।

## DEVELOPMENT OF RAILWAYS\*<sup>£</sup>

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Many hon. members have tried to see socialism in the Budget; many members have tried to see some fundamental principles on which they would like to Railway Budget to be framed. If they have been disappointed, perhaps, the fault is not with the Railway Budget. My hon. friend Shri Sinhasan Singh, who is not here was trying to find socialist pattern in the Railway Budget and his yardstick of socialist pattern is the levelling down of the salaries of the few officers in the Railways.

I am sorry, Sir, to say that this is perhaps a very poor yardstick of socialism. Levelling down or reduction of the salaries of the officers is not going to produce a socialist pattern of society. I wish he had devoted some more time to understanding what socialism means, and when we talk of introducing socialist pattern of society what actually we mean. I will not labour this point, Sir, but I would say that we in the railways are trying in our own modest way how far we can contribute to the development of the country, how far we can increase the wealth of the country and thereby increase the prosperity of the citizens of the country. That is our conception of socialism. Unless we increase the prosperity of the country, there is no chance of individual prosperity being increased. We are in our humble way contributing to the development of the country. If he looks at socialism from that angle he will find that there is something in the Railway Budget and that we are trying in our own way to advance towards the goal of socialist pattern of society.

In this connection questions were raised about the salaries and wage scale of certain categories of employees, commercial clerks and others. The Pay Commission is sitting and the Commission will take into consideration all these factors and make their recommendations. But sometimes when Members make certain allegations they are not properly informed or properly briefed.

Shri Sinhasan Singh said that commercial clerks had no opportunity to be promoted as Claims Inspectors. That is entirely wrong. The majority of Claims Inspectors are taken from the rank of the commercial clerks.

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\* *L.S. Deb.*, 8 and 10 March 1958.

<sup>£</sup> Replying to the Discussion on the Demands for Grants (Railways) 1958-59 as the Ministers of Railways.

The question about the Class IV employees was raised. As the House is aware, I have been myself anxious to do something for Class IV employees. The House is also aware that I set up a committee known as Tapase Committee to go into the question as to how far we can have additional avenues of promotion for class IV employees. The Committee has come to the end of its labours and we are expecting its final report within the course of this month. As soon as the report is received, I will see that the examination of the report is expedited in the Railway Board, and the report is published.

Some Members have raised the question of salary and pay-scale of Class IV employees like gangmen, *khalasis* and others. There is no doubt that the increment that has been given to them or the grade given to them, rising from Rs. 30 to Rs. 35 within the course of their service period, is not satisfactory. But that question also is before the Pay Commission, and I am sure the Pay Commission will take into consideration the conditions of their work and the work they are expected to put in, and make recommendations in that connection.

I have asked the Railway Board to point this out to the Pay Commission also. The difficulty is that when we talk of the Class IV employees, the picture of the ordinary peon in the Secretariat is generally brought before us. People forget that on the railways, the posts and telegraphs department and in some other departments, the Class IV employees are not only peons but are part of the operational staff or the executive staff. So they will have to be treated separately from Class IV employees in the Secretariat. That aspect of the problem, I have asked the Railway Board to bring to the notice of the Pay Commission. I have no doubt that the Pay Commission will keep all these factors in their minds while making the recommendations for the grade of salaries for the Class IV employees in the railways, posts and telegraphs department and other such departments.

I will not say anything about accidents and about the construction of new railway lines, because I have nothing to add to what I have said in reply to the general discussion of the railway budget. But I will again reiterate and repeat what I said on the previous occasion, namely, that it will be our constant endeavour to improve our efficiency, to decrease the chances of lapses and to see how far we can minimise the chances of accidents.

I must express my thanks to Shri Goray for what he said about discipline among the railway employees. I wish all Members of this House and leaders of public opinion outside this House also will support Shri Goray and will take the same line so far as the question of discipline among the railway staff, all categories of staff, high and low, is concerned. That will no doubt improve the efficiency of the railways. That is very necessary not only on the railways

but in all departments of Government. I again thank Shri Goray for the bold way in which he placed this point before the House. I hope leaders of public opinion outside the House also will follow that up, wherever cases arise for them, to emphasise upon all people, the workers, that discipline is primarily needed in a country which wants to develop.

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Victimisation is mentioned. That is a word which has to be used by those who think that they are doing something in the labour field. Whether that word is justified or not, all cases are thought to be covered by that word. We have, on the railways, certain rules and regulations for taking disciplinary action against railway employees. There are channels for appeals and second appeals in those cases. Whenever any Member feels that certain actions have been taken against any railway employees, it will be better for him to advise the railway employee to approach the proper authority or appeal to the proper authority through the channels prescribed for that purpose.

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The Members should advise the employees concerned that when disciplinary action has been taken under the ordinary rules of procedure, there are channels for appeals and Members should therefore, advise the employees concerned to approach the proper authorities and proper channels prescribed under the rules.

There are other categories of cases reference to which has been made by Smt. Renu Chakravartty, and references were made by some Members in the previous sessions also, regarding some action taken against certain number of railway employees under the President's order or under the discretionary powers of the General Managers. In those cases, where the workers were suspended, discharged or dismissed under the President's order, I offered that I will review those cases and wherever I found that there was an occasion or a case for altering the orders already passed in those cases, I would do that. I have already reviewed a number of cases. The final decisions on them are likely to be taken very soon. In other cases, I have called for reports from the General Managers concerned and from the State Governments. As soon as I received those reports, I will review those cases.

As regards the actions taken under the discretionary powers of the General Managers, orders have been issued from the Railway Board to the General Managers that when the recognised unions do take up those cases with the General Managers, the General Managers will review those cases and report to the Railway Board. So, these are the two types or categories of cases.

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The cases may be taken up by the recognised unions. The case of the individual employees can be taken up with the General Managers. It is not necessary that the recognised unions will not take up the case of others. But, if there are a few cases like that, of course the Members are welcome to write to me in those cases. These are the two categories of cases. But I am not prepared to review the cases where disciplinary action has been taken under the ordinary rules of procedure for such cases. There, action will have to be taken according to the rules laid down in that connection.

The Members are confused whenever they say that there are two thousand cases of victimisation. There may be two thousand cases or even five thousand cases in such a huge organisation where we have more than a million employees. Do you think, Sir, that there would not be a number of cases where disciplinary action be taken? There will be cases. If the disciplinary actions have been taken under the ordinary rules of procedure, there are channels laid down for an appeal, and the employees concerned should appeal to the proper authorities in that behalf. I am not going to entertain representations in such cases. Where actions have been taken and the employees have not been given any opportunity because the action was taken, under the extraordinary rules of the President's power, by the General Managers, I have already said that I would review those cases.

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I am coming to the coolies. In the first place, coolies are not railway employees.

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A question has been raised about porters, coolies and casual labour. In the first place, porters are not employees of the railways. They are there for the facilities of the travelling public, and they get their wages or remuneration from the travelling public. We do not pay anything. We have provided a facility for the passengers. In many countries such an institution does not exist at all. Perhaps, it is due to our way of life—this institution.

I want to make it clear that this has nothing to do with the socialistic pattern of society. I will request my hon. friend to try to understand what socialism is.

I want to make it clear here that I am not going to departmentalise these porters. They will remain as they are. Then, compared to previous years, as you will also remember—you also are travelling—what is paid for a unit of luggage now is very much higher.

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As regards casual workers, they are, again, not our employees, in that sense. But we have got certain rules. If a worker works continuously for six months as a casual labour, then he is taken temporarily and then permanently. But, to treat all casual labour as railway employees, if the hon. Member himself considers it he will know is a thing which cannot be done. Any commercial organisation or industrial organisation cannot function unless some number of casual employees or casual workers are employed. When the tempo of work increases all of a sudden, we will have to engage them.

On such a huge organisation like the railways we will have to have contracts for various works. We will have to see that the contractors pay fair wages to their workers. In certain contracts we have also a clause like this. But most of these labourers, the casual workers, are governed by the Minimum Wages Act in the different States. I have been going into that question and I have found that whenever we employ casual labourers we ascertain from the District Magistrate concerned what is the minimum wage prescribed in that district and we on the railways also pay the same wage, which has been prescribed by the several authorities in that area for the workers of that category. So, we have been implementing the clauses of the Minimum Wages Act wherever that Act is in force. But, if certain State Governments do not prescribe minimum wages for that category of labour, we do pay to the casual workers the wages prevailing in the locality. I do not know what more we can do in that respect. Here too, the question of departmentalising all the casual labourers is a thing which perhaps is not practicable.

Questions have been raised about the recognition of unions also. Shri Banerjee, who is not here in his seat, raised the question of recognition of registered unions. I do not know what chaos and confusion will prevail if we were to recognize all the unions which are registered on the railways. Perhaps there are registered unions of every category of employees on the railways, and I am afraid perhaps we will have unions in the railways, not in dozens but in hundreds, if we have to recognize all the unions that have been formed and registered. That, I feel, will not be to the advantage of the railway workers themselves.

I attended one of their conferences at Jamalpur and I told them—they appreciated and agreed—that category-wise formations of unions on the railways will be detrimental to the interests of the railway workers. Today unions have been formed and registered category-wise for drivers, firemen, station masters, goods clerks, commercial clerks and ministerial staff, and if we were to recognize all these unions, only confusion will be created in the ranks of the railway employees, and perhaps there will be no trade unionism worth the name in the railways.

So, as I said on the previous occasion, I will repeat again that it will be our effort to see that there is united trade union on the railways, most likely

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only one federation. I am happy that the employees and their leaders themselves are trying for the achievement of that object, and we will wish them all success in their efforts.

Shri Barua, who is not here, raised the question about the railway schools in Assam. But it is not a question for Assam only. We have got a number of schools on the railways, and the salary of the teachers in the railway schools has been determined by the Ministry of Education on the recommendations of the Pay Commission. So, no discrimination or distinction is being made in the case of the railway schools in Assam. The salary scales of the teachers in the railway schools are the same as prescribed by the Education Ministry. For other schools, the railways are not responsible, and Shri Barua will be better advised to take up the question with the State Government.

Then, about the freight rates for the goods traffic from Assam, we have a uniform rate throughout the country, except for certain hill tracts, where we have got the system of the inflated mileage. I do not think we are in any way unfair to Assam in charging the same rate of freight as we charge in other parts of the country. I will say that indirectly it will give a certain concession to Assam, because the cost of construction and maintenance in Assam of the railway track is much higher than in most other parts of the country. So, there is no occasion for any further concession to Assam in that matter.

A point was raised by Shri Tangamani about ex-servicemen. That has been examined and whatever has been laid down in the rules in that connection has been implemented. Shri Narasimhan raised the question about the directly-recruited station masters for Southern Railways. They went to the court and lost their case. Again they have preferred a Letters Patent Appeal before the High Court of Madras, and their decision is awaited. So, we do not propose to do anything in that matter at the present moment.

Shri Banerjee raised the question about the absorption of the retrenched and surplus personnel of the Central Government Departments. We have done that. Whenever people were retrenched or declared surplus to the requirements of the ordnance factories or other departments, we have tried in the railways to absorb as many of them as possible. Now, it will not be fair to the railway employees themselves if the previous services of these people, who have been retrenched from other departments, were to be taken into consideration on the railways. As a matter of fact, we have tried to absorb them. But where we find that some of them had previous experience or service in the railways, we will examine such cases and see whether something can be done for their post-railway experience.

Shri Daljit Singh referred to the representation of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the recruitment to the Railways. Their representation

in the Railways has been far from satisfactory. During the past one or two years, we have been taking certain steps to see that the vacancies meant for them are filled up by them. I may say that the results of the 1957 recruitment has been more or less satisfactory so far as the Scheduled Castes are concerned. But, in the case of the Scheduled Tribes, it is still far from satisfactory. Certain further steps will have to be taken. I may inform the House that in 1957—we carry forward vacancies for one year more—perhaps you will find that the recruitment has been more. In the four Commissions at Allahabad, Bombay, Calcutta and Madras, the total vacancies reserved for the Scheduled Castes were 4,321 and the number of people selected has been 5,454. But in the case of Scheduled Tribes, out of 2,074 vacancies reserved, the number of people selected has been 342 only. In the case of the Scheduled Castes, in the lower category in Class IV, all the scavenging staff that is required comes from among the Scheduled Castes and therefore, here also, perhaps, their number becomes slightly inflated. We are always looking into this aspect and trying to see that the representation of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes is up to the quota reserved for them.

Shri Thirumala Rao referred to the expansion of the training facilities. No doubt, with the expansion of the Railways very rapidly, we could not keep pace in respect of training facilities. But, in recent times we have been increasing the capacity. We have increased the capacity of the Railway Staff college at Baroda. It will now be possible to give longer training and adequate refresher and special courses. The training schools at Chandausi, Sini, Udaipur and Gauhati have now accommodation for 1,750 seats at a time against 1,050 before. The Training School on the N.E. Railway is being moved to Muzaffarpur and the capacity is increased from 600 to 850. Also, additional hostel accommodation for apprentices at Jhansi, Lallaguda and Kharagpur has been provided and Training Establishment for Mechanical and Electrical Apprentices has been started at Lucknow with a capacity of 40 and at Ajmer and Bangalore City. Further, construction of a Central Training School with a capacity of 225 Apprentice Mechanics and 800 Trade Apprentices is in hand at Kharagpur. Apart from this, three schools at Mhow, Shahjehanpur and Madhupur with a capacity of 600 Civil Engineering men have been set up. Altogether, the training facilities have been from 21,000 per year in 1955-56 to 53,000 up-to-date. So, we are ourselves very careful to see that the training facilities available to the employees on the Railways are adequate to our requirements.

The question of Light Railways comes up every time. I want to make it clear that we have decided not to nationalise Light Railways as a policy. That is not with a view to give protection to the owners or the companies of these Light Railways. It has been taken with a view to greater utilisation of whatever resources we have at present. The House is aware that the allotment to the

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Railway Ministry is not enough for all the commitments that we have undertaken. The terms and conditions of these Light Railways are such that if we ourselves decided to take over, perhaps, we will have to pay them compensation at a very inflated rate which, I feel, is not desirable at the present stage. As I said on the previous occasion, wherever we find that deterioration on a particular Railway is such that it is likely to go out of service and if it goes out of service, the area and the people of the locality are likely to adversely suffer on account of that we will see whether to take that Railway or not. This has been our policy and we are pursuing that.

About the Baraset-Basirhat line, every year we do make provision in the Budget and it is not utilised because certain difficulties have come in the way, and up till now, we have not been given possession of the land. The land acquisition work has to be done by the State Government. The State Government, in spite of their best efforts, have not been as yet able to deliver the land to us. Unless the land comes into our possession, we cannot start work. All arrangements for starting the work of construction of that Railway are ready so far as the Railways are concerned. As soon as we are put in possession of the land, we will go ahead.

The land has to be acquired. The land there, as the hon. Member herself is aware, is not vacant land. It is a heavily congested area. Unless the land is acquired and put at the disposal of the Railways, we cannot start work. The land acquisition has not been completed yet. As soon as it is completed, and we are given possession of the land, we will start work. It has been delayed in spite of the best efforts on the part of the Railways and the State Government of West Bengal.

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Even for the construction of stations, we require land. Unless the land is there, we cannot construct the station buildings.

About the Barsi Light Railway, so far as the question of seniority of the ex-employees is concerned, that has been fixed in consideration of their past services. There are a few other points which are being examined and I think they will be finalised very soon.

They have all my sympathy.

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I said that their seniority has been fixed taking into consideration their past service. That point has been finalised and finalised to their satisfaction.

The next question is about the construction of new railway lines on which I cannot say anything more than I said while replying to the general discussion of the Budget. There are many areas where there is necessity for railways.

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I am afraid the hon. member is not improving his case by arguing for a line which is already included in the Second Plan.

Regarding overcrowding, I am as anxious as hon. Members of this House to reduce overcrowding if I possibly can. Whatever steps are possible are being taken: some steps which are not very popular steps also.

I have disconnected restaurant cars from certain trains. Well, I am receiving protests from some areas. We have discontinued air-conditioned coaches or reduced their capacity from certain trains. Protests are coming from those areas also. But we are taking such unpopular steps also in order to increase the number of coaches or capacity for third class passengers. So, we are taking all these steps, wherever possible increasing the number of coaches, introducing new trains wherever the capacity on the track is available. There are demands either for the introduction of Janata Express or additional trains in many areas. But we have shortage either of coaches or of the sectional capacity.

Take the Janata train from Delhi to Ahmedabad. Well, there is incessant demand for it, or for a train from Delhi to Amritsar as my friend Sardar Ajit Singh demanded. There may be necessity for such trains.

In the first place, we require coaches for running additional trains, and in the second place, there should be capacity on the track for running a train.

Some friends may say: "Why do you not give priority to passenger trains? Why do you give priority to goods traffic?" It is a matter which is not so simple. In many places we have to decide whether, for the benefit of the passengers themselves, priority has to be given to goods traffic or to passenger traffic. Unless there is increased economic activity in the country, we cannot develop the country, and for the development of the country, certain goods have to be moved from one part of the country to the other, and therefore we have to see what is the minimum number of goods trains that has to be maintained in a certain area, on certain sections. If we stop those goods trains, perhaps the people in that area will be very adversely affected, and we may not get the requisite number of passengers even.

So, it is not as simple as saying: "Why do you not stop a goods train or cancel a goods train and introduce a passenger train?" I wish it were so simple to do. It is not. Therefore, the question of capacity on the track comes.

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We have engineering work going on in many sections. There also, our capacity is limited, but wherever we find that we have got the coaches or the locomotives and the capacity on the track available, we try to introduce new trains. If the hon. members will go through the various reports that we have presented, they will find that during the course of the year we have introduced many new trains in many areas of the country. So, that is our endeavour.

Then again, about the development of new railway lines in certain areas where the hon. members urge that mineral wealth is available and we can earn foreign exchange. It was very elaborately argued on behalf of friends from Orissa, Madhya Pradesh and Andhra for the development of Kakinada port and also the railways in the hinterland.

Well, Kakinada is a very important place, but the railways will be necessary to move the goods if there is capacity in the port for the export of that commodity. There have been occasions when I have found that there has been congestion at the Calcutta port or the Vizag port, and we have transported iron ore or manganese ore from the place of production to the ports and found there was no place for the wagons to be unloaded, and at this time, when there is shortage of wagons, to keep wagons unloaded for a few days is not very desirable.

There is shortage of wagons, but there is difficulty in supplying the available wagons also because in certain areas, especially on the South-Eastern Railway, we have difficulty regarding the capacity on certain sections, where engineering work is going on either in connection with development or something else. Also, the expansion work in the Tatas and also our construction work in Rourkela and Bhilai have been responsible, to a certain extent, for abnormal detention of wagons that we send there. They have their own difficulties also, but now they are trying to expedite the unloading or release of the wagons that were sent to them.

The case which was referred to by Smt. Renu Chakravartty just now is one of such cases where we have the difficulty of the wagons, not due to the physical shortage of the wagons but their detention either at the port or at the works in Tatas and Rourkela, or due to the sectional incapacity on the railways.

That raises another question about the construction of wagons by some contractor at Vizag. I am not aware of the details except that a few months back I came to know of some labour trouble in that factory. I received a large number of telegrams from them and also from the employees' unions and public men of Andhra. I told them I was not going to intervene in the matter, and that they should settle it themselves. I know that the Labour Ministry here intervened in the matter and some settlement was effected. I was told

that due to the labour dispute going on there, their production was delayed for some time and they could not keep to the schedule. More than that I am not aware, but I shall go into that matter and examine it and see how far the commitments have not been fulfilled by that contractor. I propose to go into that matter.

There are many questions which have been raised about providing certain amenities and facilities at certain stations, or stopping a train at a particular station, or introducing a new halt or constructing a new railway station. I do not think it will be possible for me to give a reply to all those points except to say that I will get all of them examined by the Railway Board. It may not be possible, and it has not been possible, to introduce new halts at all the places where there have been demands.

Some times demands come, and when I enquire, I am told the existing station is one mile from that place but that it will be more convenient if a new halt is provided there. Normally I feel that if a station is there at a distance of three miles there is no case for the introduction of a new halt or a new station but if a station is at a considerable distance, we may examine whether we can make certain trains halt at those places.

Then also, there are many stations where it is necessary to construct new buildings, or parcel godowns or goods sheds. Well, they were constructed at a time when the traffic was many times less than what it is today, and there is necessity for expansion of accommodation; and connected with that is the office accommodation for the staff. I also agree that at many places the staff has increased and the accommodation has more or less remained the same as it was 10 years or 15 years or 20 years ago. Wherever we are taking up construction of new stations of godowns, we are providing more of office accommodation for the staff. We are ourselves alive to all these deficiencies. But I cannot assure that all these deficiencies will be overcome during the course of the next two or three years, because with the arrears of many years, it will take a considerable time to fill up the gap.

About railway hospitals, as I said on a previous occasion, and I want to make it clear once again, we are trying to improve the standard of the railway hospitals. There may be lapses here and there. As for the case quoted by M. Vedakumari, I shall look into that. But I do not think there would be any rule—and I am not aware whether there is any such rule, and in fact, I cannot imagine that there will be any such rule—that only those patients who are running temperature will get admission into the hospitals. There cannot be any rule like that, and if there is any such rule, I say that it has no common sense. If there is any such rule, I will see that it is changed from tomorrow. But it may be that it may be difficult even for a good doctor to

detect a case of appendicitis, as she put it. There may be no *mala fide* on the part of the doctor. He might have made a genuine mistake; he might not have been able to diagnose whether it was a case of only ordinary stomach pain or it was a case of appendicitis. Even experts at times make mistakes. All the same, I will make an enquiry into that case. I do not think there will be any rule that anybody who is not running temperature will not be admitted into the hospital. On the whole, we have got quite competent staff on our medical side, and it is always our effort to see that when we recruit we take people with good qualifications and good experience.

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About construction of new lines, I would say this. For instance, there is the question of taking the line from Pathankot to Jammu and from there north, where timber is available; at present, we are losing quite a sizable quantity of timber, because it is washed away to the country adjoining ours. So, there is a case for the construction of a railway line there. There is a case also for the construction of the Khajuria-ghat-Malda line. Only, I say let my resources improve, and I will be able to undertake the construction of some of these new lines, whether it be in Kashmir, or whether it be the railway line from Kasganj or Etah or the railway on the West Coast, or the railway connecting the ports of Paradip and Visakhapatnam to the areas near Bastar and others.

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So, all these railway lines are under our view.

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There are areas which have been specially affected by Partition. And there are areas which have been long neglected, and so on. So, we will keep them in view; when our resources improve, we will try to construct as many miles of new railway lines as we possibly can.

I assure hon. Members that we shall keep their criticisms and suggestions in view and try to benefit by them.

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Sir, again mention has been made\* about accidents. Shri Mehta said something about comparison of accidents with other countries. As you are aware, I have not ventured to compare the incidence of accidents in India

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\* *L.S. Deb.*, 10 March, 1958.

with those in other countries, or of the accidents in previous years with those in recent years—though one can profitably compare. I will only repeat what I have said, that whenever any accident takes place, it is a matter of anxiety and worry for every one and it is also for the Railway Board and the Railway Ministry. It will be our earnest effort by all possible means to minimise the chances of accidents. More than that I cannot say on that point.

Shri Ghose made mention of certain facts about the accident at Sonarpur in Sealdah Division. I will not go into details of that. I think that enquiry has not been completed by the Government Inspector of Railways. All the circumstances of the case will be looked into by him and he will submit his report. Whatever facts are brought to our notice by him, we will ask the officers to look into them. More than that I cannot say at this stage.

Then, questions have been raised about the speed of trains or the introduction of new trains in certain areas. I cannot give any definite answer to all these things at present. I will get them examined and see how far we can speed up the trains in certain areas, or how far we can introduce new halts or introduce new trains or coaches in those areas.

Shri Mahanty again raised the question of electrification. I had given an answer to that on more than one occasion, and I do not want to repeat those very things. While making any comparison with the mileage of electrification in U.S.A., U.S.S.R., U.K. or other countries, the other conditions in those countries should also be taken into consideration. One should not forget that in U.S.A. it is not to their advantage to introduce electrification. They have large-scale dieselisation and they have plenty of diesel oil, and that is perhaps one reason why they have not gone in for large-scale electrification. In U.S.S.R. they have just started electrification on a very long route. Then again, the pattern of traffic has also to be taken into consideration, whether electrification is necessary or not. As far as priorities are concerned, the Planning Commission is there which goes into very great details in fixing the priorities and determining them. And it is only after the Planning Commission had examined all aspects that the new lines to be undertaken by the Railways were decided upon and included in the Second Five Year Plan. So, it will not be correct to say that these things are decided and allotment made without proper consideration of the priorities. There is, as I have said on previous occasion, need for the development of railway lines in many parts of the country. In certain areas, Railways develop due to certain factors which I need not mention here. Shri Mahanty made a grievance that whatever Railway line was constructed in Orissa was before Independence. That applies to most of the States in this country, because construction of new lines in recent years has been very meagre. Whatever construction has been done, I think Orissa has got a proportionate share therein.

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If they compare their population with the total population of the country and the proportion, they will find that Orissa has not been unjustly treated in this matter.

Some time ago, I had given certain figures. I do not mean to say that there is no case for new lines in these areas. The case of Titlagarh-Sambalpur is being pursued. That is linked with the development of the export of iron-ore from that area. We have been anxious ourselves that in that area something should be done. I myself feel very much disappointed when I find that I am not in a position to undertake the construction of a few miles of railway line in certain areas where they are very urgently required. I am equally disappointed as hon. members coming from those areas are disappointed. But, we have to find ways and means for that.

Shri Mahanty pointed out, why there is increase in staff. I leave it to him to compare the traffic both goods and passenger handled by the Railways four or five years ago and during the course of this year.

This question is under constant review and whenever there is necessity for increasing the staff, it is increased. It is a constant and continuous process. The House would appreciate that increase in the staff is a continuous process because the Railways are expanding and traffic is increasing and with the increase in traffic, there should be a proportionate increase in the staff. Wherever there is increase in staff, naturally, there will be increase in the ranks of officers also. They are all related things. To that extent, there has been increase in the expenditure over staff. If one feels that we can do without staff, we can save money. But, the question is whether it is possible to do without staff when traffic increases. We have to have staff.

It will not be possible for me to take up all the individual questions that have been raised. But, I will try to deal with them as far as possible. The question of Barsi Light Railway and the employees of that Railway was dealt with in great detail here by Shri D.R. Chavan and other friends. While replying the other day, I said that the question of their seniority and the taking of their prior service on that Light Railway into account for that purpose has already been decided and their service on the Barsi Light Railway will be taken into consideration while determining their seniority on the Indian Railways. There are a few other questions which are under examination and decisions will be taken on them very shortly. The cases of a few individuals were also quoted here. When the integration of that Railway was done, a committee was set up and that committee went into the question of every employee. It went into the question of the employees mention of whom has been made in this House. It was only after taking into consideration their qualifications and experience that their salary on integration was determined. I will not mention that because

that may prejudicially affect the interests of those employees, if I were here to quote their qualifications and all these things. But, I may assure the House that all these things were very thoroughly examined and then decisions were taken.

A question about the contract for wagon assembling to one firm, Dhiman Brothers, was raised by my friend Shri Sadhan Gupta. The other day, it was raised by Smt. Renu Chakravartty. I had told House that I shall go into that question. After that, Shri Sadhan Gupta again repeated that, and tried to make out a case that here was a great scandal. I would like to give certain details about that contract. He said that the lowest tender was not accepted. It is a fact that the lowest quotation was from Messrs The Great Western Engineering Works, Bombay. The quotation of this firm could not be entertained as the firm was involved in irregular transactions which were under investigation and which have subsequently been proved. The next lowest offer was from Dhiman Brothers and the same was accepted. The contract for the assembly of 8800 imported broad gauge wagons to be assembled at Vizagapatnam was, therefore, awarded to Messrs Dhiman Brothers in July 1955.

It is true that security in the shape of bank guarantee had been proposed equivalent to the value of materials entrusted to him at any time. No such condition had, however, been laid down in the original tender notice. The contractor further represented that as, at any time, he may have in his hands materials for about 2,000 wagons, their value would be very large and it would be impossible to furnish bank guarantee for such a large amount. This condition was, therefore, waived. But, the interests of the Railway administration have been safeguarded by obtaining an Indemnity bond from the contractor. Cash security is being recovered from all progress payments to the extent of 20 per cent on each bill. The contractor is carrying out the assembly work within the Railway premises at Vizagapatnam. Adequate precaution is being taken to see that no railway material is disposed off in an unauthorised manner.

Out of about 12,000 wagons to be assembled, over 10,000 wagons have been already delivered by him. Besides the Indemnity bond, the Railway administration has adequate cash security by deduction from all account bills to protect the Railway interest for the remaining number of wagons.

In regard to the suggestion that a large number of wagons were diverted from Vizagapatnam to the contractor's workshop near Calcutta, it is pointed out that this diversion was done by the Administration entirely to suit the unloading facilities available from time to time as between Vizagapatnam and Calcutta ports. At no time has any request been received from the

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contractor for diversion of assembly work from Vizagapatnam to Calcutta. The D.G., I.S.D., London, who was responsible for making arrangements for the despatch of these wagons in a knocked down condition told the Board that they were unable to obtain shipping to Vizagapatnam as a result of which 2369 wagons had to be diverted to the Calcutta port. There was, therefore, no question of realising any amount from the contractor for the so-called transport of wagons from Vizagapatnam to the Calcutta Port.

This is the factual position regarding the contract to Shri Dhiman, and I do not think there has been anything done which may be termed as scandalous, but as I had said on the previous occasion, I want to go into this matter further and see whether there is any justification for such allegations.

Shri Bharucha raised the question of the capital-at-charge and the contribution to the depreciation fund. On the previous occasion I had briefly dealt with that, but I would like to say this.

The House is aware that the Convention Committee of 1954 recommended that the contribution to the depreciation reserve funds should be raised from Rs. 30 crore to Rs. 35 crore during the five years commencing from 1st April 1955. This contribution was increased to Rs. 45 crore with effect from 1955-56 with the sanction of Parliament as the withdrawal from the funds was worked out as likely to be of the order of Rs. 293 crore during the quinquennium 1955-56 to 1959-60 and also to leave a balance at the end of the period equivalent to at least one year's expenditure on renewals and replacements. The contribution to the depreciation reserve fund will, of course, be reviewed by the Convention Committee which is scheduled to meet next year. That, I think, meets the point of Shri Bharucha in which he suggested that a committee should be appointed to go into the question of contribution to the depreciation reserve fund.

He also raised the point that there should be no further credit to the revenue reserve fund, that its ceiling limit should be fixed at Rs. 50 crore and the excess over that should be diverted to the depreciation reserve fund. It may be stated for the information of Shri Bharucha that except for interest charges—about Rs. 1.5 crore a year on an average on the fund balances—there has been no appropriation to or withdrawal from the revenue reserve fund since the beginning of the second Five Year Plan. The fund balances are expected to stand at about Rs. 51 crore at the end of 1958-59.

It may be stated that the Wedgewood Committee recommended that a general reserve of this kind should be built up to at least Rs. 50 crore. At the time of the Wedgewood Committee's report, the capital-at-charge on Indian Government railways was about Rs. 790 crore. The reserve, therefore, as

recommended by the committee would work out to about 6.4 per cent of the capital-at-charge. At this rate the revenue reserve fund should have a balance of over Rs. 80 crore at the end of 1958-59.

The question regarding the size of the fund, *inter alia*, was also considered by the Convention Committee of 1954, and the Committee did not consider it necessary to prescribe even the minimum limit for this fund. The question will no doubt be considered again by the Convention Committee which is due to meet next year.

Then, questions have been raised about the compensatory hill allowance on certain sections,—Palampur—Jogindernagar. Perhaps my hon. friend is not aware that the cost of living at these stations is not as high as at Palampur and unless those stations are declared hill stations by the State Government, which has not been done and is not likely to be done, it cannot be expected from the railways to increase the allowance.

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I think the State Government have better data to come to that conclusion than the hon. Member has, and when they have not declared it can be certainly presumed that their cost of living is not as high as at Palampur.

Then again, about the rates on the Darjeeling-Himalayan Railway. The House is aware that it was at the insistence of my friend Shri Tyagi that the inflated mileage charged on the hill railways was reduced by 25 per cent last year.

It is not three times.

So, you got 25 per cent reduction, though there has been no reduction in other things, so far as that is concerned.

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There is no doubt my friend Shri Tyagi got a substantial concession for the hill railways so far as the inflated mileage is concerned.

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It was raised by my friends who represent Simla-Kalka and Kulu valley also. So, the credit should also go to my friends Shri D.C. Sharma and Shri Hem Raj.

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But when I was standing, it meant I was not giving way.

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Let them first digest the concession granted last year.

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I was dealing with that, and my hon. friend must be aware that we have got a station advisory committee at Siliguri, and that advisory committee goes into the question not only of time-table and amenities of the passengers, but also into the question of traffic and commercial aspects. I think the committee is already there, and it is functioning, and there is no need for another committee.

Perhaps it was my hon. friend Shri Menon who raised the question of five engines that were on the Southern Railway and said that their performance was not quite satisfactory. Orders were placed for ten prototype engines in 1952, and they were delivered in 1955. Five of them were sent to the Southern Railway and five were retained by the Northern Railway. The performance of the five engines which have been stationed at Jullunder in the Northern Railway has been quite satisfactory. The performance of the five railway engines on the Southern Railway was also satisfactory except that some defect was noticed in the boilers of two of the engines. Two others have gone for intermediate check-up. It always happens that before we place any large-scale orders, we order a few prototypes in order to see their performance for some time, and if their performance is satisfactory, only in that case, the bulk order is placed with the manufacturer; or, if some minor adjustments are to be made, they are also suggested to the manufactures. So, these ten engines were the prototype engines brought here for trial, to see how they were working; and if their working is satisfactory, we will place further orders for them. That is the position regarding those engines, and it cannot be said that they are going to be scrapped in two years or three years. Normally, our engines work for fifty to sixty years quite satisfactorily.

Then, questions were raised about under-bridges or over-bridges at many places. We have certain formulae for the construction of over-bridges or under-bridges, that the cost should be shared by the State Government or the local authority concerned and the railways in certain proportions. Even in regard to bridges, unless the coordination of the P.W.D. authorities and the State Government or the local authority is there, it will not be possible to have these over-bridges constructed, because the portion outside the railways' jurisdiction has to be maintained by a certain authority. So, the question of the under-bridge at Cuttack the over-bridge at Shoranur has been taken up with the State Governments, and as soon as matters have been finalised by the State Governments, they will be undertaken. That applies to other places also.

In many places, after the construction of the railways, certain facilities are provided, and then townships grow. Then, necessity is felt for a level-crossing or an over-bridge or an under-bridge. Everybody expects that the railways should provide it. In many cases, as I have said, there are the formulae and conditions according to which we have to provide it.

The same applies to Union Territories also, because the railways do not maintain the roads appertaining to the bridges; they have to be maintained by some other authority, and unless there is co-ordination with that authority, it is not possible to construct it, because the purpose will not be served.

The question of zones and divisions or the district set-up has always been raised. Today, Shri J.R. Mehta has raised something and replied to it also himself. The days of Tughlaks are gone, no doubt, but he tried to play the part of Tughlak and the criticiser both by himself. On the one hand, he supported the zonal set-up, and on the other, he also suggested how modification should be made therein. As I have said on previous occasions, there is no intention to undertake any large-scale reviewing or revising of the zonal set-up at present. As far as minor adjustments are concerned, as I have said on previous occasions, they will be taken with a view to rationalisation in certain smaller areas, wherever possible.

As regards location of certain divisions in certain areas, it will be very difficult for the railways to function, if the location of zones or divisional headquarters or district headquarters were to be decided on the basis of a State-wise division of the country.

The criteria are the operational facilities from the point of location, which can be provided for that area. That is the only criterion. Otherwise, considering the demands that the railways are getting for the location of zones or the creation of divisions, I think the only way to give satisfaction to the different States is to locate a zone in every State; but that will be impossible; the railways cannot function then. Whether it be Orissa or Bihar or Andhra Pradesh or Rajasthan, there is the demand; even from Karnataka there is the demand that there should be a zone there.

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At present, so far as Orissa is concerned, as I have said on previous occasions, there is no intention of divisionalising it, and the district pattern is continuing. There is no occasion for any anxiety being expressed thereon that Orissa's claim is not being considered. As I have said whenever the divisional pattern is to be introduced, Orissa's claim also will be taken into consideration, if on operational grounds it is feasible to locate a divisional headquarters there also.

As regards *ex-State* railway employees, I have nothing to add to what the Deputy Minister said the other day. Most of the cases have been finalised, and a few cases which are still not finalised will, I think, be finalised during the course of this month. There is no occasion for the next-below rule. The formula that was announced by my predecessor was subject to certain conditions, and I think there has not been any inordinate delay in the implementation of that offer, because that was subject also to availability of vacancies. So, I do not think there is any case for the next-below rule of for giving them the benefit of seniority from any date prior to the date on which decisions would be taken.

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I would like to make another appeal to this House. Let us forget about these *ex-State* railway employees. Once having settled about these things, let us not, on the railways, for all times to come maintain two sets of employees, the Indian Railways employees and the *ex-State* railway employees. Once they have been integrated, let them take their chance on merit along with others. Let not the question be raised here every time that for all times to come they should be entitled to certain concessions. There is no doubt that the bulk of the *ex-State* railway employees have enormously benefited by the integration of the *ex-State* railways with the Indian railways. There may be a few cases here or a few cases there, where certain anomalies have arisen, but we shall always look into such cases of anomalies. But wherever any *ad hoc* decision is taken with a view to grant certain concessions, anomalies are bound to arise; there cannot be any such *ad hoc* concessional formula where there will be no anomaly.

That leads me to the upgrading which was announced last year. One hon. Member has said that it has done no benefit to the station masters and the assistant station masters. It was an amazing statement.

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The categories cover assistant station masters and station masters. Of course, there is a large number of other categories also that are covered, but I am speaking of the station masters and the assistant station masters.

I think a very large number of them has been benefited substantially by the upgrading announced last year. But if there are a few cases, marginal cases, where certain anomalies have arisen, the administration concerned will look into them if proper representations are made to the proper authorities through proper channels. But I will not be surprised if there are cases where a Station Master will rather refuse to go on promotion to another station, if that station is not as good as the station on which he is posted at present. There are cases of refusal of promotion.

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There may be several considerations, several aspects, from which a person regards a station as a good station. Some considerations were urged by my hon. friend, Shri Ghose.

As I said, upgrading has benefited a very large number of railway employees. If there are a few cases where anomalies have arisen, they should be brought to the notice of the proper authorities and they will be looked into.

I do not agree with the suggestion that the cultural and social welfare activities should be held in abeyance in order to save what? We spend a few lakhs over these. Why should after all any hon. Member of this House grudge the expenditure of a few lakhs over the cultural and social welfare activities of the staff.

These activities in other Ministries also have their importance and they cannot be easily belittled. I am glad that hon. Members will not mind a few lakhs being spent on the cultural and social welfare activities of the railway staff.

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That is very necessary. When they are engaged in arduous work, it is necessary that opportunity is provided to them for certain diversions, and that is what I am trying to do by spending large amounts for their cultural and recreational activities and for their social welfare.

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I have exhausted my time and I do not want to exceed it.

It was argued in detail about departmental catering and private catering. There is no intention to penalise the small contractors or caterers on the railways. Wherever we have displaced them for the purpose of departmentalising catering in a particular station, care has been taken to see and to give them alternative stations in order to rehabilitate themselves. At present, perhaps it will not be possible to go in on a large scale for departmentalisation. But the intention is that there should be no large holdings on the railways of individual contractors. That is my policy and I am pursuing it.

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I hope hon. members will withdraw their cut motions.

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## AUGMENTING REVENUES FOR RAILWAYS\*<sup>£</sup>

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I am thankful to the Members for having brought this Motion before the House. I would start by saying that the proposals of Government had been welcomed more or less throughout the country. When I am saying this, I am speaking on the basis of the comments of the newspapers in our country. Shri Harish Chandra Mathur has quoted from one newspaper, but all the newspapers in the country, whether they represent the commercial or the industrial interest or the interests of the consumers, have by and large hailed the decision of Government. So, it will not be correct to say, as my hon. friend Shri Tangamani has tried to make out, that there has been opposition to those proposals from the Chambers of Commerce. I am not going to quote from the reports in the newspapers, but all the newspapers worth the name in the country have by and large welcomed the decision of Government.

One or two important points have been raised, and the first one is about the export promotion. A grievance has been made as to why the question of export promotion has not been taken into consideration in fixing the rates. It is obvious that we cannot have any rates for that purpose. We shall have to give concessions, and if concessions are to be given for certain commodities from certain areas to certain ports, then station-to-station rates will have to be quoted.

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...We cannot have a general rate for that purpose. He<sup>@</sup> is perhaps aware of what complications will arise otherwise. So, it is not that we did not consider this question. Even at the time when we were considering the recommendations of the Freight Structure Inquiry Committee, we did consider that, and it was decided that in the interest of promotion of exports from our country, with a view to earn more and more foreign exchange, if it was felt that certain commodities required concessional rates of freight, the railways would be only too glad to do that. This is being examined in consultation with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, and I can assure the House that whenever any specific case comes before the Ministries of Commerce and

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\* *L.S. Deb.*, 3 September 1958.

<sup>£</sup> Replying to the Discussion on the Motion *re.* Railway Freight Structure Enquiry Committee as the Minister of Railways.

<sup>@</sup> Shri Harish Chandra Mathur.

Industry, and Railways, all possible steps will be taken by which export could be promoted.

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Then at least one hon. member, Shri Rajendra Singh, laboured the point why the recommendation of the Freight Structure Enquiry Committee giving more revenue to the railways was not accepted by the railways. Shri Harish Chandra Mathur has tried to give some reply to that. I may assure Shri Mathur that it was not only on this consideration that by accepting the recommendations of the Committee we would be reaching the marginal stage, and perhaps we would not be attracting more traffic, that we did not accept the recommendation, but we had to take into consideration the overall economy of the country as a whole. We had also to see that if there were certain commodities in respect of which inspite of the characteristics of their transportation and their ability to bear more burden in the rates, certain adverse results were likely to be produced by increasing the rates on the economy of the country, the railways should be reluctant to increase the rates. That consideration was also there. So taking all these considerations, the Railway Ministry thought and the Government came to the decision that it would not be desirable at the present stage to increase the rates to the extent suggested by the Enquiry Committee. That was why we modified the recommendations of the Committee.

Of course it is a question whether capital expenditure should be met from revenues. I am not going to argue the principles of that, but it has been accepted that in a developing economy when we have big projects of development to execute, it will not be out of place if the revenues were also to contribute a share of the capital pool. Members are aware—and I need not go into details—that out of the Rs. 1,125 crore allotted to the railways for the Second Five Year Plan, Rs. 375 crore are to be found by the railway, and in view of the rise in prices and labour costs, it was expected that in addition to the Rs. 375 crore, the railways would be called upon to contribute something more.

In 1956, a surcharge of 6.25 per cent was levied; in 1957, an additional surcharge of 6.25 per cent was levied, making a total of 12.50 per cent. We are hoping that we will be able to contribute our share in the Rs. 1,125 crore out of these supplementary charges, out of the development reserve fund, depreciation reserve fund and also from open line earnings, and thus we will be able to contribute to the extent of Rs. 375 crore and something more too.

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As we are to contribute something extra, it was felt that it might not be necessary to contribute as much as suggested by the Enquiry Committee, but even if we increase the overall freight rates only by 4 per cent, we will be in a position to contribute the amount stipulated by the Planning Commission from the railways. Therefore, we came to the conclusion that in present conditions of our economy, perhaps it would be enough for our purposes if we increased the rates only to the extent of 4 per cent and not more.

The conflict between rail and road has not arisen anew in this country alone. Everywhere, in many countries, the conflict has existed. In our country, there is much scope for the development of both. The only care that is to be taken is in respect of co-ordination so that there is no wastage of the capacity that exists and no duplication of the capacity that is to be created. If there is not enough co-ordination between the different modes of transport, there is every possibility of some capacity being wasted and some capacity being duplicated. Even at the present stage, that is happening in certain sectors. Where traffic has developed and where the railways have also got the capacity, road transport is coming. I am not much exercised on whether it is a serious threat to the railway revenue or not; what I am concerned with is that this national capacity is being wasted, and if the same transport capacity could be utilised in sectors where the railway facilities are not available, perhaps we will be serving the nation in a better way.

If I may give a concrete example, take, the case of Delhi and Kanpur. The railways may have difficulty in transporting from east to west, from Kanpur to Delhi, but there is no shortage of capacity from Delhi to Kanpur or from west to east. But because traffic has developed, road transport is also very much operating on this sector.

I have given this illustration because this thing is happening in many sectors. Compared to the railways, road transport does offer certain advantage to the consignors. There is no doubt about that. They lift the goods from the place of the consignor and they deliver the goods at the site of the consignee. Then in the case of certain commodities where certain manipulations, watering down and things like that have to be done, road transport offers better facilities to the consignor than the railways do. Again, railways have their rates fixed and are known to everybody whereas for road transport, at least in respect of goods traffic there is no schedule of rates; there are some opportunities for manipulating the freight paid for transportation of certain goods. What use of that could be made is known to those who deal in those things. These are certain advantages which the road transport offers in the transportation of goods to the consignors and to the consignees.

I see no conflict between rail and road transport so long as the country is not fully developed from the transport point of view. There is enough

scope for all means of transport whether it is rail, road or river transport. There are large areas where in the foreseeable future, perhaps, there is no chance of the railways being constructed in those areas. Why not allow road transport to develop in those areas? So, I do not see any conflict. There is enough scope for the development of road transport.....

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...And the House is aware and hon. members are aware that there are many areas in the country where even for shorthauls road transport facilities are not available. What have we to do for the industries in those areas if coal has to be transported or certain other raw materials have to be transported and the shorthauls according to our friends, will be 300 miles.

So far as the shorter distances of 20 miles, 25 miles or 30 or even 50 miles are concerned, we do agree that we should discourage transport by railways and encourage transport by road. But, if we include distances of 300 miles within the definition of shorthauls and if railway rates are increased so that they become prohibitive and the traffic is diverted from the rail to the road transport, I am afraid, in many areas the industry will be very adversely affected. That was the consideration why we thought that though we may discourage transportation of goods by rail to shorthauls of 25 or even 50 miles, we should not fix the rate at such a level as will be too high for the traffic to bear either by rail or by road, especially in areas where there was no road transport available. We did bestow all the consideration that this recommendation deserved and I have given the reasons which led us to come to the decision which we have presented before the House.

Then, the question of backward areas or under-developed areas has also been raised. The House is aware that before the integration of the railways, in many parts known at that time as Indian States and especially in areas which are commercially and industrially under-developed, the rates either of passenger fare or goods freight were higher than in the developed areas. And, when integration was made, the one advantage that was given to these under-developed areas was to introduce uniform rates of passenger fares and freight rates. That was one indirect advantage given to the under-developed areas.

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Some areas which are regarded as under-developed may be very near the source of raw material that is required for the development of industries in that area. One raw material may be very near that area and the other raw material may be very far. Is it possible to encourage the industries or not by any device or manipulation of the freight rates? We will have to have other

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methods for encouraging industries in certain areas which are under-developed industrially.

For example, in North Bihar in spite of the difficulty that existed before, the sugar industry developed very fast and today people are, perhaps, thinking of dispersal of some factories from North Bihar. In North Bihar or Assam, it is not the difficulty of transport alone that is standing in the way of the development of industries in those areas; but there are other considerations also. Other steps will have to be taken for developing those areas industrially and commercially.

So far as North Bihar and Assam are concerned, after the construction of the Ganga bridge and the Brahmaputra bridge, the transport position will very much improve. But, what is required to be done at some other places should not be sought to be done by the manipulation of freight rates. With all my sympathies with these under-developed areas, I am afraid, it will not be possible by any ingenuity to devise any structure of freight rates by which we can help these areas.

As pointed out, some areas are very near—at the very door they have the raw material that is required for a particular industry. I say some incentive by the State concerned, by the Ministries directly concerned with the development or encouragement of certain industries in certain areas will be necessary. And, if at a certain time it is felt that the Railways should also contribute their share in the development of the industries, we have the station to station rates by which we can indirectly help to some extent. I can assure the House that if it comes to it, at any stage that for the development of certain industries in certain under-developed areas, railways should contribute indirectly, we will not be lagging behind.

Shri Bharucha asked where is the case for revising the rates. He said, perhaps, under the guise of rationalisations the Railways are trying to raise some additional revenue. We have not made a secret that we are trying to make some additional revenue also. We have been very frank. We have never tried to disguise it.

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We are always alive to the need of effecting economy on the railways wherever possible. The House is aware that I set up a committee to go into the question of the fuel and coal consumption on the railways. The committee went into the question in great detail and a report was submitted last month which is being examined by the Railway Board. On examination of the recommendations of that committee, I am sure we will be able to effect certain economies in the consumption of coal on the railways. I am examining

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other aspects also where we can reduce the operating expenses. We are always alive to that aspect of the thing and I may assure Shri Bharucha that wherever possible we will try our best to effect economy.

I do not know what my friend, Shri Tangamani, meant when he quoted so much from the report of the committee. We are trying to increase the capacity of the marshalling yards and also to expedite the movement of wagons. We are also trying to see that wagons are made available to the parties as quickly as they are intended.

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My friend\* might be aware that the position has improved though I will not claim that we are today in a position to supply a wagon to a party as soon as it is demanded. But as compared to last year or a few months back, our position has very much improved.

There are certain bottlenecks even at present and we are trying to solve them. But they cannot be totally eliminated at certain places unless the marshalling yards are re-modelled or line capacity is increased. Even where there were serious bottlenecks, I can say that we have improved the position to a great extent. The loading and unloading even in those places has improved. I can say that it has become quite satisfactory but it also requires to be further improved.

For all these things also we require money. If we were to take only our revenue and expenditure accounts there may not be a case for increase in the rates of the freight. But as I have said, when we are expected to contribute to the capital expenditure out of the revenues, there is an unassailable case for increase in the freight rates to the extent the Railway Board has decided to increase them.

I do not know how Shri Bharucha felt that I said that when the railways assumed the responsibility of a carrier, there would be additional increase. I will again repeat from the statement I made in the House while placing the decision on the Table of the house. I said:—

“The Committee have stated that this change-over should take effect within one year of the introduction of the revised rates structure.

This matter is receiving attention, and should the responsibility of the Railways as carriers be enhanced as has been recommended, there will undoubtedly be substantial additional expense to the Railways by way of increased payments for compensation. In the absence of factual

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\* Shri Tangamani.

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data, it is difficult to assess what the quantum of these extra payments will be, but Railway Officers of experience in compensation claims work, guess that it might well be of the order of Rs. 2 to 3 crore. After the examination of this matter has been completed, necessary legislation to implement this recommendation will be put through."

I do not know whether there is any indication in this that some additional charges are going to be levied now.

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Sir, I am glad about this short discussion in the House. I do not want to repeat that we have taken good care to see that commodities which come into the daily use of the people are not affected by the revision of the rate structure. And the hon. Members might have seen it that these essential commodities have been exempted from the increase, and in certain cases we are going to incur further losses on account of concessions given to those essential commodities.

On the whole, the country has received the decision of the Government well, as can be judged from the Members of the House and the Press outside. And I hope, the railways will receive all the co-operation in augmenting their revenues so that the leakages, wherever they occur, are filled by the co-operation of the people and the country.

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## PAYING THE COMPENSATION<sup>\*£</sup>

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Sir, before discussion is initiated on the Excess Demands for 1955-56 and 1956-57 which were presented to the House on 24 November 1958. I beg to submit a point of clarification.

As Excess Demand for Rs. 1,34,842 was presented to the House on 24 November 1958, under Demand No. 15 for 1955-56, representing the actual excess over the voted Grant of Rs. 6.22 crore as shown in the audited appropriation Accounts.

The Secretariat of the House (Public Accounts Committee Branch), however, brought to notice that, in strict conformity with the recommendations of the Public Accounts Committee in para. 3 of their Ninth Report, the Demand for Excess Grant for 1955-56 under Demand No. 15 should be for Rs. 8,67,331, after adding a further entry of Rs. 7,32,489 shown in the aforesaid para (representing an erroneous credit in the accounts but for which the excess would have been Rs. 8,67,331), to the excess of Rs. 1,34,842 over the voted Grant as shown in the Appropriation Accounts. It may be mentioned that, against this erroneous credit there was an erroneous adjustment in the opposite direction of Rs. 7.74 lakh as referred to in page 67 of Appropriation Accounts. As advised by the Public Accounts Committee, however, the amount of excess demand over the voted grant of Rs. 6.22 crore under Demand No. 15 for 1955-56 has been modified from Rs. 1,34,842 to Rs. 8,67,331.

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Shri Naushir Bharucha also raised the question on what principle this income is allotted to the different funds. I will only say without entering into the details that this question has been examined by a Parliamentary Convention Committee which went into this question in 1949 and again in 1954. At present the recommendations of the Parliamentary Convention Committee are being observed by the Railways. When the five year period is over, another Parliamentary Convention Committee will be again set up which will examine all these questions in detail and whatever their recommendations, will be given effect to.

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\* *L.S. Deb.*, 11 December 1958.

£ Replying to the Discussion on the Demands for Excess Grants (Railways) 1955-56 and 1956-57 as the Minister of Railways.

My hon. friend Shri Tangamani referred to the question of the re-transfer of the staff. The proposal has every sympathy from the Railways. I may inform him that the problem has been solved to a very great extent. I do not want to quote figures; he is perhaps aware also. It is expected that within the next two or three months, all the staff who were transferred to Bezwada, Guntakal and other places will be re-transferred. But, he is aware of the circumstances under which we have had to place the staff at different Divisional Headquarters. Delay has taken place, especially in connection with the staff of the Accounts section where experienced hands are necessary before we can replace them. Within the next two or three months the problem will be entirely solved.

About the bridges, it will be wrong to say that this year, the mishap which occurred to the goods train had anything to do with the strength of the bridge. The bridge was not affected in any way. We have been taking ample care of all the bridges everywhere. Even on the Southern Railway, we have been spending quite a substantial amount every year for the upkeep of the bridges there. My hon. friend himself is aware that we have set up a high-powered committee to go into the question of these bridges. As soon as we receive the recommendations of that committee, we will take further action in this matter. But, I may assure him that there are standing instructions and these instructions have been repeated to the Railway Administrations and Engineers for the periodical inspection of bridges and necessary renovations and repairs at all important places.

We come to the question of compensation to passengers involved in accidents which was raised by my hon. friend Shri Naushir Bharucha. He is aware that this compensation is given to the passengers involved in railway accidents whether the accident took place due to the negligence on the part of the Railways or not. Whatever the cause of the accident, the passengers involved in the accidents are compensated for. The scale of compensation has been laid down depending upon death, disability and degree of disability. At present, the Claims Commissioners are appointed by the State Governments concerned wherever the accidents take place. They award the compensation. In many cases, practically in all cases, we deposit the amount in advance and as soon as the compensation is awarded, by the Claims Commissioners, the amounts are paid. I may inform the House of one step that I have taken recently. I have issued orders to the Railway Administrations that as soon as any passenger is involved in an accident, in case of death Rs. 500 and in case of injury, up to Rs. 200 should be awarded on the spot and this should not be accounted along with the compensation claim. This amount is just *ex-gratia ad hoc* payment. In some cases, I do feel that the amount that has been prescribed as compensation—the maximum of Rs. 10,000,—is not sufficient. The maximum amount that can be awarded as compensation according to

the Indian Railways (Workmen's Compensation) Act is Rs. 10,000. I feel that this amount requires to be increased. In the Ariyalur case I ordered 20 per cent more compensation, in addition to what was awarded by the Claims Commissioner. So, we are thinking of revising this also.

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Before this Act was amended perhaps it was done by the railway officials themselves, but it was felt at that time that it would be better if this question of awarding the amount of claim was left to some statutory, independent authority. And that is why it has been left to the Claims Commissioners who are nominated by the State Governments. Normally District Magistrates, or Deputy Commissioners or District Judges are appointed as Claims Commissioners whenever an accident takes place. Of course, applications have to be submitted by the person involved or his heirs or dependents to the Claims Commissioner, and as soon as the award is given, payments are made.

I may inform the House of one thing more. If any person feels that the amount of compensation awarded by the Claims Commissioner is not enough, he can go to the court in appeal, but the railways cannot go in appeal if they feel that the amount awarded is excessive. That protection is also there. There is no appeal from the railway side, but any aggrieved party can go in appeal against the award of the Claims Commissioner. I am thinking how it can be further simplified. If there is any possibility of that, I will examine that.

Shri Bharucha has raised another point, about the forfeiture of gratuity of employees for errors of judgement I have not been quite able to follow what he meant by that. I may tell him that there are provident funds for railway employees and there are special gratuity and contributions by the railways. Unless an employee is discharged or dismissed, normally this amount of gratuity is not affected. He is paid this amount. In cases where there has been punishment for serious dereliction on his part, then, of course, the whole or a portion of the amount of gratuity is forfeited. I do not know of many cases of any serious complaint in this regard, and certainly not of any case where any amount of gratuity has been forfeited for error of judgment.

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If he will send me case which he has in his possession where any portion of the gratuity has been forfeited for an error of judgment on the part of an employee, I will certainly look into that.

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There has been in the past delay in the settlement of the provident fund accounts, there is no denying the fact, and there are some cases which on and off come to my notice, where there has been abnormal delay in the settlement after the retirement of the railway employees. But some cases like that will continue. The effort we are making is this, that six months before the date of retirement of a railway employee, because that is known, the paper should be prepared, so that as soon as he retires, his accounts and provident fund amount could be finally settled within ten days of the date of his retirement. That is the target that we have set for ourselves. I do not want to quote statistics. I was looking into the results of the past six months, and I might inform the House that it is very satisfactory. The period has been reduced, and the number has been very greatly, appreciably, reduced. If this effort continues, I have no doubt that we may be in a position to achieve the targets. But in spite of that, there will be some cases where there will be abnormal delay. In case of premature retirement where we do not have previous notice or where an employee gives one month's notice and then he goes, there will be delay in the settlement of his provident fund; or, in cases where the employee himself fails to furnish all the informations that are necessary, in order to check what amount the employee concerned owes to the railways under various heads, it takes time. But on the whole, in the majority of the cases, the target that we have set before ourselves is that the final settlement should be effected within ten days of his retirement.

There have been pilferage, and theft and loss of property and goods on the railways, and claims for compensations do arise. Though the number of claims has increased in recent years, the amounts that have been paid by way of compensation have not shown any appreciable increase in comparison with the traffic that we have been handling. The number of claims preferred and the amount of compensation should be judged by the volume of the traffic that has been handled in a particular year. If we take all these factors into consideration, I may tell the House that certain steps that we have taken in the past two or three years have shown results, and if those efforts continue, I feel that the claims for compensation will be greatly reduced.

As for the maintenance of our rolling-stock and coaches, complaints have been made about the condition of the coaches. I must admit that we are short of coaches and coaching stock, and in many places, in many sections, enough time is not available before a particular rake arrives at a station and is again tacked on to another engine to go to another station. In some cases that I have examined, hardly two or three hours' time is left. So, the maintenance or the cleanliness of the rakes and coaches does suffer to some extent.

Then, second class coaches are in short supply, and because second class more or less is a dying class, the condition there also is not satisfactory. In

first class, there are certain lapses here and there on the part of the employees also, but we have been tightening these things, and we have been posting mechanics, electricians or supervisors at important big stations, so that wherever any complaint is received or some defect is noticed even during the run of a train, these defects could be removed. But I must admit that there is still much that requires to be made up, and we are taking necessary action in that connection.

Of course, pilferage of the railway fittings and other things, as you, Sir, are aware, add to our difficulties, and there, public co-operation is necessary.

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Shri S.M. Banerjee has brought in the question of the coach-building contractors in some towns of U.P. I must correct him on certain points of fact.

In the first place, these factories are not engaged only in coach building. They are existing factories on whom certain orders for construction of coaches were placed. They never construed that this was their main line of business. They had their own line of business. This work was given to them. They knew fully well that this work was a temporary one for one or two or three years. The number of workers in all these coach building factories, six in number in U.P.—3 in Bareilly and 3 in Allahabad—is not 15,000, but 1575. So Shri S.M. Banerjee has multiplied it only by 10.

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As happens in such works, sometimes the labour population fluctuates, but the fluctuation will not be 1 to 10.

Though we are short of coaches, the allotment for coach building as agreed to by the Planning Commission does not leave us any scope to place orders on private manufacturers. Even the existing coach building capacity in our own workshops is not being fully utilised and we are diverting railway employees from that section of the workshops to other sections. In that condition, it is not possible for us to place further orders on those factories. But it will not be correct to say that they are going to retrench all their employees because they have their own normal line of activity. If they are not utilising their own workers in those activities they had before they took up these contracts, they are to blame and the workers should press them to find a solution. The Railways are not concerned with it.

As regards the narrow gauge lines, of course the question raised is not quite pertinent to the excess demands. We have nearly 400 miles of narrow

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gauge in the management of private companies. The agreement between some of the companies and the then Secretary of State stipulates that if on the capital invested the profit is less than 3.5 per cent., Government will subsidise them. If the profit is more than 5 per cent., the surplus will be shared 50:50 between the companies and the Railway Ministry. But they hardly make a profit more than 5 per cent and we have been subsidising the narrow gauge lines—four or five—to the extent of Rs. 2, or Rs. 3 lakh every year.

Every time the question comes whether we should nationalise them. But it was decided two or three years ago that in the present condition of our own resources, it would not be prudent to nationalise them and give Rs. 1 crore and then invest money in rehabilitating the rickety rolling stock they have at present.

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There are only 4 lines and a few companies—MacLeod and Company, Martin and Burn etc. There are, of course, a few local authorities which also own some miles of these narrow gauge lines. But the agreement with the Secretary of State at that time with these companies was on that basis. This agreement is renewable every ten years. So the next time for taking over, if Government so decide, will be sometime in 1966-67.

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## TOWARDS A VIBRANT RAILWAYS\*<sup>‡</sup>

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Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise to place before the House the estimates of receipts and expenditure of the Indian Railways for the year 1959-60.

### Financial Results of 1957-58

As usual, I shall deal first with the completed accounts of the previous year. The actual Gross Traffic Receipts were Rs. 379.78 crore, against the Revised Estimates of Rs. 384.40 crore, that is, a shortfall of Rs. 4.62 crores, which was under both passenger and goods traffic. There was a marked decline in traffic from about the middle of January 1958. The Ordinary Working Expenses showed an increase of Rs. 5.02 crore over the Revised Estimates of Rs. 259.16 crore. This increase in working expenses was largely under repairs and maintenance expenditure, incidental partly to the steadily expanding railway assets and partly to various safety measures taken to minimise accidents to the maximum extent practicable. After allowing for other smaller variations, the net surplus came to Rs. 13.38 crore, against the Revised Estimate figure of Rs. 21.66 crore. The entire surplus of the year was credited to the Development Fund.

### Review of the Railway's Second Five Year Plan

Before I come to the Revised Estimates of the current year, I shall give the House a brief resume of the progress made in the Railway's Second Five Year Plan, as three years of the Plan will be completed on the 31 March 1959.

During 1956-57, the first year of the Second Five Year Plan, the total tonnage lifted was 124 million tonnes against 114 million tonnes in 1955-56; that is, an increase of about 8.8 per cent. In 1957-58, the tonnage lifted rose to 132 million tonnes, a further increase of about 6.5 per cent over 1956-57. For the current year, the further increase in traffic is not likely to be more than 5 million tonnes over the 1957-58 figure, as against the anticipated increase of 12 million tonnes over 1957-58. Except for the increase in coal traffic, the rest of the increase in goods traffic has been much less than anticipated; and, in fact, there has been a drop in the case of agricultural products.

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\* *L.S. Deb.*, 18 February 1959.

<sup>‡</sup> Presenting the Railway Budget, 1959-60 as the Minister of Railways.

As regards the expenditure on the Railway's Plan, the outlay rose to Rs. 251.47 crore in 1957-58, against an outlay of Rs. 179 crore in the first year. It is expected to be Rs. 245.25 crore in the current year. A provision of Rs. 235 crore is being made in the Budget. This will leave a balance of about Rs. 211 crore for 1960-61, the last year of the Plan, out of the total of Rs. 1121.5 crore allotted to the Railway Ministry under the Plan. As the House is aware, the Railway's Second Five Year Plan has had to be rephased so as to accommodate, within the provision of Rs. 1121.5 crore, the rise in the cost of material and labour as well as reduction in the foreign exchange element. Even though the increase in goods traffic in the current year has fallen below anticipations, there is every reason to expect that there will be additional demand for rail transport to the extent of about 14 million tonne in 1959-60, with the Steel Works going into various stages of production, with agricultural crop being more promising, and with the opening of the Ganga Bridge to traffic. The originating freight traffic with the Railways may be called upon to handle by the end of 1959-60 will thus be about 151 million tonne. The indication therefore is that the estimate of 162 million tonne at the end of the Second Five Year Plan (*i.e.* at the end of 1960-61) will be reached. I may assure the House that every endeavour will be made to develop the capacity of the Railways to meet this demand.

#### **Review of 1958-59—Operation**

The increase in wagon loadings on the Broad Gauge during the year has been only about 2 per cent to the end of December, 1958 as compared to the corresponding period of the previous year, while there has been a shortfall of more than 7 per cent on the Metre Gauge. Large-scale food movements were made to meet the demands of the deficit areas affected by drought in North Bihar. During August 1958, over 3,600 Broad Gauge wagons carrying about 80,000 tonne of foodgrains were transhipped at various points for stations in North Bihar, in spite of difficulties at the riverine transshipment points. In addition, about 3,000 Metre Gauge wagon loads, with approximately 35,000 tonne of foodgrains, were moved to North Bihar from Kandla and other Metre Gauge stations of Northern, Western and Northeastern Railway systems. With the formation of a separate Zonal Railway Administration, the movements over the Assam Rail Link improved and the demands for Assam on the whole were also met satisfactorily.

The overall coal loading in the country during the current year, upto November, 1958, was a record figure of 4,995 daily, as against 4,660 wagons during 1957-58, registering an increase of 7.2 per cent. The increase in earnings is not commensurate with this increase, as coal is not a high rated traffic. In the Bengal and Bihar Coalfields, coal loading averaged a record figure of 3,971 wagons per day, as compared to 3,700 wagons during the previous

year. Steady improvement in the movement of traffic *via* Moghalsarai was maintained; an average of 2,176 wagons were moved daily in the upward direction, compared to 2,037 and 1,881 during the previous two years.

The trend of decline in traffic, which commenced early in 1958, continued till about November, 1958. The decline in freight traffic in 1958-59 as compared to 1957-58, has been pronounced under grains and pulses on the Broad Gauge, and under oilseeds, cotton, jute and sugarcane on both Broad and Metre Gauges. The demands for wagons for goods transport generally were slack practically throughout the country except on a few difficult routes through which the pressure of traffic continues. The greater availability of wagons, even during the busy season, was notified through the Press, and trade was invited to take advantage of this. A development, which has come to notice in this connection, is the diversion of high-rated traffic to road transport on routes parallel to the Railways where Railways have enough capacity to move additional traffic. This matter is receiving attention, with a view to seeing what readjustments are necessary in order to ensure the maximum utilisation of our limited transport resources.

A significant development in Railway operation during the year is the adoption of diesel traction on a few selected routes. A beginning has also been made in the use of centre buffer couplers for hauling heavier goods trains.

#### **Revised Estimates for 1958-59**

It is now estimated that the goods earnings during the current year will be Rs. 245.83 crore, or a shortfall of Rs. 4.67 crore as compared to the Budget anticipation of Rs. 250.50 crore; the passenger earnings are now expected to be Rs. 116.30 crore, against Rs. 124.73 crore in the Budget Estimates. Under Other Coaching Earnings and Sundry Earnings, there may be minor compensating variations. In the result, Gross Traffic Receipts for the current year are now estimated at Rs. 394.38 crore, or a shortfall of Rs. 13.10 crore as compared to the Budget Estimates. Against this, there is a fortuitous credit of Rs. 2.63 crore on account of the write back to revenue, of the Government contribution and interest thereon in the State Railway Provident Fund account of railway employees who have elected the Pension System of retirement benefits in lieu of the State Railway Provident Fund benefits.

The Revised Estimate of Ordinary Working Expenses is Rs. 274.22 crore that is, an increase of Rs. 5.87 crore over the Budget Estimate of Rs. 268.35 crore. Out of this increase, an amount of nearly one crore of rupees is attributable to the increase in the price of coal (75 np per tonne from 17 May 1958, which was reduced to 41 np per tonne from 17 October 1958). Besides this, there has been increase due to payment of arrears of sales tax not

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provided, the cost of materials having gone up more than anticipated, additional expenditure on various measures for safety, such as patrolling of bridges and increased expenditure on the rehabilitation and maintenance of track and bridges as well as on the increased number of rolling stock turned out after repairs from the workshops and sheds.

The net surplus for 1958-59, after allowing for other variations in the revenue account including a reduction of about Rs. 2.6 crore in the expenditure on Open Line Works chargeable to Revenue, is now expected to be Rs. 13 crore. This surplus will be credited to the Development Fund.

The Revised Estimate of expenditure on Works, Machinery and Rolling Stock during the current year has now been placed at Rs. 245.25 crore—a reduction of about Rs. 14.75 crore from the Budget Estimate.

At this stage, I shall refer briefly to the position of the balances in the different Funds. The Depreciation Reserve Fund and the Revenue Reserve Fund are anticipated to have sizeable balances on the 31 March 1959, of about Rs. 50 crore each. The Development Fund, however, was left with an opening balance of Rs. 1.85 crore only on the 1 April 1958, as a result of the net Railway surplus in 1957-58, after payment of dividend to General Revenues, having come down to Rs. 13.38 crore. This Fund, which is fed only by the net surplus accruing each year, will further contract as a result of the relatively small surplus expected during the current year (Rs. 13 crore). The total provision for expenditure from the Development Fund in the Railway Plan is of the order of Rs. 92 crore, so that with an annual accretion of about Rs. 13 crore in two successive years, a loan from General Revenues to finance the Railway Development Fund expenditure has become unavoidable. As the House is aware, this Fund which is built from Railway surplus is designed to meet the cost of works for providing amenities to passengers and other Railways users, the cost of Labour Welfare works estimated to cost individually more than Rs. 25,000 as well as operating improvements found necessary from time to time, such as improvements in signalling and train control equipment and other safety measures, improvement in watering arrangements, etc. In fact, the Railway Convention Committee, 1954, did envisage occasions when the Development Fund may not be in a position to meet the programme of expenditure chargeable to that Fund from its own resources, and recommended that, in such circumstances, general revenues could advance a temporary loan. Every effort has been made to reduce expenditure, yet a loan of about Rs. 11 crore is necessary in the current year, and arrangements for this have been made.

Before I turn to the proposals for the Budget year, I would like to say a few words about the present Convention governing the arrangements between Railway Finance and General Finance. As the House is aware, the present

convention covers the period upto 31 March 1960. In the ordinary course, I would have requested the House to set up the next Convention Committee in order to review the working of the present Convention and submit recommendations in advance of the next quinquennial period (1960-65.) It is necessary, however, that this Committee, by the time it meets, should have a reasonably accurate appraisal of the Railways' financial position, obligations and surplus resources during the next few years. As such an appraisal is made for the purpose of each Plan, it will be convenient if future Conventions synchronise with each Plan period. This can be achieved by extending the period covered by the present Convention by a year, *i.e.*, upto 31 March 1961. The new freight structure has been brought into effect from 1 October 1958; and if the Convention Committee is set up now, it will not be possible to assess the full financial effect of the freight charges for the purpose of estimating the Railways' earnings for the next few years on a reasonably correct basis. Similarly, on the expenditure side, the Pay Commission's Report is awaited. These considerations emphasise that a realistic assessment of the Railways' financial position will only be possible about a year hence. Indeed, the Convention Committee, 1954, had referred to the need, at the end of each quinquennial period, to make a reasonable forecast of the Railways' financial position in the light of the expansion of their activities as a result of the implementation of the Plan, and this reinforces my proposal for the extension of the present Convention by one year, *i.e.*, upto 31 March 1961. I shall move a formal Resolution for this purpose shortly, for the approval of the House.

#### **Budget for 1959-60**

I now turn to the Budget Estimates for the year 1959-60. The fall in passenger traffic in 1958-59 was unexpected, but the recent months indicate an improving trend. After careful consideration, the estimate under this head for 1959-60 has been placed at Rs. 118.30 crore—an increase of only Rs. 2 crore over the current year's Revised Estimate of Rs. 116.30 crore. The estimate of Other Coaching Earnings has been placed at Rs. 24 crore, *i.e.*, Rs. 45 lakhs less than the current year's Revised Estimate of Rs. 24.45 crore, in order to allow for any drop in parcel traffic.

The estimate of Goods Earnings has been placed at Rs. 272.58 crore—an increase of Rs. 26.75 crore over the Revised Estimate of the current year. This includes an increase of Rs. 5 crore to cover the effect of a full year's increase in the goods freight rates introduced from 1 October 1958. This estimate is based on the expectation that, in the coming year, the Railways will be called upon to carry about 14 million tonnes of additional goods traffic, bringing the total freight traffic to about 151 million tonnes. This 14 million tonnes increase is made up of about 3 million tonne of general goods traffic,

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3 million tonnes of coal, and about 8 million tonnes transport (ore, coal and finished products) for the Steel Works. It is expected that 3 million tonnes of additional traffic in general goods will materialise with the anticipated increase in general industrial activity, particularly as a result of the Steel Works going into production, increase in food production over the current year, and increased rail movement expected between Assam, North Bihar, East Uttar Pradesh and the rest of India with the opening of the bridge over the Ganga at Mokameh to traffic. The additional transport of 3 million tonnes for the Steel Works will cover the requirements of Tata Iron & Steel Company and the Indian Iron & Steel Company, which are expected to go into full production by April 1959, as well as the requirements of Rourkela and Bhilai, and to a small extent of the Durgapur Steel Plant which may go into production later in the Budget Year.

Sundry Earnings in 1959-60 are estimated at Rs. 8.40 crore. After allowing for the normal variations in the traffic suspense (*viz.*, an increase of Rs. 40 lakhs over the Revised Estimates of the current year), the Gross Traffic Receipts for 1959-60 are estimated at Rs. 422.03 crore.

The Budget Estimate of Ordinary Working Expenses for 1959-60 has been placed at Rs. 238.71 crore—an increase of Rs. 9.49 crore over the Revised Estimate of the current year. This increase is made up of the net effect of annual increments to staff and of other normal variations in personnel (about Rs. 2 crore) and is also due to increase of nearly Rs. 1 crore in the expenditure on Staff Welfare, increase of about Rs. 2.5 crore in repairs costs which covers the additional assets (*i.e.* newly opened lines, additional rolling stock, etc.) created in 1958-59 and to be created in 1959-60, and about Rs. 4 crore under operation (*viz.*, staff, fuel etc.) necessitated by the anticipated increase in transport requirements. A close check continues to be exercised over expenditure.

In my Budget Speech last year, I had referred to the setting up of an Expert Committee on Coal. This Committee submitted their report in August last. They have analysed the effect of rising cost and freight on the Railway Fuel Bill, and found that in the recent past the consumption trend generally has been favourable. The Committee, however, have indicated scope for reducing coal consumption and expenditure—mainly by improving the quality of coal and by strict control on pilferage, losses and wastages. The Committee have strongly emphasised the necessity for improvement of the quality of coal by introducing direct purchase contracts between the Railways and collieries and more effective inspection. The Committee's recommendations are being pursued with the Ministry of Steel, Mines and Fuel, who control supplies and inspection.

The Programme of Open Line Works chargeable to Revenue has been reduced in the current year in the light of the available net revenue. It is however proposed to spend nearly Rs. 3 crore more on this account in 1959-60 than in the current year, reflecting the progressive increase in the tempo of works. With further capital expenditure on works, there would be an increase of about Rs. 4.5 crore in the Dividend payable to the General Finance over the current year's Revised Estimate. The Revenue Surplus for the Budget year is expected to be about Rs. 21.19 crore, which I propose to credit to the Development Fund. Even with this credit, a loan may have to be taken from the General Revenues in the Budget year also, as in 1958-59.

In my Budget Speech last year, I had mentioned that electrification from Howrah to Moghalsarai on the Eastern Railway and from Asansol to Tatanagar-Rourkela-Rajkharswan-Barajamda on the Southeastern Railway will be completed during the Second Five Year Plan period. In view of the urgency of the works, its technical complexities and the wide field of contacts to be covered, a separate administration under a General Manager and Chief Engineer was set up in June 1958 to administer the project. Along with detailed work in the field, arrangements for power supply and modifications in telecommunication have been made, and orders for supply and erection of overhead equipment placed for Durgapur-Gays, Asansol-Siri, Tatanagar-Rourkela, Rajkharswan-Dangoaposi and Kandra-Gomharria sections. Steps are also being taken to arrange for starting work on the remaining sections, while assisting the build-up of indigenous capacity for the requirements of overhead equipment, etc. In order to meet the urgent requirements of traffic in the coal belt area and in the Calcutta suburban sections in Sealdah Division, some rephasing of works, as necessary, is being done. For sections the electrification of which will be continued during the Third Plan, preliminary civil engineering works, like slewing of track, removal of infringements, etc. are also being taken in hand.

As regards electrification of Madras-Villupuram section in the South, I am glad to report that it will be possible to make headway now that power supply has been assured.

The supply of critical materials during the current year remained generally satisfactory, with the result that the Works Expenditure maintained its tempo evenly. The difficulty in the procurement of fabricated bridge girders, to which I alluded in my last Budget Speech, has greatly eased with the supplies now being received.

The work on various projects is in full swing. During the year, nearly 1500 Engineers and Engineering Supervisors at various levels and about 2 lakh workers have been working on the various projects on the Railways

apart from workmen engaged on track renewal and other normal railway works. The third year of the Plan has witnessed the peak of constructional activity on the Railways. Out of the total of 1848 miles of new lines and doublings under execution, 423 miles (*i.e.*, 173 miles of new lines and 250 lines of doubling) have been opened to traffic during the current year. Construction is in hand of 525 miles of new line projects. These are the Chandrapura-Muri-Ranchi-Hatia, Bondamunda-Dumaro, Bhilai-Deorajhal, Barabil-Pamposh Gaorge, Bondamunda-Nowagaon-Purnapani, Damodar-Kalipahari, Bijuri-Karaunji, Gidi-Saunda-Bachra branch lines in the Jarandih and Karanpura Coalfields, Kumedpur-Barsoi, Robertsganj-Garhwa Road, Ghaziabad-Tuglakabad including the Second Yamuna Bridge, the remaining 130 miles of the Khandwa-Hingoli, and the Baraset-Hasanabad. In addition to these, 900 miles of doublings are in progress, made up of 430 miles on the South-Eastern Railway, 190 miles on the Southern Railway, 100 miles on the Western Railway, 90 miles on the Northern Railway, 40 miles on the Central Railway and 50 miles on the Northeastern Railway.

The Rohtak-Gohana restoration on the Northern Railway was opened to Goods Traffic on 31 October 1958, and to passenger traffic on 29 December 1958.

The work on strengthening of the Assam Rail Link Route is progressing according to schedule. During the first working season of 1957-58, rebuilding of as many as 17 bridges has been completed. Considerable work has also been done for improving and strengthening the protection works to embankments and bridges. It is programmed to rebuild another 20 bridges during the current working season and complete other ancillary works.

The bridge over the Ganga at Mokameh is expected to be opened to traffic in April this year. This indeed will be a commendable performance.

The work on the Brahmaputra Bridge is also progressing satisfactorily. The quarry sidings have been laid, base camp built and the construction workshop set up. The work on the sinking of two well piers is in hand.

The estimate for the Works, Machinery and Rolling Stock Programme for the Budget year has been placed at Rs. 235 crore, leaving about Rs. 211 crore for the last year of the Plan. The Capital Budget of Rs. 235 crore includes about Rs. 80 crore under Rolling Stock, Rs. 5 crore under Machinery and Plant, Rs. 47 crore under construction of new lines and restoration of dismantled lines, Rs. 37 crore under track renewals and nearly Rs. 66 crore under Other Open Line Works, etc.

With a view to reduce the time-lag attendant on the commencement of new line projects to the minimum, as a first step towards the achievement of

targets of the Third Plan, and also to maintain the constructional activity generated in this Plan period, it has been decided to initiate action on certain new line projects which would mature in the Third Plan period. These new lines would either traverse difficult terrain or are likely to encounter special problems such as would take time—namely, in land acquisition or heavy formation and bridge work. Such new lines aggregate to nearly 500 miles, and are Udaipur-Himmatnagar, Jhund-Kandla, Tildanga-Farakka, Khajuriaghat-Malda, the Delhi Avoiding Line and the extension of the rail head from Madhopur across the Ravi into the State of Jammu and Kashmir. The Guna-Ujjain and Bakhtiarpur-Rajgir links will also be commenced during the year. Other lines included in the Budget Year are the 115 mile long Sambalpur-Titilagarh line and the link from Bimlagarh to Kiriburu; these projects will assist in the export of 2 million tonnes of iron ore through the Vizag port.

I would also like to refer to the possibilities of construction of three new lines—namely, Mangalore-Hassan, Diva-Dasgaon and Patharkandi-Dharmanagar links, which are under active consideration. Further, there is an offer of “Shramdan” labour for earthwork etc. from the Rajasthan Panchayat Sangh, for the construction of a Broad Gauge link between Hindumalkot, a frontier station on the Broad Gauge of the Northern Railway, and Sri Ganganagar on the Metre Gauge. The question of making a beginning involving commitments only to a limited extent in initial stages to judge how far the offer referred to will materialise, is also under examination.

Provision has also been made in 1959-60 for Phase II of the conversion of Gudivada-Bhimavaram-Vijayawada-Masulipatam section of the Southern Railway from Metre Gauge to Broad Gauge, estimated to cost about Rs. 3 crore and doubling of Rajahmundry-Samalkot section at an estimated cost of Rs. 1.32 crore. These would meet the need for increasing the line capacity on the Southern Railway to cope with the anticipated increase in traffic at the end of the Second Five Year Plan.

Due to the improved supply position of rails and sleepers, the Track Renewal Programme has been considerably stepped up during the current year and the progress is expected to be maintained in the Budget year.

The provision for Amenities for Railway Users has been kept at usual at about Rs. 3 crore, while a provision of about Rs. 10 crore has been made for staff amenities and staff quarters.

Three new surveys were sanctioned during the course of the current year. One is for 250 mile line from Bailadilla to Kottavallasa *via* Koraput, in the context of Dandakaranya Scheme for the rehabilitation of the displaced persons from Bengal, the other for Kiriburu-Bimlagarh link and the third for Korea Coalfields taking off from Bijuri-Karaunji Line.

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Of the 900 miles of surveys carried over from the programme of the previous years, nearly 600 miles for the following projects have been completed:

- Nimitita-Tildanga on the Eastern Railway;
- Domohani-Alipur Daur on the Northeast Frontier Railway.
- Kosikalan-Bharatpur, Kurudwadi-Miraj Kolhapur, and Orai-Jalaun on the Central Railway;
- Jagadhri-Chandigarh, Una-Nangal and Tuglakabad-Ghaziabad on the Northern, Railway;
- Maurigram-Dankuni and Sambalpur-Titilgarh on the Southeastern Railway; and
- Muzaffarpur-Darbhanga on the Northeastern Railway.

In my Budget Speech last year I made mention of the 90 million dollar loan obtained for rehabilitation, modernisation and expansion of the Indian Railways, from the World Bank. This loan has been fully drawn. As the House is aware, we have since been able to obtain a further loan of 85 million dollars from the World Bank. Besides, the Development Loan Fund authorities in U.S.A. have also agreed to two loans of 40 million and 35 million dollars. Apart from these loans, assistance has also been received under the Indo-American Technical Co-operation Programme and the Colombo Plan. A loan of 20 million dollars from U.S.A. and 8 million dollars from Japan have become available for the Orissa Iron Ore project in which the Railways are interested jointly with the Port and Mining authorities.

There has been steady progress towards the objective of self-sufficiency in the country in the manufacture of steam locomotives, carriages, underframes and wagons. In the Budget year (1959-60), out of the total provision of about Rs. 80 crore for rolling stock, about Rs. 68 crore will be spent in the country and only about Rs. 12 crore (including Sea-freight, etc.) on imports. Two new wagon building firms entered the field of production during the current year. The Railway Ministry has taken over the procurement from abroad of plates for wagons to the extent that the Iron and Steel Controller is unable to obtain supplies from indigenous sources.

Proposals for the progressive manufacture in the country of the mechanical components of electric locomotives, starting with the assembly of knocked down locomotives, have been sought from the manufacturers supplying electric locomotives on the Eastern and Southeastern Railways. The electric components for the indigenously manufactured electric locomotives may have to be imported in the initial stages, until these can be supplied by the Heavy

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Electricals Plant, Bhopal. The development of indigenous capacity for the manufacture of diesel locomotives has also been taken up.

The indigenous production of railway equipment other than rolling stock and rolling stock parts also continues to make headway. The Development Cell in the Railway Board's Office, in close association with the Industrial Development Wing of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry has succeeded in assisting the development of further manufacturing capacity in the country which will have the effect of conserving the much needed foreign exchange. There was significant increase in the domestic production of important railway equipment such as mechanical signalling, thermic sympions, pressure castings, signal glasses, vacuum and steam pressure gauges. Some of these were produced for the first time in India. In most cases, imports have been completely eliminated and where these are inescapable, are now restricted only to the specialised items of railway equipment. The production of mechanical signalling equipment in the country—both in Railway shops and in the private sector—has greatly reduced the difficulty in regard to the availability of signalling equipment to which I made a reference in my Budget Speech last year. The Indian Railways Central Equipment Advisory Committee and the four Zonal Committees at Delhi, Calcutta, Bombay and Madras have continued to provide a useful forum at which representatives of Trade and Industry can bring their problems and difficulties.

The Chittaranjan Locomotive Works produced 164 locomotives in 1957-58, and expect to produce 168 locomotives in the current year and the same number in the next year. A Steel Foundry of 7,000 tonne capacity is being set up at Chittaranjan as an essential adjunct to this production unit.

TELCO works delivered 85 locomotives in 1957-58 and are expected to deliver 100 locomotives in the current year and the same number in the Budget year.

The Integral Coach Factory turned out 222 unfurnished coaches during 1957-58. 295 unfurnished coaches are expected to be produced during the current year, while the Factory would reach its present target of 350 unfurnished coaches in the next year with single shift working. With a view to produce more coaches a second shift will be introduced shortly. The average cost of manufacture has also come down progressively. Against Rs. 1.21 lakh per unfurnished coach in 1957-58, the cost is expected to be Rs. 95,000 only in the current year. The temporary furnishing unit set up within the factory furnished 178 coaches upto November 1958. It is hoped that this will soon be replaced by a permanent furnishing unit with the capacity to furnish all the coaches turned out.

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There has been progressive increase in the production of rolling stock in the country. Against 234 steam locomotives and 15,985 wagons received by Railways in 1956-57, 249 locomotives and 17,731 wagons were received in 1957-58, the number of locomotives going up to 268 in the current year, while another 268 locomotives and 17,900 wagons will be received in 1959-60. As regards coaches, 474 Broad Gauge, 185 Metre Gauge and 38 Narrow Gauge bogie containing third class carriages were manufactured and put into service in 1957-58, in addition to 186 Broad Gauge, 195 Metre Gauge and 31 Narrow Gauge composite coaches containing third class accommodation. During the current year, 277 Broad Gauge, 175 Metre Gauge and 4 Narrow Gauge bogie containing third class coaches and 90 Broad Gauge, 183 Metre Gauge and 1 Narrow Gauge composite coaches having third class accommodation have been manufactured and put into service upto the end of October, 1958. A total of 2,008 coaches, in addition to 104 electrical multiple unit coaches, is expected to be received in 1959-60, against a total of 1,538 coaches expected to be received in the current year and a total of 1,248 coaches received in 1957-58.

In the context of increasing indigenous production of rolling stock, I would like to make a passing reference to improvements in railway workshops with a view to meet the steadily increasing maintenance load and also to increase productivity. A Productivity Cell has recently been set up, in keeping with the drive for increased productivity launched by the National Productivity Council, and it is hoped that the activities of this Cell will result in improvements leading to higher productivity.

The House, I am sure, will be glad to know that the Joy Ride train in Bal Bhavan was inaugurated in the Capital in November 1958. The idea had its origin in a suggestion by the Prime Minister and the train's inauguration on his birthday was a fitting fruition of this idea. The working of the train has been now handed over to the Bal Bhavan Board. It will provide the children of the Capital with a popular means of entertainment and general education.

During the past year, the Railway Testing and Research Centre carried out performance tests on new Locomotives notably the Alco Diesel Electric Locos; impact tests on the new 80 ton-bogie wagons designed and built in India; and riding quality trials on various designs of bodies for passenger vehicles. By extensive trials on rails of Thomas steel, their suitability for Indian conditions was established. Other research activities centred round the profitable utilisation of coal ash, of which nearly a million tonnes are produced by steam locomotives every year, the development of concrete sleepers, the treatment of boiler feed water with indigenous softening compounds, and the preparation of paints and bituminous emulsions from indigenous materials. In addition, the development from indigenous materials

of a bituminous emulsion, which will provide a cheap anti-corrosive paint for steel has also been patented. Eight other patents were taken out for other new materials and equipment developed by the Research Centre.

I have already explained on previous occasions the difficulties confronting the Railways in eliminating overcrowding. All possible measures are, however, being taken to reduce overcrowding in areas where it is most acute. Available resources are being distributed in a manner which will even out the overcrowding on different Railway Zones and different areas in the same Zone. It is not possible to provide additional Rolling stock beyond the financial resources available, but a concerted effort is being made to mitigate overcrowding by intensive usage and retention of overaged stock by proper repair. As a result of these special measures and as additional rolling stock become available, it is expected that there will be an increase in the seat mile capacity on the Broad and Metre Gauges of Indian Railways by about 24 per cent by the end of the Second Plan compared to what it was at the end of the First Plan.

During 1957-58, 71 new passenger trains were introduced—38 on the Broad Gauge, 31 on the Metre Gauge and 2 on the Narrow Gauge. In the current year upto 1 December, 1958, 45 trains were introduced on the Broad Gauge and 13 on the Metre Gauge. The run of 18 Broad Gauge trains, 30 Metre Gauge trains and 2 Narrow Gauge trains was extended in 1957-58, and of 16 more Broad Gauge trains and 28 more Metre Gauge trains in the current year. A number of new sub-urban services were also introduced on various Railways. Against 92 new trains on the Broad Gauge in 1957-58, 52 Broad Gauge trains were introduced upto 1 December 1958 in the current year, while the run of 36 trains was extended as against 16 trains in 1957-58. Besides these, 28 electric suburban trains were also introduced on Eastern Railway upto 1 December 1958, and the run of 8 trains was extended in the current year, against 8 such new trains introduced in 1957-58. A tri-weekly Janata Express train has been introduced between Delhi and Ahmedabad from 1 October 1958. With all these new trains and extensions, the daily train mileage will have increased by about 15,000 miles in the two-year period 1957-58 and 1958-59.

We have recently provided holiday camping coaches at some of the important holiday centres for the benefit of the Railway passengers. It is the intention to provide such coaches at some more stations where retiring rooms are not available. The facility of sleeping accommodation in third class has also been extended to some of the trains on the Northeast Frontier Railway.

Departmental Catering continues to grow in popularity, and is being generally appreciated by the travelling public both in regard to the quality of food and the standard of service. In order to improve the service further, a

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Special Enquiry has been initiated into the functioning of the Departmental Catering with a view to effecting improvements.

The Railway Users' Consultative Committees constituted at different levels continued to render valuable assistance and co-operation to the Railway administration in the matter of improving the services provided by the Railways. Other ancillary Committees, such as the Time-Table Committee, the Suburban Railway Users' Consultative Committee, the Passenger Amenities Committee, the Catering Supervisory Committee and the Bookstall Committee also functioned usefully in their respective spheres.

It is a matter of great regret that, in spite of sustained propaganda against the misuse of alarm-chain apparatus and intensive checks by selected staff in collaboration with police, the number of cases of alarm-chain pulling still continues to be high and is a constant cause of concern. Ticketless travelling is another evil which continues to stalk the land and constitutes a drain on the Railway revenues. These two evils obviously cannot be completely eradicated without the active co-operation of the public. I would, therefore, once again, request the co-operation of the Hon'ble Members, as the representatives of the people of the country to awaken the public conscience by intensive propaganda in their constituencies against the evils of alarm-chain pulling and ticketless travelling.

Sustained efforts continue to be made to reduce the number of Claims for Compensation for Goods lost or damaged, as well as to finalise the claims quickly. Although during 1957-58, the number of claims registered was slightly higher than in 1956-57, there was a small reduction in the amount paid towards compensation claims. The latest figures available for the current year are also reasonably satisfactory. Viewed in the light of increase in traffic carried, these figures reflect the beneficial results of the Claims Prevention Organisation and of the re-organised Railway Protection Force. The number of claims cases pending disposal, which stood at 56,891 at the end of March, 1957, came down to 44,837 at the end of March, 1958, and may come down further at the end of the current year. The average time taken for disposal of each claim has also been reduced. I am aware that there is not full satisfaction yet in regard to the pace of disposal of claims, and I wish to assure the House that no efforts will be spared to secure further improvement.

In my last Budget Speech I had referred to the examination of the recommendations of the Railway Freight Structure Enquiry Committee relating to the revision of the Freight Structure as being in the final stages. As the House is aware, the Government's decision on these recommendations was announced in the House on 18 August, 1958, and the revised freight structure was brought into force from 1 October 1958. The full effect of the

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Revised Freight Structure can be assessed only after it has operated for some time.

The examination of the Railway Freight Structure Committee's recommendations for the amendment of the Statutory Provisions relating to the responsibility of the Railways as carriers is still to be completed. As these recommendations of the Committee have far reaching implications, it will take some time to finalise Government's decision on them and indeed the Committee themselves recommended time for such examination.

As the House is aware, the need to step up exports is imperative. Having regard to this, the question of reduction in freight rates for different commodities has been engaging attention. In respect of 9 commodities, a substantial rebate in freight has been notified. It has further been decided to set up a small Standing Committee of senior officials of the different Ministries concerned such as the Ministry of Railways, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, the Ministry of Finance and the Planning Commission, to deal with the question of reduction in freight rates for export traffic as also the other steps necessary in that context.

I may also mention an instance of reduction in freight rates for an internal movement about which the House may be interested. Large quantities of cattle dung were being wasted in and around the city of Bombay for want of a suitable rate to facilitate movement to upcountry places, where they could be used as manure. To meet the situation, a 50 per cent reduction in the freight rate for cattle dung from Bombay to a number of stations has been introduced at the suggestion of the Government of Bombay.

I now come to the question of accidents, which has been a subject of considerable concern all round. In the last session of the Parliament, "A Factual Review of Accidents", based on the last 20 years' statistics, was given to every Member of Parliament, which indicated that there was a downward trend in the number of accidents. Unfortunately, there has been a slight increase recently in the number of collisions and derailments. It is far from my intention to minimise the seriousness of this feature in railway working, but I would like to mention that the period which we have been passing through is abnormal. An extensive development of line capacity is under execution on long stretches of trunk routes, upsetting settled conditions of working; at the same time, rapidly increasing volume of traffic has been passing over these sections, which are mostly working to saturation point. Under these abnormal conditions, a state of constant pressure and strain is inevitable, and this at times unfortunately leads to human failures.

We are fully alive to the seriousness of the problem, and the Railway administrations have been directed to initiate certain measures—educative,

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psychological and punitive—which, it is hoped, will instil greater safety-mindedness among the staff. Simultaneously, attention has also been paid to the provision of improved technical devices as an aid to the staff; safety organisation and research cells have also been set up on every Railway to undertake a critical analysis of accidents to focus attention on safety aspects in every field of operation, to carry out intensive inspections and to ensure strict observance of the safety rules and regulations by all concerned.

In regard to anti-sabotage measures, various schemes were examined in consultation with the Intelligence Bureau and the Ministry of Home Affairs. As a result of this examination, the State Governments have been addressed to afford assistance through publicity measures amongst inhabitants of the villages in the vicinity of railway lines, through improvement of the arrangements of the Government Railway Police for the collection of advance intelligence in this regard, through intensification of patrolling of vulnerable areas, through a continuous study of all serious railway accidents by the State CIDs, and through periodical liaison meetings for exchanging information between Railway officials and State Police officials. Railway administrations have been directed to act in close contact with the State Governments for this purpose.

Considerable emphasis has also been given to initial training and refresher courses for all categories of staff responsible for train working. I would like to assure the House that constant endeavours would continue to be made to deal with this problem of accidents with the utmost imagination and care. In this effort I solicit the unstinted co-operation of everyone concerned, so that a greater sense of safety consciousness may be brought about amongst the large number of railwaymen employed for train operation.

The Members of Parliament have naturally been evincing considerable interest in the problem of security and safe travel on Railways. Policing on the Railways is a State subject, but the Railway Ministry maintain a close liaison with them through the Railway Protection Force, so that a co-ordinated effort may be made to render Railway travel reasonably safe and to ensure that the public property entrusted to the Railways is secured from theft and damage. The Railway Protection Force with its Armed Wing has rendered useful service in tackling this problem. The Chief Ministers of the States also, whom I met in this connection, assured me of their fullest co-operation.

The problem of corruption on the Railways continues to be tackled vigorously. Activities of the Vigilance Organisation have been intensified, and various preventive measures have been adopted to liquidate this evil. The Central Investigation Agency of the Railway Board's Office examined directly about 200 cases of corruption and other malpractices, while on the

Railways more than 3,500 new cases were taken up during the year. Deterrent punishments have been awarded. In 1957-58, departmental action was finalised in 1,301 cases as against 511 in the previous year. The Vigilance Organisation has succeeded not only in highlighting malpractices and bringing corrupt employees to book, but also in protecting those who are honest and allow no laxity, but are maligned by interested parties.

The growing interest evinced in our efforts to eradicate the evil is helpful, and I appeal to the Members of the Parliament and of State Legislatures to continue to extend their full co-operation in the matter and in arousing public conscience, without which this evil cannot be eliminated.

Turning now to other aspects of Railway administration, I would refer to the progressive expansion of medical and welfare facilities for railwaymen and their families. During the current year, 337 more beds have been provided in our hospitals, bringing the total to 4,287. Special facilities have been provided for the treatment of railway employees and their families suffering from T.B. Chest clinics for providing domiciliary and out-door treatment to T.B. patients and for controlling the spread of T.B. have been established in most of the Railway hospitals. To 687 T.B. beds reserved at the end of 1957-58, 211 beds have been added in the current year, and 40 more beds will be available shortly. Dental clinics with part-time dental service have also been provided in some of the hospitals. In order to provide expert medical advice to Railwaymen, the honorary services of consultants of eminence have been enlisted to advise and help in the treatment of cases in the principal Railway hospitals. Medical aid to staff at roadside stations and isolated sections was improved by increasing the number of mobile dispensary vans from 9 to 17.

The question of increasing housing facilities for the Railway staff has continued to receive attention from the administration. During the first two years of the Plan, about 25,000 quarters were constructed. Another 11,000 are expected to be added during the current year, and 9,000 in the Budget year. In addition to this, improvements to old type quarters, through provision of better ventilation, electrification, latrines and kitchens have also been undertaken.

The Railways have continued to maintain, as a measure of staff welfare, a number of schools of various categories, expanding these facilities wherever required. I have been feeling particularly the need for widening the primary school facilities for the children and wards of Railway employees. I have, therefore, issued orders that 500 primary schools should be established on austerity standard. It is hoped that these would be opened before the next school session, *i.e.*, June 1959. It has further been decided that all children studying in the Railway Primary Schools should be required to wear uniforms

of a simple style. This would help to create a feeling of discipline and equality amongst these children. The uniform will be supplied free to the children of railway employees drawing less than Rs. 200 per month.

To mitigate the difficulties of the staff who have to send their children away from their headquarters for the purposes of education, schemes for setting up 13 subsidised hostels in the major linguistic areas have been approved. As we are keen to start these hostels from the coming school year even though the buildings may not be ready, arrangements are being made to obtain alternative accommodation to the extent possible. Ultimately about 1,500 students are proposed to be accommodated in these hostels. The wards of those employees, whose pay does not exceed Rs. 300 per month, will be admitted on payment of concessional rates, while the children of employees drawing more than Rs. 300 per month will be admitted on payment of full mess charges. This scheme, in the case of staff who take advantage of it, will form an alternative to the educational assistance now admissible under the rules.

The *per capita* contribution to the Staff Benefit Fund has been increased from Rs. 2 to Rs. 4 from 1 April 1958. This would meet the increased expenditure on account of scholarships, which are being awarded every year in deserving cases to the children of railway employees to assist them in the prosecution of technical education. During 1956-58, about 1,900 applications were received for the grant of technical scholarships and 998 scholarships were awarded involving an expenditure of Rs. 2.95 lakh from the Staff Benefit Fund. During 1957-58, over 1,400 applications were received; 921 scholarships were awarded in addition to 628 scholarships carried forward from the previous year. The total expenditure during 1957-58 on account of these scholarships amounted to a sum slightly in excess of Rs. 4 lakhs. As the courses generally cover four years, the number of scholarships will progressively increase to about 3,000 at any one time.

As indicated in my Budget Speech last year, the Tapase Committee was appointed to review the channels of promotion to Class IV staff and concerned matters. The Committee submitted their Report in March, 1958. Orders have already been issued on a number of their recommendations, and other recommendations are being finalised quickly.

The necessity for imparting adequate training to recruits to the various Railway Services and of refresher courses to serving employees is constantly kept in view. A new training school at Bhusawal with a capacity for 650 trainees, is likely to be completed by October, 1959. The Technical Institute at Jhansi has been taken over from the State Government of U.P., and a scheme for increasing its capacity from 32 to 150 for training Mechanical and Electrical Apprentices is under consideration. The temporary Technical Schools at

Bangalore and Lucknow are being converted into permanent ones. As recommended by the Estimates Committee, Basic Training Centres have been, and are being, set up in the various workshops and running sheds on the Railways. The capacity of various existing training schools has been increased, and expansion of some others is under consideration. A new training school for the Railway Protection Force staff has been set up at Bulsar, and another at Kharagpur is likely to be completed shortly. Arrangements for setting up a Central Advance Permanent Way School at Poona have been finalised and the school is likely to start functioning soon. This school will serve the E.C.A.F.E. countries also.

The House is aware that as a measure of staff welfare, holiday homes have been provided for Class III and Class IV staff at suitable places. Charges for such homes have been fixed at nominal rates.

It has come to my notice that Kashmir is becoming increasingly popular as a holiday resort for Railway employees coming from distant places in India. I have, therefore, decided to provide facilities for such staff by setting up two holiday homes in Kashmir—one at Srinagar and the other at Pahalgam—to serve the employees of all the Railways. It is through the good offices of the Prime Minister of Kashmir that the Government of Jammu and Kashmir have agreed to grant, free of cost, land at Pahalgam and Srinagar, along with the transfer to the Railways, at the actual cost, of a suitable building under construction at the former place. I should like to take this opportunity of thanking Bakshi Gulam Mohammed Sahib for the keen interest he has so kindly taken in this matter, which is of such importance to the welfare of the Railway employees.

The Co-operative movement is receiving increasing response on the Railways. Nearly 60 per cent of the railwaymen are members of the Cooperative Credit Societies, whose working capital on the 31 March 1958 amounted to Rs. 23.37 crore. Besides these there are about 120 Consumer Co-operative Societies and their turn-over during 1957-58 amounted nearly to Rs. 80 lakh.

The relations with the Railwaymen throughout the year have been cordial. Regular meetings were held between the National Federation of Railwaymen and the Railway Board for discussion of the various demands of the Railwaymen. The *Ad hoc* Tribunal, which resumed sittings to deal with the two items on which agreement could not be reached between the Railway Board and the Federation, has since completed its work and submitted its findings to the Government; these are receiving consideration.

The unity move between the National Federation of Indian Railwaymen and the All India Railwaymen's Federation has not made much progress.

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With a view to help the Federations in the process of implementation of the unity agreement on matters like scrutinising the lists of membership, holding elections and setting any possible disputes that may arise, I made available to the Federations the services of independent observer and a retired High Court Judge as an Arbitrator. The Government are anxious to see that railwaymen should unite under one Federation in their own interests, and I still hope that unity would be achieved in the near future. Meanwhile the All India Railwaymen's Federation, who are pressing persistently for a channel being provided for approaching the Railway Board for discussing their demands, have had two meetings with the Railway Board.

Before I conclude my speech, I would like to make a brief mention of the fact that outside their normal spheres of work, railwaymen have continued to distinguish themselves in the field of sports and other cultural activities. They are the National champions in Hockey, volleyball, weight-lifting and Kabaddi; individually too some of them have excelled in athletic events. In the cultural field, the exhibition of paintings and handicrafts held during the Railway Week last year at New Delhi displayed considerable talent among railwaymen of all categories and their families so also in cultural performances like dance drama and music staged at Delhi and other railway centres. All these activities, besides providing a diversion after their duties help in bringing after their duties help in bringing all classes of railwaymen closer together to build up a cordial fellow-feeling in this very large family of railwaymen spread over the whole country.

In conclusion, I would like to take this opportunity of placing on record my appreciation of the dedicated manner in which the railwaymen as a whole have tried to discharge their duties. Admittedly they cannot afford to rest on their past achievements. In this critical period of the economic evolution of our country symbolised by the successive Five Year Plans, they have the privilege to play a most significant role, which requires sustained attention, and, therefore, they will have to rise to yet greater heights than hitherto. Considering their performance hitherto in the face of heavy odds, I have no doubt that the House will join me in wishing well by the Railwaymen in the years to come and in the further future ahead.

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