

**PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE
(1967-68)**

EIGHTEENTH REPORT

(FOURTH LOK SABHA)

[Audit Report (Civil), 1967 relating to the Ministry of
Transport and Shipping (Border Roads Organisation)]



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI**

February, 1968/Magha, 1889 (Saka)

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PART II—MINUTES*

Minutes of the sitting of the Public Accounts Committee held on 5th August, 1967 (Fore-noon).

*Not printed. One cyclostyled copy laid on the Table of the House and five copies placed in Parliament Library.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

(1967-68)

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SECRETARIAT

Shri Avtar Singh Rikhy—*Deputy Secretary.*

Shri R. M. Bhargava—*Under Secretary.*

*Declared elected on the 30th November, 1967 *vice* Shri Mohammed Yussuf Saleem ceased to be a Member of the Committee on his appointment as Deputy Minister.

INTRODUCTION

1, the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee, as authorised by the Committee, do present on their behalf this Eighteenth Report (Fourth Lok Sabha) on Audit Report (Civil), 1967, relating to the Ministry of Transport & Shipping (Border Roads Organisation).

2. The Audit Report (Civil), 1967, was laid on the Table of the House on 7th April, 1967. The Committee examined the paras dealt with in this Report at their sitting held on 5th August, 1967 (fore-noon). The Committee considered and finalised this Report at their sitting held on 30th January, 1968 (after-noon). Minutes of the sitting of the Committee from Part II* of the Report.

3. A statement showing the summary of the main conclusions recommendations of the Committee is appended to the Report (Appendix II). For facility of reference these have been printed in thick type in the body of the Report.

4. The Committee place on record their appreciation of the assistance rendered to them in the examination of these Audit paras by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India.

5. They would also like to express their thanks to the officers of the Ministry of Transport & Shipping and the Ministry of Defence for the co-operation extended by them in giving information to the Committee.

NEW DELHI;
February, 12, 1968.
Magha 23, 1889 (Saka).

M. R. MASANI,
Chairman,
Public Accounts Committee.

*Not printed. One cyclostyled copy laid on the Table of the House and five copies placed in Parliament Library.

MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT AND SHIPPING

(BORDER ROAD ORGANISATION)

Audit Report (Civil), 1967

*Infructuous expenditure to abandonment of roads—Para 99,
page 124.*

In May, 1964, the Border Roads Development Board decided to take up immediately the construction of two roads in a certain area at an estimated cost of Rs. 54.21 lakhs which had been surveyed earlier during July—September, 1963.

1.2. The roads were required to be completed by December, 1964. The estimates were sanctioned between May and September, 1964. In May, 1965, when the roads were still under construction, it was decided to abandon the work. The expenditure of Rs. 19.63 lakhs incurred in the meantime has thus not served the intended purpose.

1.3. It has been stated that, in future, roads will be projected taking into consideration the period of construction.

1.4. The Committee enquired about the reasons for the delay of eight months in taking a decision about the construction of two roads which had been surveyed in July—September, 1963, and asked why the construction of roads was abandoned later on, when an expenditure of Rs. 19.63 lakhs had already been incurred on the construction of a part of those roads. The Secretary, Ministry of Defence, stated that the border road development programme followed the requirements laid down by the General Staff in terms of their plans. In July—September, 1963, a survey was made with a view to take up the construction work later on. The decision to take up construction of these roads was not taken until May, 1964. In June, 1964, construction of one road was taken up and the construction of the other road was taken up in October, 1964. As these roads were to be constructed in Jammu & Kashmir State, many problems were involved, and it was not physically possible to complete the work by the scheduled time i.e., December, 1964. In that particular area no work was possible between November and May because of snow. The witness added "I personally think that the Border Roads Organisation should have indicated to the General Staff that they would not be able to do it by 1964". The witness further added that in December, 1964, the General Staff gave second

priority in place of the highest priority to the construction of those roads. In other words the same degree of urgency was not attached to the execution of the work. The actual decision to abandon the construction of roads was taken by the General Staff in March, 1965. In May, 1965, the formal decision to abandon it was taken by the Board. In between these months, no construction was done.

1.5. Asked whether the roads constructed under the Operational Works Procedure were required to conform to "all weather" specifications, the witness replied that those were "fair weather" roads and not "all weather" roads. Apart from that, specifications were laid down by the General Staff about the strength and width of roads. The Border Roads Organisation had no say about those specifications. In reply to a question, the Director General, Border Roads, stated that fair weather roads were 20 feet wide and did not have any surface placed on them. All weather roads, had a 12 feet wide black topped surface so that these could be used throughout the year.

1.6. The Committee enquired whether the General Staff changed their operational needs all of a sudden and therefore, abandoned the construction of those roads. The Secretary, Ministry of Defence, stated that actually the change in their thinking started in December, 1964, when the General Staff had reduced the priority from the highest to second place. In March, 1965, the General Staff said that they did not need the roads at all and therefore, they abandoned the construction. The witness denied that the decision to abandon the construction of roads was on account of the apprehension that it would take a long time to complete them.

1.7. Asked whether the portion of the roads already completed could be used in future for some purpose, the witness stated that at present they were being used for movement of pickets though they were not capable of being used for operational purpose as originally envisaged. The Director General, Border Roads stated that these roads were usable by jeeps. They were not doing any maintenance and the roads would gradually deteriorate. The Secretary, Ministry of Defence, added that the use of the roads was not so frequent as to justify their regular maintenance.

1.8. In reply to a question, the witness stated that the Jammu and Kashmir Government might require one of the roads in about two or three years time, depending on the development of the roads under their own Plan. The Committee pointed out that if the roads were allowed to deteriorate further, more expenditure would be incurred on them in case those were to be used again. The witness

stated that they had "to persuade the Jammu & Kashmir Government to take it over as it would not be possible for us to spend any money on it because it is not really required".

1.9. In reply to another question, the witness stated that the programme of the Border Roads Organisation was motivated primarily by operational plans and the requirements of the Army. There was a secondary element of economic development of the area. He added that, whether it was Jammu and Kashmir or other areas, they did consult the State Governments. In these two cases the Jammu & Kashmir Government itself was not interested in taking over these roads. It was clear that these roads did not serve any local economic development need.

1.10. The Committee enquired "now that the public funds have been sunk in the construction of these roads to meet the vital defence needs, would it not be economically advisable to complete these roads anyhow, since they are already in a jeepable condition." The witness stated: "If they are not required for our purposes, no expenditure can be incurred out of our funds."

1.11. The Committee desired to know the actual wording of the communications sent to the Jammu & Kashmir Government and their reply to the communication. The Committee have been informed in a written note that a letter was addressed by the Union Government to the Jammu & Kashmir Government on the 24th March, 1965 to the effect that they 'might examine the feasibility of taking over this route for further development'.

1.12. The Jammu & Kashmir Government stated *inter alia* in their letter of 8th March, 1966 that '.....The State Government is not interested to take over the roads at present.....It will be done after the other roads taken in hand are completed and this would mean not earlier than 1971-72'.

1.13. The Committee are surprised to find that these two roads, the construction of which was taken up on a priority basis in May, 1964, were given second priority in December, 1964, and a decision to abandon their construction was taken in March 1965. It appears that the General Staff did not examine the necessity of the two roads in all its aspects before requesting the Border Roads Organisation to take up their construction. They did not also subsequently assess the requirements with reference to a change in the operational needs, if any, and inform the Border Roads Organisation in time not to incur any further expenditure on these roads. This has resulted in an expenditure of Rs. 19.63 lakhs without serving any operational or economic purpose.

1.14. The Committee suggest that the Jammu and Kashmir Government may again be approached to take over the two roads before their condition deteriorates due to non-use.

Unproductive expenditure resulting from change in alignment of roads—Para 100—Pages 124-125.

1.15. In the two cases mentioned below, change in alignment of roads after commencement of construction, entailed infructuous expenditure of Rs. 7.60 lakhs.

Name of the road	Date of		Unproductive expenditure (In lakhs of rupees)	Remarks
	Sanction	Abandonment of original alignment		
'A'	January, 1963 and September 1963.	November 1963.	3.51	A three mile stretch of the road was abandoned as it was found to be subject to heavy breaches during monsoons.
'B'	February, 1963.	April, 1964.	4.09	According to the alignment selected by the State Public Works Department who were originally responsible for construction, the road was to cross a certain river at a particular point. During the progress of the work, it was found that the construction of the bridge at that point would be difficult due to slips and falling boulders from the hill side. The proposed site of the crossing was, therefore, abandoned and the road re-aligned suitably. An expenditure of Rs. 4.09 lakhs on the work done at the original bridge site, and the formation cut of a portion of the road, which had to be abandoned, thus did not serve the intended purpose.

Apparently, the survey and investigation conducted on the site before starting construction were not sufficiently detailed, or thorough.

1.16. Explaining the reasons for making changes in the alignment of the roads, the Secretary, Ministry of Defence, stated that the Road 'A' was formerly with the Assam, Public Works Department. In December, 1962 it was decided to take over this work under the border roads programme. Between January, 1963 and the time of the change in the alignment, the Chief Engineer, Directorate General Border Roads, made a study and he found that many breaches were occurring on this road during the monsoons resulting in dislocation of traffic. He, therefore, decided to change the

alignment. The witness added that in these cases particularly in hilly areas which were subject to different intensities of monsoons, changes in alignment were inescapable in spite of careful and detailed initial survey and investigation. He stated: "The rock formation and soil formation behave in a peculiar way and sometimes in a very abnormal way under the stress of monsoon in a particular region, and this is what happened in 1963."

1.17. The Committee enquired whether before taking up the construction of the road, any investigation was conducted by the Border Roads Organisation. The witness stated "The plans and estimates are prepared by the State PWD, and the D.G.B.R. makes a general check. Of course, he subjects the data to a technical assessment and analysis, but if the data itself does not take into account certain factors, we would not know about it. In any case, this road forms part of the North Assam Trunk Road and I think it was quite legitimate for us to expect the local Public Works Department to have a much better knowledge of the topography, rock formation and soil in that area. Whatever technical data they gave, on that basis the Director General applied the checks and scrutiny and approved the plans. It was only in 1963 when the abnormal situation occurred that it had to be changed."

1.18. In reply to a question, the witness stated that it was their scheme and it was handed over to the State Public Works Department for execution. The Secretary, Border Roads Development Board added that in 1960 this road was included in the programme of the Board for the purposes of improvement and the State Public Works Department was entrusted with the work. Between 1960 and 1962, a considerable amount of work was done between North Amingaon and North Lakhimpur. This area was further away and the State Public Works Department had done only a little bit of work on it. Meanwhile the General Staff indicated that in the case of need, they might have to use this road. The Director General Border Roads was therefore asked whether they could take up a small stretch of 15 or 20 miles. It was in these circumstances that the Chief Engineer, Border Roads Development Board, came to be entrusted with the work, for it was not making much headway under the State P.W.D.

1.19. Asked whether at the time when the road was handed over to the Border Roads Organisation, the State P.W.D. indicated that this three mile stretch was subject to inundations and breaches, the Director General, Border Roads, stated that they knew about the situation. As far as the floods were concerned, the P.W.D. had another department—the Flood Control Department. They were car-

rying out certain flood control works in the same area. He added that the monsoon in 1963 was very severe and there was a lot of damage not only to the flood control works, but also to the road works. The river changed its course. With the experience of the monsoon of 1963, they felt that any work done on this alignment would get damaged during the monsoon unless extensive protective works were done. About the same time, a railway line was being constructed in the area. They thought that they would coordinate with the Railways and take advantage of some of the works they were building. So they decided to change the alignment and take it nearer to the railway line. In reply to a question, the witness stated that at that time two simultaneous works were going on in that area. One was the flood control work which was being done by the Flood Control Department. The other was being done by the Railways. The Railways started work in November, 1962 but suspended it. The Railways resumed the work in November, 1963. He added that they had informal discussions with the Railways as well as the Flood Control Department. The Committee asked as to why the alignment of the road by the Border Roads Organisation was changed, if they had consultations with the Railways before November, 1962 and whether the Railways also changed their alignment. The Director General, Border Roads stated. "The Railways have stuck to their alignment."

1.20. The Committee pointed out that it would have been better if there had been a little better coordination between the various agencies. The Secretary, Ministry of Defence, stated "I entirely agree that the road programmes have to be coordinated with similar programmes of the State Government as well as the Railways. This was particularly borne in on me when I visited the roads in that area, because I found that as a result of our road construction, the entire topography was being affected so adversely that it was creating a first class soil erosion problem in that area. Therefore, I told them at that time that they must coordinate their plans with the Agriculture Department, Soil Conservation Department, Forest Department, etc. to ensure that from the very beginning you take into account these problems and they may not become a legacy of a wonderful road which ultimately people might curse 100 years hence."

1.21. With regard to Road 'B', the representative of the Ministry of Defence stated that the construction of the road was included in the Border Roads programme in May, 1960 and it was entrusted to the State Public Works Department. In December, 1962, it was taken over from them. The process of taking over was completed on 1st April, 1963.

1.22. The Secretary, Border Roads Development Board, explained the procedure followed in the cases where projects were entrusted to the State Public Works Department. He stated *inter alia* "The position is that after an estimate has been approved by us, the entire work is done by the Public Works Department under their respective procedure, under the Control and rules and regulations applicable to them in the State itself." The Committee pointed out that from this procedure, it appeared that at no stage, was there a technical check by the Border Roads Organisation on the spot regarding the technical feasibility, suitability and connected matters and their check was based only on the data and material supplied by the State Public Works Departments. The Secretary, Ministry of Defence, stated that the State Government's own organisation was fairly well technically qualified and added "We will issue instructions to our D.G.B.R. and in future he will try to see that before finally we give technical sanction one of his own Chief Engineers would make a general survey of the area and make whatever general assessment he can. But I would like to say that he would not even then be able to acquire that detailed technical knowledge of the area which only those who live in it or work in it can."

1.23. As regards to this case, the witness stated that the Public Works Department decided to construct a road which was to cross Dhauli Ganga. During the progress of work, they found that there was one particular crack, a small slip on the left bank of the river. But it was not considered serious thing. The construction of the bridge continued. Next year, as a result of the monsoons it was noticed that not only the slip had widened but that on the other side of the river some disturbing cracks on the hill appeared. So, they came to the conclusion that it would not be possible perhaps to cross the river at that spot. The witness added that the Additional Chief Engineer, Public Works Department, who went there in connection with periodical conferences discussed the matter with the then Director General, Border Roads. There were series of discussions between the Chief Engineer, Public Works Department, the officers of the Directorate General Border Roads and other officers concerned. Twice between April, 1963 and 1964, one of the Chief Engineers was sent by the Director General, Border Roads to that place. Later on, the Chief Engineer of the Border Roads Organisation was also sent by the Director General, Border Roads. He had a lot of experience on another important road and was one of the experts. Ultimately a view was taken that it was not possible to construct bridge at that point. They fixed another site for easy alignment of the road, the maximum stretch of which had already been built by the Public Works Department. Therefore, due to all these factors the align-

ment was changed after full consultation between the engineers of the Border Roads Organisation and the State Public Works Department.

1.24. The Committee enquired whether they had ascertained from the State Public Works Department as to why they suggested the earlier alignment. The witness replied that there were discussions between them. In reply to another question, the Director General, Border Roads stated that when the Public Works Department Engineers decided on the bridge site, they thought that they would be able to control the slip. But, later on, it was found that the slip got magnified and a threat arose to the bridge.

1.25. At the instance of the Committee, the Border Roads Development Board has furnished a note stating the nature of data and other relevant details which are required to be submitted by the State P.W.D. and other Departments to the Border Roads Organisation and the nature of scrutiny exercised by the Director General Border Roads before according sanction (Appendix I).

1.26. From the note, the Committee find that the Border Roads Organisation depends on the data furnished by the State P.W.D. and the proposals from the P.W.D. are normally accepted on the basis of their technical assessment. The Government control is exercised by the respective State Government. Technical control during execution is also the responsibility of the Chief Engineer, State P.W.D. except that the designs of all bridges having a water way over 100' will be submitted to the Director General Border Roads for approval. As the responsibility for technical control during execution of the project in case of P.W.D. rests with the respective Chief Engineers, no regular inspections are carried out by the officers of the Director General Border Roads.

1.27. The Committee are distressed to note that an infructuous expenditure of Rs. 7.50 lakhs was incurred on account of changes that had to be made in the alignment of roads after commencement of their construction. They feel that with proper planning and coordination between the State P.W.D., the Railways and the Border Roads Organisation, this infructuous expenditure could have been avoided.

1.28. The Committee note that the Border Roads Organisation is completely dependant on the data furnished by the State P.W.D. and do not make their own assessment. The result of this is that the work of construction which was started on the alignment prepared by the State P.W.D. had to be changed later on in these two cases. It is

evident that the present procedure requires improvement. The committee feel that in order to avoid such a situation, it will be appropriate if the Chief Engineers of the Directorate General, Border Roads, make an independent general survey of the area before according technical sanction.

1.29. They also trust that, as assured by the representative of the Ministry of Defence, the Border Roads programme will be fully co-ordinated with similar programmes of the State Governments and the Railways so that they profit from one another's technical data and experience. Such coordination would make not only for economy but also ensure better topographical management to obviate problems of soil erosion at a later date.

Uncoordinated raising of civilian units, para 101 (Revised).

1.30. Civilian complement of 223 units (pioneer Companies, Transport Companies, Field Workshops, Supply Platoons, etc.) for construction of border roads were raised at a base in 1961—65. The raisings were not, however, coordinated with the requirements which resulted in an infructuous expenditure of about Rs. 34 lakhs.

(a) Units disbanded at the base itself.

1.31. 15 units (excepting some personnel of these units who were posted to other units in which vacancies existed) were disbanded at the base itself, without being moved to the project sites, apparently as they were found to be not required. The entire expenditure totalling about Rs. 8 lakhs on these units during the period in which they were being raised and while the units raised were staying idle at the base (which exceeded over a year in some cases) as shown below has been infructuous:—

TABLE—I

Year in which raising commenced	Interval between commencement of raising and disbandment					Total
	within 6 months	6 to 12 months	12 to 18 months	18 to 24 months	over 24 months	
1961	—	—	—	—	1	1
1962	2	—	—	2	2	6
1963	—	8	—	—	—	8
	2	8	—	2	3	15

(b) Delay in despatch of units to the project sites:

1.32. 208 other units raised were moved from the base depot to the project sites, but after a delay extending over a year in some

cases (counting from the date of commencement of the raising) as shown below:—

TABLE—II

Year of raising	Extent of delay from the date of raising						Total
	less than one month	1 to less than 2 months	2 to less than 4 months	4 to less than 6 months	6 to less than 12 months	over 12 months	
1961	7	24	12	10	10	7	70
1962	6	13	17	10	15	6	67
1963	4	10	12	4	2	3	35
1964	—	1	2	1	5	—	9
1965	8	11	6	1	1	—	27
	25	59	49	26	33	16	208

1.33. The Border Roads Development Board have explained that there was delay in the completion of the raising of some of the units, "because sufficient number of tradesmen and officers, who could form an effective working nucleus of the project area could not be recruited" and that such delays, when many units have to be raised simultaneously, were unavoidable. It is, however, observed that there was delay, extending to over 2 months in a number of cases, even in the despatch to the project sites after the units had been fully raised, as shown below:

TABLE—III

Year of raising	Extent of delay in despatching the units after the raising was completed					Total
	less than one month	1 to less than 2 months	2 to less than 4 months	4 to less than 6 months	6 to less than 12 months	
1961	69	—	1	—	—	70
1962	62	3	2	—	—	67
1963	32	3	—	—	—	35
1964	7	2	—	—	—	9
1965	26	1	—	—	—	27
	196	9	3	—	—	208

It would appear that the raising of these units had not been co-ordinated with the requirements.

1.34. It will be observed from column (2) of Table 2 that in a number of cases the units were raised and moved to the project site within a month of the commencement of the raising. Even assuming that a period of two months was normally necessary, the raising and movement of 124 units referred to in columns 4—7 would appear to have been unduly delayed. The infructuous expenditure on these 124 units, during the period in excess of 2 months spent in the raising and/or movement to the project areas, is roughly estimated at Rs. 26 lakhs.

1.35. The Committee asked as to why a reply was not sent to Audit within the usual period of six weeks or at least before the Audit report was sent to the press in March, 1967 when this case was reported to Government in December, 1966. The Secretary, Ministry of Defence, stated that the audit paragraph raised many details which had to be checked from different units and by March, 1967, they could only get the preliminary replies from different units. On getting the replies, they were scrutinised by the D.G.B.R. and the Ministry of Defence. They had to appoint team of officers to go into this case. The reply was sent to a Audit in July, 1967. The witness stated, "I think it was worth while taking this much time in the run."

1.36. The Committee pointed out that the despatch of some units was delayed very long and some were ultimately disbanded without full utilisation and that had resulted in an infructuous expenditure of about Rs. 34 lakhs. The Committee enquired about the steps taken by the Border Roads Organisation to ensure that there was better planning and coordination so that the infructuous expenditure of this type could be avoided. The witness as stated that the Public Accounts Committee (1966-67) had made some recommendations on it last year, as a result of which some improvements had been effected. He added "In 1966, we raised 17 units and the time taken in raising was 4 to 55 days and for their despatch 2 to 21 days. In the current year, we have raised two units so far and they have both taken even shorter time".

1.37. On being asked about details of the new procedure, the Secretary, Ministry of Defence, stated, "We have now laid down a working rule that the period of stay in the General Reserve Engineer Force Centre of any unit under raising, shall not exceed two months. When it exceed two months, the Director General will obtain the explanation from the Centre within a fortnight and satisfy himself about the time taken to complete the raising of the unit. When the raising of a unit can not be completed within four months, the case is reported with details to the Government. It has also been possi-

ble for us to lay down that the despatch of these units to different stations will not take more than one month." The witness added, "I have also told the Director General that he should assign it as a duty to his Director of Personnel to look into the statements which are submitted every month and, if there are any delays taking place, to secure an explanation even without this particular procedure getting involved.

1.38. The Committee enquired about the procedure that the Ministry followed in determining the need for raising new units before issuing sanction for their raising. The Secretary, Ministry of Defence, stated that it was really the Board of Border Roads Development and not the Ministry that came into the picture. The Director General, Border Roads considered the annual workload in terms of the plans for road construction and the work in hand. Then he estimated the requirements of new units and the place where they were likely to be required. On that basis he submitted a report to the Border Roads Development Board and generally the sanction was given in the light of his recommendations. Whatever further scrutiny was required, it was made in the Board's office. Once the sanction was given, the Director General issued the sanction for the raising of the units.

1.39 In reply to a question, the witness stated that they had issued instructions in April, 1966, to complete each unit before raising the next unit.

1.40. The Committee desired to know when the Director of Personnel was instructed to scrutinise the statements. The Secretary, Border Roads Development Board, stated that right from the beginning monthly statements were being received from the General Reserve Engineer Force Centres, in respect of the position as on the last day of the month category-wise and numberwise. That was sent to the Directorate for scrutiny. At a particular point of time even though the full authorised strength had not been raised the Director of Personnel could move a unit. He added, "We found in the course of examination of these statements, as a result of the audit paragraph, that they could have been scrutinised more carefully and that in certain cases perhaps the units could have been moved earlier. So, what has been done now is that the Director General, Border Roads has got an arrangement to see that the scrutiny takes place every month and at a proper level and the results are brought to his notice." The Secretary, Ministry of Defence, added, "When I went into this whole matter in regard to the 1961—63 happenings, I thought that the main lapse was on the part of the Director of Personnel is

not scrutinising. So, I told the Director General that he must ensure that this is done."

1.41. The Committee pointed out that 15 units were raised but they were disbanded without even being used and asked the explanation for it. The Secretary, Ministry of Defence, stated, "There is none. I can make only one point here. If you look at the dates on which they were raised and despatched, they happen to coincide, in many cases, with the Chinese invasion and subsequent dislocation. That is the only explanation I can give. But that is only an explanation in extenuation, not a justification."

1.42. At the instance of the Committee, the Border Roads Development Board has furnished a note on sub-para (a) stating that the delay in 'disbanding' the units and transferring the personnel to other units, which were working with deficient strength in projects, is "mainly due to the uncertainties of deployment plans consequent on the Chinese aggression. In retrospect, however, it seems that, with better planning and control on the part of the Directorate, the retention of these personnel could have been considerably avoided."

1.43 During the period covered by the Audit Para Government sanctions were being obtained by Director General Border Roads for the units, which were, according to his assessment, needed for implementing the programme of the Board. The timing of the raising, the despatch of units and their distribution amongst various projects were left to the discretion and judgement of D.G.B.R. This policy was adopted to ensure maximum flexibility in the development resources and achieving coordination of men and machines in project areas. In order to keep a watch over the progress of recruitment, periodical statements indicating the progress of raising of each unit and number (categorywise) of the personnel recruited for each unit were being submitted by the Commander, General Reserve Engineer Force Centre to D.G.B.R. Directorate of Personnel, who received these reports, decided the stage at which units could be moved to project sites. "If the review had been carried out effectively, the retention of the personnel of the units, which were later 'disbanded' could have been avoided." The arrangements in DGBR's office were, however, tightened up as soon as the matter came to the notice of the Government through para 84 of Audit Report (Civil), 1966.

1.44. Regarding delay in the raising of units mentioned in sub-para (b) of Audit Report, it has been stated *inter-alia* in the Ministry's note "It is, however, accepted that. With better administrative and organisational control. It could have been possible to avoid retention of a large number of personnel." The note furnished by the Ministry also states that, 'remedial measures to tighten up administrative control, and to avoid delay in raising of units and their despatch, had already been taken, as a result of which there was no case of delay in raising or in despatch of units during the years 1966 and 1967.'

1.45. The Committee regret to note that an infructuous expenditure of Rs. 34 lakhs was incurred due to the disbandment of units or the delay in raising or despatching of units to the work site. It is all the more regrettable that an expenditure of Rs. 8 lakhs (out of these Rs. 34 lakhs) was incurred on 15 units which were disbanded at the base itself. According to the Ministry's own note, "with better planning and control on the part of the Directorate, the retention of these personnel could have been considerably avoided."

1.46. The Committee are sorry to note that due to a lapse on the part of the office of the Director of Personnel (D.G.B.R.) in not scrutinising properly the monthly statements furnished by the General Reserve Engineer Force Centres, proper administrative control was not kept on the raising, despatch and retention of units. They trust that in future administrative control in the office of the Director of Personnel will be tightened so that delay in the raising and despatch of units is strictly avoided.

1.47. Another disquieting aspect of this case is that the delay in raising and despatch of units to project sites came to the notice of the Department only when it was pointed out by Audit in Audit Report (Civil) 1966. The Committee feel that this should have come to the notice of officers of the Department themselves before it was pointed out by Audit if they had kept proper administrative control. The Committee also hope that with the measures adopted by the Border Roads Organisation, the requirements of the units will be assessed realistically and there will not be any delay in the raising or despatching of units to the work site in future.

Non-utilisation of Construction plant and machinery—Para 102 (Revised).

1.48. On 31 May, 1966, the Border Roads Organisation had 596 earth-moving machines (e.g. excavators, tractors), 958 construction plants (e.g. concrete mixers, road rollers), 903 drilling equipment (e.g. rock drills, air-compressors) and 265 other tools and plants (e.g. pumping sets, refrigerators). The book value of 2,722 machines, most of which were procured from the trade, totalled Rs. 14.18 crores. These figures exclude equipment under overhaul/repairs in Base Workshops (as also certain other equipment e.g. given on loan).

1.49. 1,412 of the 2,722 machines had been acquired a year or more ago; the remaining 1,310 machines had been received during the year ending May, 1966.

A review of the utilisation of the 1,412 machines which were on hand throughout, during the year June, 1965—May, 1966, as reflected in the census returns disclosed the following:—

1.50. (a) 375 machines (26 per cent) were not shown to have been utilised at all during the year. Of these, 289 machines (70 with hour meter and 219 without hour meter) had not been utilised ever since their purchase/receipt from workshops after overhaul.

1.51. The remaining 86 machines (28 with hour meter and 58 without hour meter) (23 earth moving and construction machines and 63 others) were not shown to have been utilised throughout the year, although they had been used for some period during the preceding year(s).

1.52. (b) 1,037 (74 per cent) of the machines valued at Rs. 4.50 crores in the books, were utilised to some extent during the year. A

large majority of these were, however, shown to have been used for only a very short period, as shown below:—

Number of hours utilised during the year	Number of machines		
	Earth moving and construction	Others	Total
Upto 100	31	16	47
101-250	62	38	100
251-500	96	44	140
501-1000	165	64	229
1001-1500	137	41	178
1501-2000	69	19	88
2001-2500	25	12	37
Over 2500	16	2	18
	596	235	831
No hour meters	30	9	39
Information not available	47	7	54
	682	3	717

153. The Border Roads Development Board have not laid down the optimum period of utilisation of machine during a year. The Central Water and Power Commission have, however, laid down that, allowing for interruption in work due to rains, etc., it should be possible for a machine to work for at least 2,500 hours in a year. Director General, Border Roads had assumed while fixing the usage rates for the purpose of proforma debiting the construction accounts of the projects that it should be possible to use annually the machines to the extent of 1200 hours in the Western Sector and 1500 hours in the Eastern Sector. Even on this basis, only about 1/3rd of earth moving and construction machines (for which only information has been supplied) can be said to have been fully utilised. The utilisation of the remaining 2/3rd machines was much below par.

154. The obviously very high "off the road" ratio of machines, and the serious under-utilisation of those in use, reflected by the figures given above, is bound to result in employment of unbalanced manpower, delay in execution of work and increase in cost.

1.55. With regard to the non-utilisation of different kinds of plant and machinery in the Border Roads Organisation, the witness stated that it would not be correct to infer from the data that a particular machine had remained idle all along as out of 289 machines, stated to have not been utilised by the present holders (1 to 3 years), 219 machines had no meters. So there was no data on which one could say that they had not been used. As regards the remaining machines, the witness added that there were many difficulties inherent in the utilisation of the machinery on a widely dispersed programme of the Border Roads Organisation. Asked if log books were not maintained for the machines and it would not be possible to calculate their working hours from the petrol consumed by these machines, the Secretary, Border Roads Development Board, said, "A log book is maintained and in certain respects a document called Vehicle Daily Running Account is maintained. The Accounts are maintained at the project sites where the machines are working and these are all spread over in the Border Roads." The Secretary, Ministry of Defence, stated that in those cases where metres did not exist, only the records on the sites in respect of each machines could be looked into, but that would take a lot of time.

1.56. As regards supervision about the utilisation of the machines, the Secretary, Ministry of Defence, stated "There, I have told the Director General that he should revise his proforma and ensure that he can get adequate information to see that the machinery is not lying idle for reasons beyond the control of administration."

1.57. Explaining the prevailing procedure, the witness stated that the whole thing was planned in terms of the work that was proposed to be undertaken or that remained to be done in that year. The utilisation of machinery was also planned in the same way. In the actual operations it so happened that there were different stages in work which did not come simultaneously but were taken one after the other. The utilisation of machinery had to be done in terms of the completion of the previous stages of the work until the machinery was fit to be used. Therefore, sometimes delays occurred on this account and sometimes there was overlapping.

1.58. The witness further stated that there was also the question of transporting the machines. They had to be broken up into 3 tonne loads and then transported and then reassembled. The machines could not also be utilised due to non-availability of spare-parts and repairing facilities. Due to hostilities with Pakistan in

August-September, 1965, there was a lot of dislocation during June, 1965 to May, 1966 and consequential changes in the Border Roads Programme itself which meant some re-alignment of the use of the equipment.

1.59. The Secretary, Ministry of Defence, added, "I have not been quite satisfied with this.

We are entrusting the whole question of the utilisation of machinery and the systems and the procedures that we should follow to the National Productivity Council for a work study. We shall take whatever remedial measures that are required to be taken. Actually, even in advance of that, the Defence Minister has asked me, the Chief of the Army Staff and the Director General, Border Roads, to look into the problems of this nature and see what remedial action can be taken."

160. The Committee pointed out that the Central Water and Power Commission had laid down that the optimum utilisation of such types of machines per annum should be 2,500 hours while the Director General Border Roads was of the opinion that taking into consideration the conditions of altitudes, climatic conditions and certain other factors, both on the Eastern and Western sector, it should range between 1200 and 1500 hours. The Committee enquired whether this minimum of 1200 to 1500 hours has been achieved. The witness stated that the utilisation of individual machinery varied from 1000 hours to about 1750 hours. He added that it was one of the problems which they wanted to study in greater detail to ensure as good an optimum figure as possible.

1.61. The Director General, Border Roads, stated that the figures given by the Central Water and Power Commission were for two shifts of seven hours each whereas the Border Roads Organisation normally worked in one shift.

1.62. In reply to a question, the Secretary, Ministry of Defence, stated that he would not accept that 26 per cent of the total machinery was not utilised at all. He added "What I would say is that they were lying idle."

1.63. In reply to another question the Director General, Border Roads, stated "We assess the number of machines which would be working in particular sector, and based on the number of machines, we work out the number of personnel required and then the units required. Thus we take into account the percentage of machines which may not be available for work for various reasons. It is,

therefore, taken care of in the establishments and in the demand for manpower."

1.64. The Committee pointed out that if the returns about the actual working of each individual machine received by the D.G. Border Roads were properly studied, then it should be possible to avoid purchased of machines which might not be required. The Director General, Border Roads, stated "as far as the returns are concerned, we are doing two things. Firstly, as regards the census return, we are modifying it, so that we would get detailed information about each machine, its location, condition and all that. In addition to this on the Inspectorate side (I have an Inspector of Works) I am introducing a return which will go into the utilisation of equipment and its output, so that we will be able to control from here the deployment, utilisation and output."

1.65. With regard to the co-ordination of work in neighbouring areas for fuller utilisation of machinery, the Director General, Border Roads, stated that they reviewed the progress and the programme every month with Chief Engineers. Whenever they found that a certain item of work was delayed for some reasons and the machines had become surplus, they moved such machines to a neighbouring area for fuller utilisation.

1.66. The Committee are constrained to observe that as many as 289 machines valued at Rs. 70 lakhs had not been utilised ever since their purchase receipt from workshops after overhaul and that two-thirds of 1,037 earth moving and construction machines valued at Rs. 4.5 crores were utilised for less than the optimum hours fixed for them. These statistics are symptomatic of the manner in which machines are acquired by Government departments without critically examining whether it is essential to purchase them and whether these will be put to optimum use. The Committee note that Government have taken some action now to constitute a high-powered Committee consisting of the Secretary, Ministry of Defence, the Chief of the Army Staff and the Director-General of Border Roads to go into the matter. They hope that this high-powered Committee will critically review the existing inventory of machinery available with the Border Roads Organisation and lay down guide lines to ensure optimum utilisation of the existing machinery and to avoid purchases of excess machinery in future.

1.67. The Committee feel that Government should arrange for a thorough expert investigation of the problems of inventory control

and materials management in the Defence Services with a view to effect economy.

Injudicious purchase of slat conveyors—Para 103—Pages 128-129.

1.68. In July, 1961—March, 1962, Government sanctioned the purchase of 2 slat conveyors and 20 belt conveyors at a cost of Rs. 3.90 lakhs, for conveyance of materials in connection with the construction of border roads. The slat conveyors (designed for transportation of packages, or bulk materials, up to a height of 16 feet) were proposed to be used for loading/unloading ration bags, cement bags, machinery, etc., weighing 1—3 cwts. each, in/from cargo planes. The belt conveyors (designed for conveying loose materials or small articles, up to a height of 13 feet) were intended to be used for conveying boulders, weighing up to 1 cwt. each to stone-crushers, and loading tippers from stock-piles of crushed stones of 2-3 inch size. The Director General, Board Roads, however, purchased 12 slat conveyors (Rs. 2.34 lakhs) against 2 sanctioned, and did not purchase any of the 20 belt conveyors.

1.69. All the 12 slat conveyors, are lying idle (2 in damaged condition) since their receipt in January—June 1963.

1.70. The 12 slat conveyors are now proposed to be converted into belt conveyors. It may be mentioned that as the initial cost, as also the running cost, of belt conveyors, is less than that of the slat conveyors, the purchase of belt conveyors in the first instance would have saved Government an expenditure of Rs. 55,860 (Rs. 49,860 on account of difference in price and Rs. 6,000 proposed to be spent on conversion) and a certain amount, annually, on running expenses.

1.71. With regard to the purchase of 12 slat conveyors instead of 2 slat conveyors and 20 belt conveyors as sanctioned by the Government, the Secretary, Border Roads Development Board, stated "before the second order for these ten slat conveyors was placed, the indent did come to Government and we had pointed out that the administrative approval for the belt conveyors should really be amended and on that it was explained to us by the Director General, Border Roads that the two machines were functionally the same and it was not necessary again to formally amend the administrative approval."

1.72. The Committee enquired whether the officer concerned had the authority to modify the Government order. The Secretary, Ministry of Defence, replied "It was the Board which took the decision."

1.73. The Secretary, Ministry of Defence, added that the slat conveyors were ordered for specific purpose, namely of mechanical loading and unloading on aircraft from the ground which was higher than usual, and the aircraft was being used in areas where mechanical power was not easy to get. In expectation of a particular workload, these 12 slat conveyors were ordered by the Director General, Border Roads. But due to emergency in 1962 all the plans of airlift etc. had to be subordinated to the operational needs and therefore the airlift load of the Border Roads Organisation went down considerably. Thus the use of these slat conveyors was not possible.

1.74. In reply to a question, the Secretary, Ministry of Defence, stated that they had consulted the Air Force and the Indian Air Lines Corporation and they had intimated that they did not need the slat conveyors. The witness added that he had suggested to the Director General, Border Roads to approach the Indian Air Lines Corporation again because they had now become slightly more mechanically minded.

1.75. In reply to another question, the Director General, Border Roads, stated that the price of the slat conveyor was Rs. 19,480 and the belt conveyor was Rs. 15,325 and that Rs. 500 would be required to convert a slat conveyor into a belt conveyor.

1.76. The Committee regret to note that the 12 slat conveyors purchased by the Border Roads Organisation were lying idle since their receipt and that it was now proposed to convert them into belt conveyors. The Committee desire that this costly equipment should be suitably utilised and, if necessary, the Indian Air Lines Corporation may be contacted again for the transfer of this equipment.

1.77. The Committee pointed out that the Border Roads Organisation had 48 belt conveyors and out of that they had not used 8 since May, 1965 and with the conversion of 12 more they would have 20 belt conveyors which would be lying idle. The witness stated that they were using all the belt conveyors except those which were in class 'C' condition. There were only 32 belt conveyors which were in fit condition and those were being used. The balance of the belt conveyors which were now in 'C' condition would be sent to the base workshops for overhaul.

1.78. The Committee enquired why those belt conveyors were in 'C' condition for long and whether those were not attended to regularly and speedily. The Director General, Border Roads, stated that they would look into the matter.

1.79. At the instance of the Committee, the Border Roads Development Board has furnished a note stating that out of 48 belt conveyors procured so far, 16 are in Class 'C' condition. Seven numbers became Class 'C' in September-December 1966 and nine during January-May 1967. The percentage is 33.5. With regard to steps taken to repair those conveyors, it is stated in the note that the bulk indent for spares for overhaul of the equipment, excluding the engines, has been finalised by DGBR. But in regard to engine spares, the price list has not yet been received by D.G.B.R. The firm is being pressed to indicate the prices without which no indents can be approved.

1.80. The Committee are unhappy to note that 33.5 per cent of belt conveyors are in class 'C' condition. They are also surprised to note that a good number of them have been inoperative since long. The Committee need hardly emphasise that the upkeep of machinery should be the first concern of any field organisation. They desire that, consistent with requirements, all efforts should be made to repair the belt conveyors without any further delay.

*Unnecessary and advance Procurement of Bitumen—Para 104—
Pages 129-130.*

1.81. In the two instances given below, large quantities of bitumen were procured in excess/advance of requirements involving the unproductive lockup of Rs. 1.94 lakhs besides risk of loss through leakage.

1.82. (a) A road is first constructed to a jeepable standard and then improved to motorable standard. While the former is not metalled at all, the latter are metalled, and black topped, at a later date, if considered necessary.

1.83. In June, 1964 the Chief Engineer of a project placed an order for supply of 300 tonnes of bitumen, to be supplied by 15 September, 1964, for black topping of 20 miles of a 50 mile road. Government had, however, accorded an *ad hoc* sanction, in December, 1963, for only a jeepable road; the formal sanction for the first 20 miles issued in January, 1965 was for a motorable road, but did not contemplate metalling at that stage. As question of black topping would have arisen only after the road had been metalled, bitumen was obviously ordered too much in advance.

1.84. In September/December, 1964, the Chief Engineer cancelled the order for about 150 tonnes and asked the firm to postpone supply of the remaining quantity till March, 1965. Accordingly, 160 tonnes were received in March, 1965.

1.85. While the quantity referred to above was lying unutilised, in October, 1965 the Chief Engineer placed a further order for 400 tonnes to be supplied by 15 December, 1965. 200 tonnes—half the quantity was received in December, 1965; order for the balance was cancelled in January, 1966.

1.86. The entire quantity of 360 tonnes costing Rs. 1.23 lakhs, received in March, 1965 (160 tonnes) and in December, 1965 (200 tonnes), is lying unutilised (December, 1966). Some of the containers are said to be leaking.

1.87. (b) In his report for the period July-December, 1965, the Inspector of Border Roads Works has stated that "in one area, nearly 208 tonnes of bitumen (consting Rs. 0.71 lakh) were held on charge during quarter ending March, 1965 which have been lying unused for over one year. Another 616 tonnes (costing Rs. 210 lakhs) have been received during April, 1965. Out of this only 217 tonnes have been lifted to work sites"; balance of 607 tonnes were moved to work sites, only in September, 1965 to March, 1966 after the Inspector of Works suggested it. 138 tonnes are yet to be consumed (February, 1967).

1.88. The Committee enquired about the reasons for purchasing bitumen in excess/advance of requirements and without obtaining sanction. The Secretary, Ministry of Defence, stated "Actually, there is no doubt that the Chief Engineers concerned acted without authority. We are looking into the disciplinary aspect involved."

1.89. In reply to a question, the witness added that the whole thing had been utilised and only 100 tonnes were left.

1.90. Asked whether this happened because of the officer concerned and because there was some loophole in the procedure, the Secretary, Ministry of Defence, stated "He says there was something in the rules which authorised this advance planning, but on the face of it that argument does not hold good, if you take the dates on which the thing was used, nor had the works reached at that stage a situation in which bitumen could have been utilised within a reasonable time."

1.91. The Committee deplore the way in which the procurement of a large quantity of bitumen in excess/advance of requirements was made. This had not only resulted in the locking up of public money but also involved the risk of loss through leakage and other factors. The Committee would like to know what action has been taken against the officers concerned and the quantum of the loss suffered if any.

*Minus balance in accounts of construction materials, Para 105—
Page 130.*

1.92. Chief Engineers of various projects are authorised to hold stocks of the following stores in the base depots, up to certain maximum limits, for issue to the Task Forces as and when required:

- (i) consumable tools and plant, like shovels, pick-axes and explosives;
- (ii) construction materials (cement, steel, bridging etc.); and
- (iii) rations, petrol, oil and lubricants.

1.93. The book balance of the stores represents the stores in hand and must necessarily be a plus figure. In the case of three projects, however, the accounts of the stores maintained at the base depots showed a minus balance at the end of 1964-65 and 1965-66 as indicated below:--

	(In lakhs of rupees)	
	Balance at the end of	
	1964-65	1965-66
Project A	—80.29	—119.64
Project B	—13.85	—17.14
Project C	—9.36	—14.00
Total	—103.50	—150.78

1.94. Minus balances are indicative of defective maintenance of accounts; no purposeful use can be made of such accounts.

1.95. With regard to this para, the Secretary, Ministry of Defence, stated that if balances were minus, then "we would have stopped working long ago, but we are taking care of it. In consultation with Audit we are trying to see whether we can convert the minus into plus more easily".

1.96. As the minus balances in the stores accounts are indicative of defective maintenance of accounts, the Committee trust that the Border Roads Organisation will take necessary steps to bring these accounts to a satisfactory level and to take adequate remedial measures in consultation with Audit to avoid such minus balances in the accounts in future.

General

1.97. The Committee are unhappy that the raising of units and the utilisation of man-power by the Border Roads Organisation have not been undertaken in an effective and coordinated manner and have led to infructuous expenditure of Rs. 34 lakhs.

It has also come to notice that, while a large number of machines involving an outlay of Rs. 11 crores were purchased, many of them were either not utilised at all since their purchase or there were delays of one to three years in their utilisation after receipt from workshops.

The Committee would like Government to look into the various aspects of the working of the Border Roads Organisation and to take suitable steps to gear its machinery and put it on a thoroughly sound footing so that it can meet any eventuality effectively and efficiently. The Committee would like to be informed of the measures taken by Government to bring about the desired improvement in the Border Roads Organisation.

NEW DELHI;
February 12, 1968.

Magha 23, 1889 (Saka)

M. R. MASANI,
Chairman,
Public Accounts Committee.

APPENDIX I

(Ref. Para 1.25 of Report)

Sanctions for the road projects to be executed through the agency of the State PWDs are normally accorded at three stages as detailed below:—

Stage: I: Recce, survey and trace cut.

Stage: II: Formation cutting and protective works.

Stage: III: Surfacing in case of roads to be made fit for all weather traffic.

Cases in which the existing roads have to be improved, sanctions for the various stages are combined depending on plans of construction.

2. Reconnaissance, survey and trace-cut are sanctioned on *ad hoc* basis. In the light of the results of survey, alignment is fixed by the State PWD after consulting civil and where necessary, military authorities. The preparation of estimates is then taken in hand on the basis of longitudinal and cross-sections as assessed on the trace-cut.

3. The approximate estimates duly checked at various stages by PWD Officers are submitted by Chief Engineer, PWD to DGBR. The estimates are accompanied by the following details:

- (a) *Report*: A report indicating the cope of the work covered by the estimate and containing a detailed account of the existing road features, all available information about the existing or any proposed alignment availability of materials and labour etc.
- (b) *L&X Sections*: These are taken at suitable intervals on the selected alignment in support of the assessment of the quantum of earth work involved in formation cutting and an assessment of soil classification i.e. assessed percentage of hard rock, soft rock ordinary soil involved in the earth work.
- (c) Mile-wise details of quantities of permanent works in the case of permanent or protective works e.g. retaining and breast walls, culverts and parapet walls etc.
- (d) The thickness of pavement (soiling, metalling and black-topping) in surfacing estimates.

4. The estimates of the State PWDs are scrutinised by the DGBR, prior to submission to Government in respect of the following:—

- (i) The suitability of the gradients and the slopes of X Sections proposed for the assessed soil classification.
- (ii) Reasonableness of the quantities of earth work and other items included in the approximate estimate.
- (iii) The technical necessity and specifications for the various items of works proposed.

5. The estimates duly checked by DGBR are dealt with by DGBR Secretariat in consultation with Finance Ministry and administrative approval and expenditure sanction to the estimates (Subject to annual allotment of funds) are accorded to State Government.

6. After administrative approval and expenditure sanction has been accorded by the Central Government and funds have been allotted the execution of the border roads projects entrusted to the State PWDs is carried out within the scope of the administrative approval in accordance with their departmental Rules and procedures applicable to the projects of State PWDs. Any anticipated excess over 20 per cent will be reported to the Board for orders. The Governmental control is exercised by the respective State Government. Technical control during execution is also the responsibility of Chief Engineer, State PWD except that the designs of all bridges having a water way over 100' will be submitted to the DGBR for approval. However, progress reports of the physical work done in respect of each project as administratively approved are required to be forwarded by the PWDs to the DGBR monthly. A monthly expenditure return is also required to be furnished by the PWDs to the DGBR indicating the expenditure incurred on each project against the administrative approval. The reports are consolidated and the progress indicated periodically by DGBR to BRDB Secretariat. The performance of PWDs (State and Central) are included in the progress reports submitted at each meeting of Border Roads Development Board. On completion of the projects, completion reports are required to be submitted to DGBR.

As the responsibility for technical control during execution of the project in case of PDW rests with the respective Chief Engineers no regular inspections are carried out by Officers of DGBR. However, if any doubt or difficulty comes to notice a joint inspection is carried out by the representatives of DGBR and Chief Engineer of the State PWD concerned.

APPENDIX II

Summary of main Conclusions/Recommendations

S. No.	Para No. of Report	Ministry/Deptt. concerned	Conclusions/Recommendations
1	2	3	4
1	13	Transport and Shipping	The Committee are surprised to find that these two roads, the construction of which was taken up on a priority basis in May, 1964, were given second priority in December, 1964, and a decision to abandon their construction was taken in March, 1965. It appears that the General Staff did not examine the necessity of these two roads in all its aspects before requesting the Border Roads Organisation to take up their construction. They did not also subsequently assess the requirements with reference to a change in the operational needs, if any, and inform the Border Roads Organisation in time not to incur any further expenditure on these roads. This has resulted in an expenditure of Rs. 19.63 lakhs without serving any operational or economic purpose.
	1.14	do.	The Committee suggest that the Jammu & Kashmir Government may again be approached to take over the two roads before their condition deteriorates due to non-use.

- 2 1.27 do. The Committee are distressed to note that an infructuous expenditure of Rs. 7.60 lakhs was incurred on account of changes that had to be made in the alignment of roads after commencement of their construction. They feel that with proper planning and coordination between the State P.W.D., the Railways and the Border Roads Organisation, this infructuous expenditure could have been avoided.
- 1.28 do. The Committee note that the Border Roads Organisation is completely dependant on the data furnished by the State P.W.D. and do not make their own assessment. The result of this is that the work of construction which was started on the alignment prepared by the State P.W.D. had to be changed later on in these two cases. It is evident that the present procedure requires improvement. The Committee feel that in order to avoid such a situation, it will be appropriate if the Chief Engineers of the Directorate General, Border Roads, make an independent general survey of the area before according technical sanction.
- 1.29 do. They also trust that, as assured by the representative of the Ministry of Defence, the Border Roads programme will be fully co-ordinated with similar programmes of the State Governments and the Railways so that the profit from one another's technical data and experience. Such coordination would make not only for economy but also ensure better topographical management to obviate problems of soil erosion at a later date.
- 3 1.45 do. The Committee regret to note that an infructuous expenditure of Rs. 34 lakhs was incurred due to the disbandment of units of the delay in raising or despatching of units to the work site. It is all the
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more regrettable that an expenditure of Rs. 8 lakhs (out of these Rs. 34 lakhs) was incurred on 15 units which were disbanded at the base itself. According to the Ministry's own note, "with better planning and control on the part of the Directorate, the retention of these personnel could have been considerably avoided."

I.46

Transport and
Shipping

The Committee are sorry to note that due to a lapse on the part of the office of the Director of Personnel (D.G.B.R.) in not scrutinising properly the monthly statements furnished by the General Reserve Engineer Force Centres, proper administrative control was not kept on the raising, despatch and retention of units. They trust that in future administrative control in the office of the Director of Personnel will be tightened so that delay in the raising and despatch of units is strictly avoided.

I.47

do.

Another disquieting aspect of this case is that the delay in raising and despatch of units to project sites came to the notice of the Department only when it was pointed out by Audit in Audit Report (Civil) 1966. The Committee feel that this should have come to the notice of officers of the Department themselves before it was pointed out by Audit if they had kept proper administrative control. The Committee also hope that with the measurers adopted by the Border Roads Organisation, the requirements of the units will be assessed realistically and there will not be any delay in the raising or despatching of units to the work site in future.

4

1.66

do.

The Committee are constrained to observe that as many as 289 machines valued at Rs. 70 lakhs had not been utilised ever since their purchase/receipt from workshops after overhaul and that two-thirds of 1,037 earth moving and construction machines valued at Rs. 4.5 crores were utilised for less than the optimum hours fixed for them. These statistics are symptomatic of the manner in which machines are acquired by Government departments without critically examining whether it is essential to purchase them and whether these will be put to optimum use. The Committee note that Government have taken some action now to constitute a high-powered Committee consisting of the Secretary, Ministry of Defence, the Chief of the Army Staff and the Director General of Border Roads to go into the matter. They hope that this high-powered Committee will critically review the existing inventory of machinery available with the Border Roads Organisation and lay down guide-lines to ensure optimum utilisation of the existing machinery and to avoid purchases of excess machinery in future.

1.67

do.

The Committee feel that Government should arrange for a thorough expert investigation of the problems of inventory control and materials management in the Defence Services with a view to effect economy.

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1.76

do.

The Committee regret to note that the 12 slat conveyors purchased by the Border Roads Organisation were lying idle since their receipt and that it was now proposed to convert them into belt conveyors. The Committee desire that this costly equipment should be suitably

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utilised and, if necessary, the Indian Air Lines Corporation may be contacted again for the transfer of this equipment.

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1.80

Transport and
Shipping

The Committee are unhappy to note that 33.5 per cent of belt conveyors are in class 'C' condition. They are also surprised to note that a good number of them have been inoperative since long. The Committee need hardly emphasise that the upkeep of machinery should be the first concern of any field organisation. They desire that, consistent with requirements, all efforts should be made to repair the belt conveyors without any further delay.

7

1.91

do.

The Committee deplore the way in which the procurement of a large quantity of bitumen in excess/advance of requirements was made. This had not only resulted in the locking up of public money but also involved the risk of loss through leakage and other factors. The Committee would like to know what disciplinary action has been taken against the officers concerned and the quantum of the loss suffered if any.

8

1.96

do.

As the minus balances in the stores accounts are indicative of defective maintenance of accounts, the Committee trust that the Border Roads Organisation will take necessary steps to bring these accounts to a satisfactory level and to take adequate remedial measures in consultation with Audit to avoid such minus balances in the accounts in future.

The Committee are unhappy that the raising of units and the utilisation of man-power by the Border Roads Organisation have not been undertaken in an effective and coordinated manner and have led to infructuous expenditure of Rs. 34 lakhs.

It has also come to notice that, while a large number of machines, involving an outlay of Rs. 11 crores were purchased, many of them were either not utilised at all since their purchase or there were delays of one to three years in their utilisation after receipt from workshops.

The Committee would like Government to look into the various aspects of the working of the Border Roads Organisation and to take suitable steps to gear its machinery and put it on a thoroughly sound footing so that it can meet any eventuality effectively and efficiently. The Committee would like to be informed of the measures taken by Government to bring about the desired improvement in the Border Roads Organisation."

Sl. No.	Name of Agent	Agency No.	Sl. No.	Name of Agent	Agency No.
27.	Bahree Brothers, 188, Lajpatrai Market, Delhi-6.	27	33.	Bookwell, 4, Sant Narainari Colony, Kingsway Camp, Delhi-9.	90
28.	Iyans Book Depot, Chaparwah Kuan, Karol Bagh, New Delhi.	66		MANIPUR	
29.	Oxford Book & Stationery Company, Scindia House, Connaught Place, New Delhi-1.	68	34.	Shri N. Chaoba Singh, News Agent, Ramlal Paul High School Annex, Imphal.	77
30.	People's Publishing House, Rani Jhanai Road, New Delhi.	76		AGENTS IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES	
31.	The United Book Agency, 48, Amrit Kaur Market, Pahar Ganj, New Delhi.	88	35.	The Secretary, Establishment Department, The High Commission of India, India House, Aldwych, LONDON, W.C.-2.	
32.	Hind Book House, 182, Janpath, New Delhi.	95			

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