

**ESTIMATES COMMITTEE
1960-61**

**HUNDRED AND ELEVENTH REPORT
(SECOND LOK SABHA)**

**POSTS AND TELEGRAPHS DEPARTMENT
PART II**

**POSTAL SERVICES
AND
RAILWAY MAIL SERVICE**



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI**

March, 1961/Phalguna 1882 (Saka)

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CORRIGENDA

to

Hundred and Eleventh Report of the Estimates Committee on the Posts and Telegraphs Department —
Part II — Postal Services and Railway Mail Service.

Page 4, para 14, line 2, for 'large' read 'larger'.

Page 8, para 23, line 7, for 'east' read 'ease'.

Page 9, para 27, marginal heading for 'O' read 'Offices'.

Page 14, para 44, line 13, for 'courtesury' read
'courtesy'.

Page 18, para 57, last line, delete ' '

Page 18, para 58, line 3, for 'broken on' read
'broken or'.

Page 19, para 63, line 1, for 'Bureauz' read 'Bureaux'.

Page 23, para 86, line 3, for 'doubtfull' read
'doubtful'.

Page 29, before para 91, in the heading, for 'Division'
read 'Divisions'.

P. T. O.

Page 36, para 111, line 4, for 'of the' read 'to the'.

Page 38, para 118 (sub para), line 1, for
'recommended' read 'recommend'.

Page 39, para 120, line 3, for 'bags' read 'bag'.

Page 44, last line, for '1953' read '1959'.

Page 48, col. 1, before '15' insert '6'.

Page 48, col. 1, before '17' insert '7'.

Page 54, serial No. 48, line 1, for 'speeder'
read 'speedier'.

Page 56, serial No. 1, line 4, for 'moder'
read 'mode'.

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1960-61

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(iv)

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INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairman, Estimates Committee, having been authorised by the Committee to submit the Report on their behalf present this Hundred and Eleventh Report on the Posts and Telegraphs Department—Part II—Postal Services and Railway Mail Service.

2. The Committee wish to express their thanks to the Director General, Posts and Telegraphs and other officers of the P. & T. Department for placing before them the material and information that they wanted in connection with the examination of the estimates.

3. A statement showing an analysis of the recommendations contained in this Report is also appended to the Report (Appendix IV).

H. C. DASAPPA,

Chairman,

Estimates Committee.

NEW DELHI-1;

The 14th March, 1961.

The 23rd Phalguna, 1882 (Saka).

POSTAL SERVICES

I. POSTAL DEVELOPMENT

A. Introduction

The early history of the postal system in the country has been traced by the Committee in their earlier Report on the P. & T. Directorate. Early history.

2. In opening or retaining a post office the criterion observed is the limit of loss incurred by the office in a year. It is interesting to recall in this connection, that as far back as 1928, the Government had authorised Heads of Circles to open or retain post offices working at a loss of Rs. 500 per annum. The criteria for opening new post offices have been notably liberalised since the independence of the country. The latest directive issued by the Government in February 1959 (Appendix I) is based largely on the recommendations made by the Postal Development Committee in their report of March 1958. The salient features of the liberalised orders are that in the case of villages which are headquarters of Community Projects or National Extension Service Blocks or where there are schools run by District Boards, Local Boards or Schools approved by or receiving aid from State Governments, the distance condition for opening post offices has been reduced from 3 miles to 2 miles *i.e.* a post office will be opened in these villages on the existing conditions provided the nearest post office does not exist within 2 miles. Opening of Post Offices at a loss.

B. Postal Divisions

3. There are 13 P. & T. Circles at present and each Circle has a number of Postal Divisions under it headed by a Superintendent or Senior Superintendent of Post Offices. Postal Divisions are of three categories, Class I *Senior Scale, Class I Junior Scale and Class II. The number of Divisions in each Circle varies, with the Bombay Circle having twenty-two Divisions and Assam Circle having only five. Categories of Divisions.

4. The Committee were informed that the Circles reviewed the working of the Postal Divisions under them every year and submitted proposals to the Directorate for the creation of new Divisions or the upgrading of existing

*NOTE.—In the revised scale, Class I Senior Scale and Junior Scale have been merged into one scale.

ones from Class II to Class I. Since 1956-57, four new Postal Divisions had been created, 27 Divisions upgraded from Class II to Class I Junior Scale and two Divisions upgraded from Class I Junior Scale to Class I Senior Scale

Criterion for creation or upgrading of Postal Divisions.

5. The principal criterion for the formation of a new Postal Division is that the volume of work should be such as to justify the need for 150 clerks in a Class II Division and 300 clerks in a Class I Division. *The Committee doubt if the present criterion for the formation of a new Division based on the strength of staff provides the best method of assessment.* In places where postal development has been slow or in places which are sparsely populated as in hilly tracts, the area included in a Division on this standard is bound to be considerably large and even unwieldy. The problems in the way of postal development in such areas are bound to differ and may require attention at appropriate levels. The Committee have also referred later in this chapter to the need for special care and attention to be devoted to border areas. *There is need for evolving more rational criteria for the formation of a new Division or its upgrading which should take into account such factors as the work load, the stage of postal development, the special problems to be faced in that connection, and the population and area served.*

C. Cost ascertainment

Cost and income of Post Offices.

6. It is interesting to note that the principles* which guide the Department in regard to the cost and income of post offices were laid down as long as 1893 and were only slightly amended in 1917. During these 68 years, many changes have taken place in the method of working of the post offices, especially in regard to the modes of conveyance of mail, nature of work done in post offices e.g., agency functions, telegraph etc. with the result that the pattern of expenditure of the department has undergone a radical change. *It is obvious that the formula at present in use for determining the cost and income has become outdated in the present conditions.*

7. The Postal Development Committee had stressed the importance of this matter and had recommended that the question of cost and income of post offices as also cost ascertainment of services should be taken up by a working group comprising of postal officers, who should make an intensive study of the problem and finalise their recommendations within a period of two years. The Postal Development Committee also correctly emphasised "that the work of cost ascertainment is a continuous process and unless it

*See rules 547 and 548 of the P & T Manual Vol. IV.

is reviewed and revised from time to time the method will become stale and inapplicable to the changing conditions".

8. The Postal Development Committee submitted their report in March 1958. Till the end of 1960, the Department had taken no concrete action on their recommendation relating to costing. The Committee were informed that the recommendation of the Postal Development Committee would be brought to the notice of the Cost Ascertainment Committee which had been appointed in February 1960 "to review the present system of costing with a view to evolving a more satisfactory set of principles on which costing should be done conforming to the need of attaining the desired degree of accuracy and an equitable distribution of costs as far as common services are concerned between the four constituent branches viz., Postal, Telegraphs, Telephones and Radio". The importance of this matter cannot be overstressed. *The Committee urge that necessary action which is long overdue should be taken early in the matter.*

Review of system of calculating costs.

D. Frequency of delivery in rural areas

9. One of the objects of the policy of postal development is to provide postal facilities where there are none and to increase the frequency of delivery where facilities already exist. The table below gives the comparative figures of frequency of delivery of mails in rural areas in 1953 and 1959:—

Standards for determining frequency of delivery.

	<u>No. of villages</u>	
	<u>1-5-1953</u>	<u>1-12-1959</u>
Daily service	1,04,003	2,40,547
Bi-weekly service	1,11,039	1,53,293
Tri-weekly service	1,96,988	1,55,121
Weekly service	1,42,323	98,401
Over one week service	27,313	15,340

It is seen that there has been a substantial improvement in the frequency of delivery in rural parts between these years.

10. The standards laid down by Government as a rough guide for frequency of delivery are as follows:—

- (a) villages receiving not less than 30 letters a week may be provided with daily service.
- (b) villages receiving 18-29 letters a week may be provided with service at least thrice a week.

- (c) villages receiving 12-17 letters a week may be provided with service at least twice a week;
- (d) all other villages may be provided with service at intervals of not more than a week.

11. *The Committee hope that constant efforts will be made to increase the frequency of delivery of mail and improve the efficiency of local delivery.*

**"No Dak"
Villages.**

12. The number of "no dak" villages, or villages which have not been provided with any postal facilities at all, was said to be 4658 in September, 1960. There is provision for delivery of articles received for such villages through "special" men on payment of portage charges. *The Committee hope that the number of "no dak" villages will be substantially reduced during the Third Five Year Plan.*

E. Conversion of footlines

**Speedier
means of
conveyance
of mail.**

13. The Committee were informed that one of the objects of the P. & T. Department is to improve the method of conveyance of mail and substitute faster means of transport wherever feasible. On 31st March, 1960 there were 37,886 footlines covering 1,68,556 miles. During the 4 years from 1956-57 to 1959-60, 1,039 footlines covering 9,742 miles were converted into speedier modes of conveyance. These were as follows:—

	covering	miles
Motor Service	518	6,258
Horse drawn vehicles	27	213
Camels and Mules ..	5	50
Bicycles ..	477	3,137
Other means (boats .. streams, launches etc.)	12	84

It will be observed that during these four years only 1.2% (477 out of 38,900) of the footlines have been converted into cycle lines.

**Advantage
to be taken
of develop-
ment of roads
in rural
areas.**

14. *The Committee feel that it should be possible to convert a large percentage of footlines into cycle lines.* Construction of roads is one of the aims of the schemes of community development and national extension service, which cover a substantial portion of the country. As a result, a number of villages have been connected by road in recent years where earlier only footpaths existed. *The Department could take advantage of this and in tune with the spirit of:*

serving the rural areas enjoined under these schemes, provide such villages with speedier communication facilities by converting existing footlines into cycle lines etc. This, the Committee consider, will also result in economy since the benefit of longer distances that can be covered by a person by the speedier mode of transport will more than make up for the additional initial cost.

F. Visit by Senior Officers to border areas

15. The Committee understand that senior officers of the P. & T. Department had not visited the country's border areas in the Northern and North-Eastern region to ascertain first hand the requirements of communication facilities there or to see for themselves the adequacy or otherwise of the facilities available at present. It was stated during evidence that instructions were being issued in this connection by the P. & T. Directorate. *The need for paying attention to this matter at the appropriate level requires no emphasis. The Committee feel that in view of the strategic importance of these areas, senior officials of the Department may pay visits to border areas so as to ensure that development of communication facilities is not neglected there.*

G. Renting of buildings

16. The Committee were informed that one of the major difficulties faced by the P. & T. Department in the matter of expansion of postal services was that of obtaining suitable accommodation. Where buildings were available for rent, procedural formalities accounted for inordinate delays in securing the accommodation. According to the present orders, before a building could be rented out by the Department in any part of India, the rent should be verified in every case by the C.P.W.D. and a certificate of reasonableness of rent obtained. The C.P.W.D. assessed rent on a formula based on capital cost etc. while rent in the locality in actual practice was largely influenced by demand and supply. It was therefore not surprising that the assessment of rent by C.P.W.D. varied in several cases from the rent demanded by the owner. The Committee were informed that such matters usually entailed a lot of correspondence with the C.P.W.D. and it sometimes happened that the Department was not able to open a post office even when the demand was very pressing. It was stated that before 1955, the Department had powers to rent buildings after consultation with district authorities but since then, the Ministry of W.H. & S. had issued instructions to all Government departments requiring prior approval of the C.P.W.D. about the reasonableness of the rent before entering into any agreement.

Certificate of
reasonable-
ness of rent
by CPWD.

17. *The Committee feel that the present procedure is leading to unnecessary delay in taking final decisions. The whole procedure needs to be reviewed in consultation with the Ministry of W. H. & S. A time limit for issuing such certificates by C.P.W.D. may be laid down. In the alternative, the feasibility of reverting to the earlier practice of acting on the certificates from the local rent authorities or district authorities may be examined.*

H. Departmental buildings for Post Offices

Need for departmental buildings.

18. The importance of departmental buildings for post offices needs no special emphasis. The Postal Development Committee had in their Report recommended that—

“as part of the scheme for provision of better postal facilities, a policy decision should be made and followed for construction of departmental buildings, for rural post offices. In a vast majority of cases, rural post offices have been located in unsuitable buildings and in many cases, away from the main road or main centre of the village”.

What is more, that Committee had aptly observed that “the Post Office is a visible symbol—often the only symbol—of the Central Government in rural areas” and had stressed the importance of locating post offices in suitable buildings.

Phased programme for construction of buildings.

19. *The Committee recommend that Government may draw up a phased programme for housing of post offices in their own buildings, both in urban and rural areas.*

II. EXTRA-DEPARTMENTAL POST OFFICES

A. Introduction

20. The system of extra-departmental post offices appears to have been introduced as a regular measure in 1866-67 and is almost a century old. Today the extra-departmental post offices form a large percentage of the total number of post offices in the country. The bulk of the postal development in rural areas in the two Plan periods has been through the agency of extra-departmental post offices and as such, their number has considerably increased.

21. In September 1957, Government appointed a one-man Committee to examine the working of the extra-departmental system and make recommendations for its improvement. It presented its report in August, 1958. Government announced its decisions thereon in December 1960. The Committee are glad to note that most of the recommendations have been accepted by Government. The Extra-Departmental Enquiry Committee was of the view that the "department can easily feel proud that the extra-departmental system has been catering to the needs of the rural public very well in this vast country". *Though this may be true, there is no room for complacency for the rural post offices have a long way to go to provide the kind of service expected of a modern post office.*

Committee of enquiry on Extra-Departmental System.

B. Training of extra-departmental Staff

22. One of the important matters relating to the extra-departmental post offices is the inadequacy of the present method of training given to the staff. The present instructions issued by the Directorate are that the staff "may be briefed for the work by the Inspectors of Post Offices and they should also be made to pick up the work by understudy at the nearest Branch offices". The Study Group of the Estimates Committee were informed by Postmasters-General during the course of their study tours that the position about training of extra-departmental staff was far from satisfactory. Most of the irregularities committed in working by extra-departmental agents can be traced to their ignorance of rules and regulations.

Inadequacy of present method of training.

Training by
Mail Over-
seers.

23. The Committee of Enquiry on Extra-Departmental System was of the view that the present method of training should be changed and had recommended that—

“as a systematic measure, the mail overseers should stay at least for 5 days in each newly opened office and ensure that the Branch Post-master understands and performs the work with ease. The mail overseers should also visit Branch Offices where there is a change in the incumbency and give similar instructions to the new Branch Postmaster.”

The P. & T. Directorate have accepted the above recommendation. *The Committee hope that the Department will ensure that the orders regarding training are strictly complied with and that every extra-departmental agent has a good working knowledge of the rules, rates, procedure, etc. before he is allowed to assume full charge of his office. Inspectors visiting Branch Offices may make sure that the staff have knowledge of upto date rules etc. They may also be asked to comment specially on this aspect in their Inspection Reports.*

C. Pay of new incumbents

Procedure
for fixing
allowances of
new incumb-
ents

24. It was brought to the notice of the Committee that when an incumbent changed in an extra-departmental post office, his allowances could only be fixed by the Head of the Circle. The difficulty appears to be that according to the rules, the dearness allowance drawn, if any, from some other source by the incumbent has to be taken into account while fixing the dearness allowance payable by post office. As only the Postmaster General had powers to fix such an allowance, the matter had to be referred to him each time for sanction and this took time.

25. *The Committee feel that the procedure in this regard should be simplified. Broad rules may be laid down for fixing the pay and allowances of extra-departmental staff and Superintendents of the Divisions may be enabled to fix their emoluments, including of those in leave vacancies in accordance with these rules. The present procedure, apart from being cumbersome, leads to unnecessary delay and avoidable hardship to the staff.*

III. MECHANISATION

A. Introduction

26. In many advanced western countries like the U.S.A., U.K., Holland etc. a great deal of mechanisation has been introduced in post office work. In India, however, mechanical operations in post offices have been introduced only to a very limited extent in a few big post offices in the country.

27. A committee was appointed in 1957 "to suggest the extent to which mechanisation in post offices is desirable and the policy which should be followed in this regard". The Committee made several recommendations, as for example, the introduction of post-card and stamp vending machines, automatic scales, mail lifts, electric letter sorting machines, etc. In view of the fact that most of these machines are at present not manufactured in India and it is difficult to import them because of foreign exchange difficulties, the Mechanisation Committee had observed that "the emphasis should be for study of these (foreign-made machines) and their adaptation to our requirements, as also to plan independently for our own needs".

Committee on Mechanisation in Post Office

28. The P. & T. Department are making an attempt to have some of these machines manufactured in the country. For example, the P. & T. Workshop, Calcutta was conducting experiments for the manufacture of post-card vending machines and automatic stamp cancelling machines. The manufacture of an electric letter sorting machine was also in its experimental stages in the Indian Telephone Industries. The P. & T. Department were of the view that most of the machines required by post offices did not have a commercial market and as such, no private manufacturer would undertake to produce them and that it would be necessary to develop and manufacture them in the department's workshops or the Indian Telephone Industries. *This is a matter with which the Committee cannot wholly agree.* While there might be no general commercial market for these items, the post office can itself offer to take appreciable number of machines each year. The Mechanisation Committee had also suggested that firms like Jessop & Co. in which Government had a controlling voice "could be offered either a subsidy or assured a percentage of return so that they may take sufficient interest in the postal work entrusted to them".

Indigenous manufacture

29. The Committee understand that the P. & T. Workshops are not able to meet even the existing needs of the Department fully. If, therefore, the Workshops are to be depended upon wholly for the manufacture of equipment required for post offices the progress may be greatly retarded. *The Committee would therefore urge that the suggestion of the Mechanisation Committee to get the machines manufactured in companies should be vigorously pursued.*

30. *The Committee hope that the work in designing the automatic stamp cancelling machines and electric sorting machines in Co'cutta Workshop and the Indian Telephone Industries respectively would progress speedily and that after testing the proto-types the machines would be manufactured expeditiously.*

B. Postal Research Centre

Functions.

31. The Committee were glad to learn that a postal research centre with the following functions was to be started:—

- (i) study of requirements of the public and suggesting remedial measures;
- (ii) undertaking research on specific problems *e.g.*, improvement of sealing wax, jute bags etc.; and
- (iii) mechanisation.

Staff.

32. *The Committee hope that the Research Centre will be set up soon and that officials well acquainted with the working of post offices and their problems will be appointed therein. The Committee also hope that with the setting up of this Research Centre, greater attention will be paid to the problems of mechanisation in post offices which need serious and constant consideration.*

Literature from foreign countries.

33. *The Committee also recommend that literature on the progress of mechanisation in post offices in foreign countries may be obtained regularly and studied and useful ideas implemented. It might also be useful to send officers to advanced countries to make a study of their postal services with a view to introduce the improvements here.*

Lump sum grant for research.

34. The Mechanisation Committee had recommended that a lump-sum grant of Rs. 50,000 to Rs. 1,00,000 should be set apart every year for experiment and research. One of the reasons given was that at present even for spending petty amounts, Finance had to be approached and sanctions obtained on each occasion. This could be avoided if

separate provision was made for research. *The Committee endorse this recommendation.*

C. Automatic scales

35. One of the irritants at a post office counter is the long time taken by a postal clerk in weighing a letter or a parcel in order to determine the postage payable. Conventional balances are used even in big post offices and the clerk tries one weight, then another, till he finds the exact weight and calculates the postage. In the meanwhile, the public have to wait. In England some of the post offices use a machine which not only weighs the letter or parcel but also automatically calculates the amount of postage. *While such improvements may not be possible in the face of heavy shortage of foreign exchange, the Committee feel that it should be possible for the Department to replace the conventional balances by automatic scales, atleast in the busy post offices located in towns and cities. The question of indigenous manufacture of scales which can give dependable and sturdy service say, in the National Instruments Ltd., Calcutta, may also be examined.*

Replacement of conventional scales by automatic scales.

D. Franking machines

36. The Heads of Circles Conference held in October-November, 1957 had recommended the encouragement of the use of franking machines. The Department, however, felt that it would not be appropriate at that stage to issue general instructions to encourage the use of franking machines owing to their shortage. These are imported items. The Department had neither approached any private firm in order to manufacture these machines nor had they thought of undertaking their manufacture in the P. & T. Workshops.

Present scarcity.

37. The franking machine is a modern gadget and has proved very popular in many western countries. It has several advantages, both for the user as well as for the post office. For the user, the problems of safe custody of stamps, the difficulties of tearing and sticking stamps of different denominations on one envelope, accounting etc. are all solved. For the post office, the advantages are first, the economy that results from saving of printing of stamps; secondly, of ensuring that all letters posted are correctly stamped, (franked envelopes are to be delivered at post office windows); thirdly, that these letters need not be defaced and may be sent for sorting straightaway. In Calcutta, alone, the Department obtained an annual revenue 2036 (Ai) L.S.—3.

Advantages of franking machines.

of about one crore of rupees through about 1,000 franking machines in use in the city. The saving to the Department is the cost of printing one crore rupees worth of stamps and of their sale.

**Manufacture
in India.**

38. The machine is neither complicated nor very costly. *The Committee feel convinced that it should be possible to manufacture it indigenously. The P. & T. Department may explore the possibilities of getting the machines manufactured in the country and encourage their use by wide publicity.*

IV. COMPLAINTS

A. Complaint|Suggestion Book

39. Rule 48-B of the P. & T. Manual Vol. VI states that "a complaint/suggestion book will be kept by all post offices other than branch offices". *It may be examined why this book cannot be kept in branch offices also.* **Complaint/Suggestion Book in Branch Offices.**

40. *In all post offices, the Committee hope, it will be ensured that a notice is prominently displayed so that the public can know of the existence of the complaint/suggestion book.* **Notice.**

41. The Rules also state that "the complainant should be informed of the action taken". *The Committee feel that besides informing the complainant in writing, the action taken on the complaint may be recorded in the complaint book itself.* **Action taken.**

B. Delay in delivery of postal articles in rural areas

42. The number of complaints regarding delay in delivery of postal articles including money orders in rural areas during the last four years was as follows:— **Complaints regarding delays.**

1956-57	..	..	60,547
1957-58	..	..	69,204
1958-59	..	..	63,773
1959-60	..	..	79,334

43. The Committee were informed that the main cause of delays in the delivery of money orders in rural areas was the limit set to the amount that should be handled by a delivery agent as also the difficulty in remitting money to branch offices. Some remedial measures had been taken, for example, additional cash offices had been opened, limits of maximum and minimum balances revised, the limit of each money order had been raised from Rs. 40 to Rs. 100 and the aggregate from Rs. 100 to Rs. 500 etc. *The Department may keep a close watch to see how far these measures have proved effective and improve upon them in the light of experience. The Committee recommend that remedial measures should also be taken to reduce the delays in regard to delivery of registered and insured articles.* **Cause of delays.**

C. Complaints against staff

Misbehaviour of staff.

44. The number of complaints received by the P. & T. Department regarding misbehaviour or misconduct of staff are as follows:—

1956-57	..	2,857
1957-58	..	3,302
1958-59	..	3,378
1959-60	..	3,266

This number is very high. To this may be added the number of instances of rude behaviour which goes uncomplained. Instances are also reported in newspapers either in the shape of letters to the editor, or as news features or as editorial comment of the objectionable behaviour of postal staff. *A proper sense of courtesury and politeness should be enjoined on the staff and any breach of good manners may be taken serious note of. The Committee also suggest that "behaviour towards the public" may be one of the important points to be commented upon in the confidential reports of postal employees dealing with the public.*

D. Pilferage of mail

Complaints of pilferage,

45. One of the matters on which the P. & T. Department usually comes in for criticism by the public is regarding pilferage of mail. Numerous complaints are voiced through newspapers of missing magazines, especially foreign magazines, or pictorial magazines, calenders, diaries, etc. There have been reports of costly magazines finding their way to pavement bookstalls.

46. The number of complaints received by the Department regarding pilferage of mail were as follows:—

1956-57	..	..	2,094
1957-58	..	..	2,442
1958-59	..	..	3,157
1959-60	..	..	1,333

Preventive action.

47. The Committee were informed that since April 1959 the Department was exercising special checks in this matter by following the transmission and delivery of mail selected at random. Out of 67,536 such random checks, 268 cases of non-delivery were detected. The Department was of the view that these checks had proved deterrent and that judging by the number of recent complaints of pilferage received, there had been considerable reduction in its incidence.

48. The actual number of complaints must evidently be much more than reported. In India people are not accustomed to lodge written complaints even though they have good enough grounds to do so. *The Committee hope that serious attention will continue to be given by the Department to this matter and that all possible measures will be taken to eradicate this evil completely.*

E. Express Delivery letters

49. The Committee were informed by several business and trade associations that the express delivery letters were more often than not, received much later than ordinary letters. The Minister of Transport and Communications had also admitted in Parliament* that the system was not working satisfactorily. The main reason appears to be that these letters are delivered by the telegraph peons and this procedure has its drawbacks. The Department was envisaging changes in the working of the system and it was intended to use postal peons instead of telegraph peons for delivery. Delays in delivery.

50. The Minister had also stated in the Lok Sabha on the 22nd December, 1960 that "if we find that the expenses will be too much and we will not be able to meet the extra cost, we may discontinue the express delivery letters". *The express delivery system is a facility which the public have enjoyed for several years now and the Committee hope that it will not be abolished but so organised as to make the service efficient and truly express.* Need for continuance.

*See Lok Sabha Debates dated 22nd December, 1960 starred Question No. 1057, Cols. 6971—6974.

V. CLAIMS

Number and value of claims.

51. The number of claims together with their value for different classes of postal articles was as follows during the last four years:—

	1956-57		1957-58		1958-59		1959-60	
	No. of cases	Amount involved	No. of cases	Amount involved	No. of cases	Amount involved	No. of cases	Amount involved
		Rs.		Rs.		Rs.		Rs.
Registered articles	391	13,606.20	301	13,896.99	381	15,852.81	339	13,014.34
Insured articles	294	2,03,644.27	297	96,663.10	349	1,40,450.56	406	1,57,811.04
Money orders	522	42,136.09	666	54,733.41	1,011	86,195.14	620	58,037.13
Savings Bank	73	1,09,408.21	154	1,32,829.28	122	68,598.90	187	1,11,704.83
National Savings Certificates etc.	16	9,453.53	29	2,030.00	4	3,220.00	12	32,895.00

Remedial measures.

52. From the above figures it will be seen that the value of claims continues to be high. The Department has however pointed out that the percentage of loss due to frauds to the total turn-over was negligible. It was 0.0034 for savings bank, 0.0026 for postal certificates, 0.008 for money orders and 7.44 for insured articles. *While recognising the need for expeditious handling of claims cases, the Committee would also stress the importance of analysing the claims specially those relating to insured articles and savings bank and for taking remedial action so as to reduce loss to Government.*

53. *Deterrent and swift action should be taken against staff who are found responsible for frauds.* The Committee were informed in this connection that the present procedure in regard to disciplinary proceedings stood in the way of expediting decisions and that the P. & T. Department had taken up this matter with the Ministry of Home Affairs. *The Committee hope that it will be possible to evolve a satisfactory procedure which will make for expedition in such cases.*

VI. FOREIGN POST

A. Introduction

54. The Foreign Post Office handles all incoming and outgoing foreign mail. An important feature of the work of the Foreign Post Office is customs appraisalment. No article is sent out of the country or if received from another country is sent to the addressee within the country till the customs have permitted their despatch and in the case of import, have fixed the customs duty has to be levied on the article. Scrutiny by customs.

55. For incoming foreign parcels, the procedure was that if no duty was leviable and if it was passed as such by the customs, the parcel was delivered by the postman. If duty was leviable, the addressee was advised to arrange to take delivery of the parcel after paying the duty. The Committee was informed by some non-official organisations whose representatives appeared before them that sometimes the intimation of arrival of a parcel was received long after the Foreign Post Office had received the parcel, thus causing unnecessary annoyance and difficulty to the addressees. In 1958-59 and 1959-60, 676 and 775 complaints respectively were received by the Foreign Post Office, Bombay alone for delay in receipt of parcels. *The Committee suggest that instructions may be issued to the effect that no sooner does the foreign parcel reach the Foreign Post Office than an intimation thereof is sent to the addressee. This can be followed by another intimation to the addressee on completion of customs scrutiny.* Intimation of arrival of parcel.

B. Delay in releasing parcels

56. The Committee were surprised to note that in the Foreign Post Office, Bombay at the end of August 1960, 1,277 parcels were awaiting release orders for more than 6 months but less than one year, and 418 parcels for more than one year but less than three years. They were informed that the detention and release of parcels was a matter which was entirely dealt with by the Customs according to their departmental regulations and procedure. Parcels awaiting release orders.

Simplification of procedure.

57. The representative of the Department stated in his evidence that the difficulties in regard to clearance of parcels through the Customs had been taken up by the P. & T. Department with the Central Board of Revenue. *The Committee expect these consultations to be concluded soon and trust that the procedure in this regard will be streamlined and made less cumbersome.*

C. Stacking of parcels in Foreign Post Office

Unsatisfactory stacking arrangements

58. The Committee also noticed that the stacking of parcels in the Foreign Post Office was very unsatisfactory. There was also allegations that the parcels got broken on torn because of improper stacking. The representatives of the P. & T., Department during the course of their evidence before the Committee agreed that the stacking of parcels especially in the Bombay Foreign Post Office could be improved a great deal.

Improvement of stacking methods.

59. *The Committee recommend that a study may be made of the methods of stacking parcels in the Foreign Post Offices with a view to making it more systematic and to utilise the available space to the best advantage. They recommend that continuous efforts should be made to improve the efficiency of Foreign Post Offices and in this context suggest that a study of working of Foreign Post Offices in more advanced countries would prove useful.*

VII. STAMPS

A. Introduction

60. Since independence, the P. & T. Department have issued many special stamps. These can be divided broadly into two categories: the definitive series and the commemorative issues. The definitive series included the independence issue depicting the national emblem, the Lion Capital, the Gandhi series, the archaeological series and the latest, the map of India series. The commemorative series can again be divided into two categories: the anniversaries and centenaries of institutions and personalities.

Stamps issued since independence.

B. Attractive stamps

61. The Heads of Circles Conference held in October-November 1957 recommend that—

Improvement of stamps.

“the colour, design and printing of India postage stamps should be improved. The facilities for printing and training of printers was also considered and it was felt that the India Security Press at Nasik should develop its technique for multi-colour printing . . . The Department should follow a set policy in the matter of issuing new stamps. Our flora and fauna are so rich that the stamps could be issued depicting these with great advantage.”

62. *Stamps find their way to all parts of the world. It is, therefore, of great importance that the issue of stamps should be scientifically studied and planned. There is no reason why with the rich tradition of Indian art we should not be able to produce attractive stamps of high philatelic value. Incidentally, stamps of good philatelic value could also earn us valuable foreign exchange.*

C. Philatelic Bureaux

63. There are 13 Philatelic Bureaux under the P. & T. Department.

Sale of stamps.

64. The figures of sale of stamps from the Bombay and Calcutta Bureaux, which are the most important among the Bureaux, were as follows for the last four years:—

Bombay

1956-57	..	..	Rs. 1,12,644·45
1957-58	..	..	Rs. 3,69,033·50

1958-59	..	..	Rs. 2,27,708·94
1959-60	..	..	Rs. 3,83,739·32

Calcutta

1958	..	..	Rs. 1,34,488·72
1959	..	..	Rs. 1,40,224·94
1960	..	..	Rs. 1,29,835·25

65. *The sale of stamps through these Bureaux has not been very satisfactory.* Giving reasons for this, the representative of the P. & T. Department stated that philatelists usually got their requirements through normal channels. The sales also depended on the number of issues. Certain difficulties also existed because printing of stamps was done at short notice, sometimes of not more than three weeks, and as a result, publicity could not be organised properly. A rule had however been made now that stamps would not be printed except with at least three months notice. It was admitted that publicity needed more attention.

66. The Heads of Circles Conference held in October-November, 1957 had also recommended that suitable publicity in the Circles and efficient running of philatelic bureaux would go a long way to encourage philately, "which apart from being an aid to cultural and educational development, is a source of foreign exchange earning". *The Committee feel that there is considerable scope for improvement both in the quality of stamps and the organisation of publicity.*

VIII. MISCELLANEOUS

A. Delegation of Powers

67. The Study Groups of the Committee who visited various offices under the Department in June-July, 1960 gathered an impression that the heads of Circles were having inadequate financial powers. The representative of the Department stated during evidence that while powers relating to construction, addition, alteration and repairs to mail vans, surrender of wires by Railway and Canal administrations and conveyance of mail without calling for tenders had been enhanced, and that proposals for enhancing powers for renting of accommodation, additions and alterations to buildings, purchase of stores, etc. were still under consideration. *The Committee recommend that the decision on the proposals may be expedited.*

B. Designation of Heads of Circles

68. The Committee observe that out of 12 territorial units under the Department, West Bengal, Bihar, Bombay, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Central, Madras and Andhra Circles are placed in charge of Postmasters General. The remaining Circles of Mysore, Orissa, Assam and Rajasthan are under Directors. *There is no reason why such a distinction should be maintained as regards designation of Heads of Circles even though the scales of pay may be different. The Committee recommend that the Heads of Circles may go by a common nomenclature.*

Need for having uniform nomenclature.

C. Heads of Circles Conference

69. A Conference of Heads of Circles is held every year with the following objectives:—

- (1) to promote personal contacts among the highest executive officers of the Department;
- (2) to expedite policy decision by personal discussion in cases where settlement by correspondence would normally take a long time;
- (3) to evolve common coordinate policies in regard to various matters of public importance such as improvement of P. & T. facilities, relations with staff and the public and so on; and

- (4) to review the working of the Department and to improve the efficiency in services by exchange of ideas among them.

Outstanding recommendations.

70. Since 1957, three such conferences have been held. The Committee were informed that the total number of recommendations made at these three conferences is 246. Final orders have so far been passed on 221 of these recommendations while 25 were stated to be still outstanding. Out of the 221 recommendations on which orders have been passed so far, 200 recommendations had been accepted. This conference of senior departmental officials brings to bear on the problems discussed, the experience of long years of working of the department. *The Committee hope that the remaining recommendations of the conferences will also receive consideration and final orders passed thereon soon.*

D. I.A.C. Rates for Mails

Rates for conveyance of mail by air.

71. The All-up Scheme was introduced from 1st April, 1949. From 1st April, 1949 to 31st March, 1950 the rate for conveyance of mail by air was 25 per cent. over the freight rate by the actual route flown for L.C. (First class) mails and 25 per cent. less than the freight rate by the actual route flown for A.O. (Second class) mails. Letters, Post-cards and Inland letter cards are treated as First class mail, all other articles such as Book Packets, Registered Newspapers, Pattern and sample packets and Blind literature packets are treated as articles of Second class mail. From 1st April, 1950 to 30th April, 1950 the rate for conveyance of mail by air was Rs. 2-14-0 per ton mile for L.C. mails and Rs. 1-11-6 per ton mile for A.O. mails. From 1st May, 1950 onwards the rate for conveyance of mail by air is Rs. 3 per ton mile for L.C. and Rs. 1-12-0 per ton mile for A.O. mails. In most cases, however, the rate for L.C. mails works out to be much higher than the freight rate charged by the I.A.C. for general cargo. A few comparative figures are given below:—

Name of Sector	Distance in miles	Rate of conveyance of miles per lb.		Rate of freight per lb.
		L.C.	All other Mails	
Delhi-Amritsar	279	0·37	0·22	0·31
Bombay-Delhi	712	0·95	0·56	0·69
Calcutta-Delhi	820	1·10	0·64	1·00

72. During 1958-59 the P. & T. Department paid the I.A.C. a sum of Rs. 97,54,681·16 nP. for the carriage of mails. Had the I.A.C. charged only their cargo rate (obtaining in February, 1959) the P. & T. Department would have had to pay only Rs. 90,67,454 i.e., Rs. 6,87,227·16 nP. less than what they actually paid. Difference in rates

73. The Committee do not see why the P. & T. Department should be made to pay this excess amount over even what an ordinary customer of the I.A.C. would have been charged. In fact, it almost amounts to an indirect subsidy. The P. & T. Department is perhaps the I.A.C.'s biggest customer with a regular daily cargo and it is paradoxical that it should be charged more than others. *The Committee recommend that the whole question of freight rates for mails carried by air may be examined afresh by Government with a view to secure more equitable rates than what obtain now.* Excess charges.

E. Universal Postal Union

74. India has been a member of the Universal Postal Union since 1876. The main advantages and benefits of being a member of the Union are in the shape of reciprocal facilities in the operation of our international postal services and in the development of international collaboration in this sphere. It also obviates the need for entering into many bilateral agreements with various countries in respect of our postal relations with them. The amount paid by India as a first class member towards the funds of the Union was Rs. 11,86,608·50 in 1959. Advantages of membership.

75. The Committee were informed that in the Secretariat of the Universal Postal Union, there were only 40 permanent officials, of whom only 15 belong to categories of posts which can be filled up on an international basis. Only one permanent post of translator was held by an Indian national till recently and even this person had left service. *The Committee hope that the vacancy would soon be filled up by another Indian national.* Appointment of Indian National in Secretariat of U.P.U.

F. Paper used for inland letters and aerogrammes

76. *The Committee feel that there is scope for improvement in the quality and colour of the inland letter and aerogrammes.* The aerogrammes at present being sold by the P. & T. Department do not compare favourably with those issued by many of the foreign post offices. The Committee were informed that difficulty was being experienced in Quality of paper.

getting better quality paper. *The Committee hope it will be possible to get over this difficulty and obtain better quality paper from Indian paper mills.. The colour of the paper should also be improved so as to show up the writing on it better. A red and blue border may also be provided in the case of aerogrammes.*

RAILWAY MAIL SERVICE

I. ORGANISATION

A. Introduction

77. Till 1863 the mail bags were carried in the guard's van and no sorting was done in the trains. It was in 1863 that the first Sorting Section was established on the Railways and was called the Travelling Post Office. This name was changed in 1880 to the Railway Mail Service. Early history.

78. Until 1927 the Railway Mail Service was a separate and independent unit of the P. & T. Department and was in charge of three Deputy Postmasters General with their headquarters at Ambala, Calcutta and Poona. As a result of the recommendations of the Posts and Telegraphs Department Committee (Ryan Committee) of 1924-25, the Railway Mail Service was placed under the Postmasters General of Circles as an integral part of the ordinary postal administration.

B. Separation of R.M.S. from Postal Branch

79. The question as to whether the R.M.S. and the Postal Branch are to remain as separate entities or as parts of one unit has been considered by four expert bodies during the last 35 years—the P & T Department Committee 1924-25 (Ryan Committee), the Postal Enquiry Committee of 1934-35 (Pasricha Committee), Officer on Special Duty to enquire into the efficiency of the Post Office Organisation, 1952, and the R.M.S. Committee, 1958. Merits and demerits of separation.

80. The Ryan Committee (1924-25) advanced the following arguments, amongst others, for amalgamating the two Branches.

- (i) the isolation of the R.M.S. Branch causes administrative difficulties and it was not conducive to economy;
- (ii) enquiries into loss and fraud cases were rendered difficult, as both the Branches were, generally, involved and fixation of responsibility was complicated;
- (iii) considerable friction between the two Branches was likely to arise;

- (iv) distinction of control made co-ordination of policy and effort almost impossible;
- (v) the Head of a R.M.S. Circle, being of a lower status, was not able to hold his own against Postal Postmaster-General and his suggestions, also, carried less weight with the Directorate; and
- (vi) the R.M.S. staff, also, felt that their interests were not represented by the junior Heads of the Circles with the same force as of their Postal colleagues by the senior Heads of Circles. At that time, the R.M.S. staff were on a lower scale of pay.

81. The Postal Enquiry Committee (1934-35) reviewed these arguments, soon after the R.M.S. Branch was amalgamated with the Postal Branch. They pointed out that the defects pointed out had not been remedied. They felt the friction between the R.M.S. and Postal Branches had been eliminated but at the expense of efficiency. They pointed out the following inherent defects in Postal Circles looking after R.M.S. work:

- (i) The beats of R.M.S. Sections were arbitrarily curtailed to make them co-terminous with Circle boundaries.
- (ii) There was lack of co-ordination between Circles.
- (iii) Time-table changes had to be worked out by more than one Circle.
- (iv) The same cases had to be discussed with the Railway Administration by more than one Circle.
- (v) R.M.S. offices and sections seldom received proper attention from the officers in the Circle office.

Recommendation
of R.M.S.
Committee.

82. The R.M.S. Committee (1958) observed that the defects pointed out over two decades back were true even today and that judging from the results, three decades after the amalgamation of the Postal and R.M.S. Branch, they had no hesitation in saying that the system had not worked well. They felt that the efficiency of the R.M.S. Service which requires qualified and specialised attention, had suffered because the Postal Circles were not in a position to give such attention. They came to the conclusion that the Postal and R.M.S. Branches should be separated and that the R.M.S. Branch should be organised on a territorial basis

with headquarters at Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta and Madras, each under the charge of an officer in the senior administrative grade (P.M.G.).

83. The R.M.S. Committee suggested that their proposal be implemented in two stages as follows:—

“As a first step, we would suggest the immediate separation of the technical aspects of R.M.S. work from the Circle Offices and vesting them in four Regional Directors of R.M.S. at Delhi, Bombay, Madras and Calcutta. These Regional Directors could, at least, ensure that these technical aspects, which it has not been possible for the Circles to attend to, are given proper attention, while the administrative organisation will remain undisturbed for the time being. The offices of the Regional Directors could also form the nucleus of the future R.M.S. Circle Offices, when it is decided to separate the R.M.S. Branch. We consider it desirable, even then, that the complete separation of the R.M.S. should be effected within a period of two years or so. The expedient we have suggested above is only to tide over the difficulties as an interim measure.”

84. The P & T Board decided in January, 1960 that for the present, the separation of the R.M.S. from the Post Offices should be tried as an experimental measure in respect of technical matters only. The Board proposed setting up three Regional Organisations under Directors with headquarters at Bombay and Madras and Lucknow with ancillary staff on a “no cost” basis. These Regional Organisations were to handle only technical matters relating to R.M.S. whereas the staff and establishment matters pertaining to the R.M.S. would continue to remain with the Heads of Circles.

Decision of
P&T Board.

85. The representative of the P & T Department in his evidence before the Committee admitted that the problems of the R.M.S. had been neglected over a number of years. The R.M.S. Committee have also pointed out a number of instances which indicate that the efficiency of the service is not exactly what it should be. It is surprising how this important work of the Postal Services had been neglected so far. The Railway Mail Service provides the main arterial system of postal communication and the efficiency of the postal services depends very largely on the efficient working of the R.M.S.

Efficiency of
service.

Question of separation.

86. *The Committee are not convinced that the remedy for the present ills of the R.M.S. lies in its separation from the Postal Services. It is doubtful if this will make for greater efficiency. Moreover the intimate co-ordination that should exist between the Postal and R.M.S. Branches might become difficult if rival interests are created. There are many common problems between the Postal and R.M.S. Branches and it might be inadvisable to have two sets of people doing the same work. The result of the experiment of separating the technical problems of R.M.S. from the Postal Branch by the appointment of Directors of R.M.S. on regional basis on "no extra cost" basis should be carefully watched. The Committee feel that it should be possible to solve the difficulties of the R.M.S. and make it into a modern, efficient and streamlined organisation provided the officials concerned and the P. & T. Directorate make a determined effort in this direction.*

C. R.M.S. work in the Directorate

Director, R.M.S.

87. The R.M.S. work in the Directorate is under the Senior Deputy Director General and there is a Director, R.M.S. under him. The Committee found that the Director, R.M.S. also handled the work relating to Foreign Post and the O. & M. work of the Directorate. The R.M.S. Committee observed that the volume of this non-R.M.S. work is quite considerable and that it has not been possible for the officer to give the required attention to R.M.S. cases proper. *The Committee feel that the Director, R.M.S. should be relieved of his extra duties so that he could devote full attention to the problems relating to R.M.S. It would also enable him to do the necessary touring so as to gain first hand knowledge of R.M.S. problems.*

D. D. G. for R.M.S. Work.

88. The R.M.S. Committee had recommended that the officer in control of the R.M.S. Branch in the Directorate should be in the grade of Postmaster General so that he may be in a position to hold his own with the Heads of Circles, the Railways, Civil Aviation and Transport authorities and deal with them on equal terms. *The Committee consider that complete separation of the R.M.S. from the Postal Branch is not warranted in the circumstances and that there is no necessity of creating a separate post of D.D.G. (RMS).*

D. R.M.S. work in Circles

Trained personnel for R.M.S. Work.

89. There are many technical problems involved in the functioning of the R.M.S. and therefore officials in charge of it have got to have the requisite knowledge. The Committee understand that deterioration in R.M.S. started during

and after the Second World War when the trained personnel of the old R.M.S. Circles gradually retired from service, creating a void in their places which has not since been filled. Several remedial measures were taken by the Department in this regard. For some time there was a panel of R.M.S. officers who alone were put in charge of R.M.S. work. Later, since 1954, it was arranged that in each Circle, one officer qualified in R.M.S. work, should deal with all cases relating to R.M.S. including staff and establishment cases. These measures however did not effect much improvement. The R.M.S. panel was given up because of administrative difficulties and in most circles, officers doing R.M.S. work also attend to non-R.M.S. work. The R.M.S. Committee observed that there has been a persistent feeling that the present procedure of getting the R.M.S. work attended to by officers not always having technical and practical working knowledge of R.M.S. work has not been altogether satisfactory.

90. *The Committee hope that the Directorate will take all steps necessary to build up adequate man-power with sufficient technical training to man this branch. It is advisable that only officers with adequate R.M.S. experience are appointed to look after R.M.S. work in the Circles. In this connection the Committee were glad to know that the Indian Postal Service recruits would also be given training in R.M.S. work. Special emphasis may be laid during this training on their acquiring practical experience of the working of the R.M.S.*

Officers with R.M.S. experience to look after RMS. Work.

E. R.M.S. Division

91. There are at present 28 R.M.S. Divisions of varying sizes. There are some small divisions with just over 200 sorters and big divisions like Bombay and Calcutta with an establishment of over 1000 sorters. There are great disparities in the size of the Divisions. The Committee understand that the present standards for the creation of R.M.S. Divisions are based purely on the strength of the operative clerical establishment. This does not appear to be realistic.

Standards for creation of R.M.S. Divisions.

92. The R.M.S. Committee had recommended that it would be desirable to have R.M.S. Divisions which are fair sizable units from the point of view of mail communications without cutting across arbitrarily against the pattern of mail circulation. This would mean much larger Divisions than at present in charge of Senior Scale Officers assisted by one or more Deputy Superintendents. The Committee were informed that the recommendation had not been accepted by the P. & T. Department and that the present Divisions

Size of Divisions.

would not be redistributed but it was proposed to attach Deputy Superintendents to larger units to attend to establishment matters etc. so that the Superintendents could concentrate on technical and other aspects of R.M.S. work. Smaller units would continue under a single officer as hitherto. The Committee were informed that the financial implications of this proposal were being worked out.

Review of
R.M.S.
Divisions.

93. *The Committee feel that there is much to be said in favour of the recommendation of the R.M.S. Committee to have larger R.M.S. Divisions. In the light of their recommendation there may be a review of the jurisdiction and administrative set up of these Divisions.*

II. SORTING ARRANGEMENTS

A. Due Mail and Sorting Lists

94. The R.M.S. Committee in their Report stated that "it cannot be denied that one of the major causes for the deterioration in the efficiency of our Sorting Service is the present very unsatisfactory position regarding the issue of Due Mail and Sorting Lists." In the R.M.S. sorting offices, the Due Mail and Sorting Lists are the primary books of reference and are of vital importance in the working of the organisation. Under the existing rules, Sorting Lists of mail offices or a section are due to be issued once in three years and Due Mail Lists once a year but they have not been complied with. The Committee called for a complete list of the Sorting Lists currently in use and were surprised to find that many of them had been issued more than three or four years ago and there were some which were issued as long back as 20th September, 1949 (P. 20, Bihar Circle), 23rd July, 1950 (Midnapore RMS-1, West Bengal Circle), 31st December, 1950 (N-1 Orissa Circle), and quite a few issued in 1951, 1952 and 1953. In certain cases the Sorting Lists had not been issued yet. The representative of the P. & T. Department in his evidence before the Committee admitted that these instances were examples of neglect over a number of years.

Unsatisfactory position at present.

95. The R.M.S. Committee made several recommendations for improvement in the method of issue and printing of these lists and these have been accepted by the P. & T. Department and instructions have been issued to all Heads of Circles in March, 1959. *The Committee have seen that earlier instructions in this respect have not been given effect to and hope that the recommendations of the R.M.S. Committee will be speedily implemented.*

Remedial measures.

96. The R.M.S. Committee also observed that one of the main causes of the present state of affairs was the employment of unqualified non-RMS personnel in the Circle offices for the compilation of Sorting Lists. They also mentioned that compilation work was looked upon as a drudgery. No office has chosen to keep its records and books of reference relating to compilation work corrected upto date, with the result that when a sorting list had to be compiled a working draft had to be called for from the unit concerned.

Personnel for compilation work.

Comprehensive instructions

97. The Study Groups of the Estimates Committee had occasion to see the Sorting Lists in everyday use in some of the R.M.S. offices visited by them. They noticed that they were maintained in a very unsatisfactory manner. In some cases the latest corrections had not even been posted and corrections made were not clear or were too closely written as there was insufficient space between entries for incorporating corrections legibly. *The Committee recommend that the Regional Directors appointed for R.M.S. work may take special care to ensure that in all the R.M.S. sections, the lists are revised regularly and are maintained in a proper way in accordance with instructions. Any lapses in this regard may be seriously taken up.*

B. Improvement in sorting arrangements

Inefficiency in sorting.

98. The question of improvement in the system of delivery of mails was considered at the Heads of Circles Conference held in October-November 1957, and the following were pointed out as some of the causes which militate against efficiency in sorting:—

- (i) Inconvenient sorting cases and improper arrangement of pigeon holes;
- (ii) inadequate lighting;
- (iii) inefficient arrangements for speedy and regular movement of mails inside the office or mail van;
- (iv) complicated and incorrect Due Mail and Sorting Lists;
- (v) deficient knowledge of sorters and their slow speed of sorting;
- (vi) lack of specialisation due to frequent staff changes.

The following measures for improvement were recommended:—

- (i) Preparation of a proper design of sorting cases for preliminary and detailed sorting.
- (ii) Laying down the arrangement of pigeon holes according to number of articles generally received in the office for each Section and rigid adherence to the sorting case diagram thus prepared.
- (iii) Proper arrangement of tables and sorting cases in sequence of work to provide speedy and regular movement of mails.

99. The Committee understand that some of the items of furniture in use in RMS offices had been standardised and that the scheme of supplying these standard items of furniture was being implemented subject to the limitation of funds. In most cases, standardised furniture would be supplied in replacement of old non-standardised furniture. *The Committee recommend that where new furniture is supplied either for the first time or in replacement of old furniture, it may be ensured that the standard approved designs are adhered to. Inspection staff may be asked to specially check this. It may also be ensured that every RMS office has the minimum requirements of furniture.* **Standardised furniture.**

100. *Another measure that can be taken up immediately is to ensure effective supervision. Random sample checking may be carried out to ensure that sorting is being done correctly. Similarly, post offices might be asked to report about postal articles wrongly sent to them. When defects or cases of wilful negligence of duty come to notice, effective and speedy action may be taken.* **Better supervision.**

C. Centralised sorting in towns and cities

101. In most of the big towns and cities central sorting is resorted to. The advantage of smaller number of bags than otherwise required is obvious. Even so, it has its disadvantages. The latest time of posting has to be fixed at an earlier hour causing inconvenience to the public. The Post Masters of local offices are unable to look directly into complaints regarding loss or mis-despatch of articles since they are not answerable for disposal of outward mail. **Sorting in towns and cities.**

102. *The Committee feel that a comparative study might usefully be made of the advantages of both the systems as they exist in various towns and cities today. It might also be advantageous to study the practice followed by other countries and adopt improved methods in vogue there.* **Comparative study.**

D. Speedier clearance of mails from letter boxes

103. *The Committee suggest that speedier methods of collection of letters from letter boxes may be introduced wherever possible. The use of cycles in rural areas and motor cycles or scooters in towns and cities should be encouraged. Efforts may also be made to increase the frequency of clearance of mails from letter boxes.*

E. Delivery Zones

Publicity.

104. One of the main purposes behind the system of having delivery zones numbered is to facilitate sorting. Actual experience, however, shows that few include the delivery zone number in the address. *The Committee feel that greater publicity should be given so as to encourage the public to write the Delivery Zone numbers in the addresses. One effective means of publicity might be to include the Zone number in the Delivery stamp with the request to the addressee that he may ask his correspondents to indicate that Zone number invariably.*

III. COORDINATION WITH RAILWAYS

A. Liaison with Railways

105. For the efficient functioning of the R.M.S. very close coordination with the Railways is a *sine qua non*. Liaison with the Railways is maintained at various levels. At the Divisional level, *ad hoc* meetings are held with the Railway officers to discuss local problems. At the Circle level, quarterly coordination meetings are held between the representatives of the Railways and the concerned Circle to discuss all matters relating to railway timings, mail vans, R.M.S. railway buildings, rest houses etc. In cases of dispute, where no agreement could be reached, the matter is taken up by the Directorate with the Railway Board. It was proposed to hold these coordination meetings with the Railway Board regularly.

Liaison at various levels.

106. The Committee have examined this question of co-ordination between the Railways and the P. & T. Department in some detail and have come to the conclusion that it has not been completely satisfactory. There are many problems which arise from time to time like changes in train timings, provision of accommodation in Railway stations for R.M.S. offices, facilities in Railway stations for the efficient working of the R.M.S., provision of adequate mail-van accommodation etc.

Present position.

107. Changes in train timings are a matter of very great importance to the R.M.S. because consequent changes have to be made in the clearance and sorting of mails and closing of bundles so as to enable prompt despatch of mail by the trains. Several cases in which Railways did not consult the R.M.S. before changing the train timings, as was necessary, were brought to the notice of the Committee. Some of these are given in the Appendix-II.

Changes in train timings.

108. The R.M.S. Committee in their Report observed that "the Railway Administrations have progressively attached less and less importance to the Departmental point of view in ordering changes in train timings and the procedure prescribed in the agreement between the P & T. and Railway Administration in this regard is a dead letter in most cases".

109. *The Committee hope that this matter will be given closer attention both by the Railway Board and the P. & T. Directorate. There should be the fullest consultation between the Railway and R.M.S. authorities especially in matters affecting changes in timings of trains which carry mail.*

B. Accommodation in Railway Stations

Agreement
with the Rail-
way Board.

110. One of the difficulties faced by the R.M.S. is regarding adequate accommodation in Railway Stations. The Committee were informed that in order to meet the requirements of the expanding services of the R.M.S., the P. & T. Department had come to an agreement with the Railway Board whereby the Railways would include the P&T works in their annual works programme as far as possible. Difficulties arose when the Railway administrations suggested execution of P&T works as 'deposit works' which in the P&T Department's view, should have been executed as part of the annual works programme.

Close liaison
with Railway
Board.

111. Under the agreement, such difficulties were to be brought to the notice of the Railway Board for necessary action. *The Committee hope that the P&T Directorate will bring to the direct notice of the Railway Board all cases where the Railway Administrations have not been adhering of the agreement in letter and spirit or where difficulties have not been resolved at the Divisional or zonal level. There should be close liaison between the Directorate and the Railway Board in this matter.*

Assessment
of overall
requirements.

112. *The Committee also suggest that it might be desirable to assess the overall requirements of the R.M.S. in regard to accommodation at Railway stations and request the Railway Board to chalk out a phased programme for its implementation.*

C. Mail Van Accommodation

Present posi-
tion.

113. The Committee were informed by the representative of the P&T Department in his evidence that generally speaking, the mail van accommodation was sufficient except in certain metre-gauge sections in South India. During the Second Five Year Plan, 80 vans of different types had been constructed till 1959-60 and 100 more were under construction. These were partly in replacement of old vans.

Study of
mail van
accommoda-
tion.

114. *The Committee feel that it might be worthwhile to undertake a study of mail van accommodation especially in the South to assess its adequacy or otherwise, and to prepare*

a phased programme in consultation with the Railways both for the provision of additional vans and for replacement of old vans.

115. The Committee were informed that the latest R.M.S. vans which had been built were modern and well designed. **Modern fixtures.** The old vans were however cramped for space. Improvements effected in Western countries could be profitably studied and adapted with necessary variations to suit local needs. *Suitable furniture, healthy conditions of work, ventilation, lighting and provision of basic amenities like drinking water etc. for staff should be given particular attention. Wherever possible and within the funds available, it might be desirable to introduce some cooling arrangements in the vans, especially in the trains passing through areas where the temperature rises very high.*

116. Several modern gadgets are in use in the Railways in U.K. and other Western countries, viz., for automatically picking up or dropping mail in stations as the mail trains speed through at upto 75 miles an hour. **Modern gadgets.** *These gadgets may be studied and adopted wherever possible. Every effort should be made to modernise our service and make it comparable to the best in other advanced countries.*

IV. MISCELLANEOUS

A. Contracts with Road Motor Transport Operators

Difficulties with road motor transport operators.

117. Most of the mail to rural areas is carried by road motor transport. The P&T Department deals with two types of operators—the State Road Transport Corporations and private operators. The Committee were informed that the Department had some difficulty in entering into agreements with both the State owned Corporations as well as the private operators mainly on account of the rates of conveyance of mail. Under the Motor Vehicles Act, the Regional Transport Authorities had powers to compel road motor transport operators to carry mail on the conditions (including rates) to be fixed by them. In many cases these rates did not satisfy the operators with the result that they did not fully cooperate with the Department.

Powers for Central Government under Motor Vehicles Act.

118. The P&T Department held the view that having regard to the all India nature of its activities and to the fact that the postal services cannot suffer any interruption, the best course would be for the Central Government to acquire powers under the Motor Vehicles Act to lay down the rates and have a provision for arbitration in the event of a dispute. The Committee were informed that the Ministry of Transport with whom the matter was taken up had proposed to await the results of the negotiations with the State Transport Corporations before dealing with this question.

The Committee recommended that the matter may be expedited and a satisfactory solution found for the conveyance of mails by road.

B. Bag Accounts

Present position.

119. The Heads of Circles Conference held in October-November 1957 had made the following observations in regard to the bag accounts maintained by R.M.S. offices:

“It is an admitted fact that bag accounts are not being settled from time to time, and in this respect almost all Circles are falling into arrears. Whereas the problem is not so acute in so far as the bag accounts

between offices within a Circle are concerned, in respect of inter-Circle accounts, claims are not being settled."

120. The R.M.S. Committee went into this matter in great detail and found the existing procedure to be very cumbersome. They were of the opinion that the system of bags accounts should satisfy the following tests:

- (a) It should be simple and should not involve elaborate accounting. It need only ensure that bags cannot be withdrawn for irregular use or misuse.
- (b) It should ensure an adequate working stock in each office and provide for its replenishment where necessary without delay.
- (c) It should cut down the circulation of empty bags to the minimum.

121. The present system is elaborate and complex and involves numerous registers and a large number of entries. The Committee were surprised to note that throughout India "320 officials were exclusively employed in R.M.S. offices, alone for keeping bag accounts, not including the staff employed part time and those in post offices and the circle offices".

122. The R.M.S. Committee had made a number of recommendations for simplifying the procedure. The major defect in the present system was that each office was required to maintain elaborate bag accounts with every office with which it exchanged mails. The R.M.S. Committee recommended that instead of this, it would be enough if a record of bags received or used for despatch of mails was kept only at the offices concerned and that it was not necessary to get back the bags from the offices of destination as was done at present. All the bags in stock or in circulation would be considered to be borne by an all India pool. To prevent the unnecessary locking up of the bags, each office would be authorised to keep bags only between certain prescribed limits and if the balance was exceeded the surplus bags were to be despatched to a District Bag Office which would also be drawn upon to recoupe its stock when it fell low. Similar adjustment of bags would be made between the District Bag Office and the Circle Bag Office and between the Circle Bag Office and the Bag Office of the Directorate. For this purpose the Head Post Offices and the Divisional Bag Offices

R.M.S. Committee's
recommendations.

would function as the District Bag Offices for the Postal and R.M.S. Branches respectively. The Circle Stock Depots would function as Circle Bag Offices.

123. The Department was however hesitant to make a major change suddenly covering the entire country, as the present system of accounting was very complicated and a quick change would be difficult. The Committee were informed that the Circles were being consulted and details of the new scheme were being worked out and that experiments would be tried in one or two places to begin with.

124. *The Committee feel that it is not desirable to postpone decision in the matter as the present system, apart from being complicated, also involved the appointment of a large number of clerks on bag accounting work. The P&T Directorate may therefore go in detail into the matter and devise a more workable and efficient arrangement.*

Classification of bags

125. The R.M.S. Committee had also stated that the number of classifications of bags for the purposes of bag accounts should be reduced to only three viz. Canvas, Drill and Air mail bags. At present accounts are kept for numerous varieties of bags. The Committee were informed that the question of reduction of the variety of bags for accounting purposes was under the consideration of the Directorate. *The Committee recommend that this matter should also be considered while revising the system.*

H. C. DASAPPA,

NEW DELHI;

Chairman,

The 14th March, 1961.

Estimates Committee.

The 23rd Phalguna, 1882 (Saka).

APPENDIX I

(Vide para 2)

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT & COMMUNICATIONS

(Departments of Communications & Civil Aviation)

No. 1—16/56-PLG

New Delhi, the 18th Feb., 1959.

From

Shri K. K. Saran, I.A.S.,

Deputy Secretary to the Government of India.

To

The Director-General,

Posts & Telegraphs,

New Delhi.

Subject:—Postal facilities in Rural areas—Extension during Second Plan period.

Sir,

The question of liberalising some of the conditions for opening new post offices in rural areas has been under the consideration of Government for some time past. After careful consideration, the President has been pleased to decide that with effect from 1st March, 1959 the opening of post offices in rural areas should be governed by the following conditions:—

I. Remunerative or Self-supporting Category

Post Offices which are expected to be remunerative or self-supporting, i.e., the estimated income of which is expected to be more than, or equal to the estimated cost, may be opened without any restriction as regards population or distance.

II. Post Offices required on non-returnable contribution basis

Post offices for which non-returnable contribution is offered by any interested party to cover the anticipated loss, may be opened without any restriction as regards population or distance.

III. Villages with population of 2,000 or more

(i) The loss should not exceed Rs. 750 per annum per post office.

(ii) Distance from the nearest existing post office should not be less than 3 miles.

IV. Compact Group of villages with population of 2,000 or more

- (i) Villages to be grouped should be within a radius of 2 miles from the proposed post office.
- (ii) The loss should not exceed Rs. 750 per annum per post office.
- (iii) Distance from the nearest existing post office should not be less than 3 miles.

V. Villages or Groups of villages with population of less than 2,000

- (i) Post Offices may be opened at the discretion of the Head of the Circle in areas not included in the schedule of backward areas where, due to sparse population and location of villages at long distances, it is not possible to form a group of 2,000 population within a radius of 2 miles.
- (ii) The loss should not exceed Rs. 500 per annum per post office.
- (iii) Distance from the nearest existing post office should not be less than 3 miles.

VI. Villages at Headquarters of Administrative Units, like Tehsils, Talukas, Thanas, etc.

The loss should not exceed Rs. 750 per annum per post office.

VII. Villages which are Headquarters of Community Projects or N.E.S. Blocks or where there are schools run by District Boards, Local Boards or Schools approved by or receiving aid from State Governments

- (i) Distance from the nearest existing post office should not be less than 2 miles.
- (ii) (a) The loss should not exceed Rs. 750 per annum per post office, if the population to be served within a radius of 2 miles is 2,000 or more.
- (b) The loss should not exceed Rs. 500 per annum per post office, where the population to be served within a radius of 2 miles is less than 2,000.

VIII. Areas scheduled as very backward for purposes of extension of Postal facilities

- (i) The loss should not exceed Rs. 1,000 per annum per post office.
- (ii) No population or distance restriction is applicable.
- (iii) Post Offices will be located in consultation with local authorities.

"General Conditions."

- (i) The opening of new post offices of all the above eight categories is subject to the condition that it does not result in the parent office being worked at a loss beyond the

permissible limit, which at present is Rs. 500 per annum for a parent office in rural area, Rs. 240 per annum for a parent office in urban area.

Note.—The “Parent Office” is the Head, Sub or Branch Office which serves the village or group of villages where a new post office is proposed to be opened; whereas the term “Account Office” is used in relation to a branch office and refers to a Head or Sub-Office in whose accounts the monetary transactions of the branch office are incorporated.

- (ii) The condition of distance from the nearest existing post office, where applicable, is relaxable at the discretion of the Director General, if a natural barrier like an unbridged river or hill or forest intervenes between the proposed post office and the nearest existing post office.

2. With the increase in the network of post offices consequent on the opening of a large number of new post offices during the post-independence period, a further objective would be to rationalise the mail and accounting arrangements in order to afford better executive and account control over offices, secure systematic financing of branch offices, and to provide better security arrangements. With this end in view, accounting work will be decentralised by converting some of the existing centrally located branch offices and extra departmental sub-offices into departmental sub-offices for administrative purposes and attaching the neighbouring branch-offices to them by transfer from existing account offices, even though the new upgraded sub-office might be unremunerative initially. However, in effecting such conversions, the post of sub-Postmaster (and any other post, if possible) will, as far as possible, be found by diversion of staff from the account or parent office so that the over-all loss on conversion is within the permissible limit of Rs. 500 per annum. Such conversions will be effected by Heads of Circles under the powers delegated to them in the Director General's letters No. PLG.1-4/56, dated the 5-12-1956, 7-4-1958 and 13-8-1958, as may be amended from time to time.

3(a) As with the opening of new post offices, the delivery jurisdiction of the existing post offices shrinks, efforts should be made to provide a more frequent, extensive and economic service by replacing the departmental delivery staff by extra departmental delivery staff, as far as possible.

(b) Certain villages, hitherto known as ‘No-Dak’ villages are at present provided with delivery service under the system of portorage charges. Efforts should be made to include these villages within the beat of the delivery staff of the nearest post offices under the unfixed beat system so that necessary arrangements for delivery of mails, if and when received, may be made.

(c) Simultaneously with the opening of new post offices, efforts should be continued to increase frequencies of deliveries in rural areas. Arrangements should be made to provide delivery facilities at least once a week to all villages with a population of 500 and over

by the end of the Second Five Year Plan period. In order to achieve the objective of the accelerated delivery service, the following standards may serve as a rough guide:—

- (a) Villages receiving not less than 30 letters a week may be provided with daily service.
- (b) Villages receiving 18—29 letters a week may be provided with service at least thrice a week.
- (c) Villages receiving 12—17 letters a week may be provided with service at least twice a week.
- (d) All other villages may be provided with service at intervals of not more than a week.

Additional posts of delivery staff, as may be justified on the basis of these standards, may be sanctioned, if they are expected to be self-supporting. Such posts as may be justified by the amount of work, may be created if the office as a whole continues to be remunerative even after this addition to its establishment. In exceptional cases, such posts may also be sanctioned with the personal approval of the Head of a Circle, provided the office does not consequently work at a loss beyond the permissible limit.

4. Nothing in these orders supersedes the existing procedure regarding sanctions to and control of expenditure.

Yours faithfully,

(Sd.) K. K. SARAN,

Dy. Secy. to the Govt. of India.

NEW DELHI;

The 17th February, 1950.

APPENDIX II

(Vide Para 107)

Instances where the Railways did not consult the R.M.S. before changing train timings

The timings of the following trains were revised during the last two years without consulting the R.M.S. which adversely affected the carriage of mails:—

1958-59—

1. From 1-4-1958, the connection between N.F.R.—21 Up in which H-14 Out Section (Siliguri Jn.—Alipur Duar Jn.) works and N.F.R. 201 Up in which H-41 Out Section (Alipur Duar Jn.—Gitaldah) works was discontinued. The matter was taken up with the Railway Board who in their O.M. No. 58TTIV/10/NF/10, dated 9-9-1958 did not agree to revise the timings.

2. With effect from 7-5-1958, the run of E.R.S. 128 Dn in which WB-5 In (Burdwan—Howrah) and WB-32 In (Bundel Jn.—Howrah) Sections were working was curtailed between Memari and Burdwan stations. When the matter was taken up with the Railway Board, they in their O.M. No. 58-TT(IV)/3/E-42, dated 15-8-1958 did not agree to restore the original running time.

3. From 1-10-1958, the departure times of 1 Up, 3 Up, 5 Up, 11 Up and 13 Up E. Railway trains from Howrah by which 10 R.M.S. sections, viz., C—12, C—42, C—3, C—28, P—1, P—26, P—31, H—12, H—35 and P—25 Sections work were advanced by about an hour, as a result of which mails posted in the afternoon in offices in Calcutta missed connections with the above sections and were detained for about 24 hours. On representation, these timings were partially changed but the old timings were not restored.

1959-60—

4. The speeding up of Ahmedabad—Bhavnagar mail and curtailment of its halts:

In 1959, 21 Up and 22 Down Bhavnagar—Ahmedabad—Bhavnagar trains conveying R.M.S. Section RJ-7 were suddenly made faster curtailing 23 halts *en route*. As a result of this, the P. & T. Department had not only to incur avoidable huge expenditure in the opening of new R.M.S. section and mails for the stations *en route* suffered delay.

5. The late departure of Bombay—Madras mail from Bombay resulting in misconnections with the important R.M.S. Sections at Poona and Manmad:—

9 Down Bombay—Madras mail conveying R.M.S. Section B-7 In (Bombay V.T.—Sholapur) which was leaving Bombay V.T. heretofore at 22.00 hours now leaves Bombay at 23.00 hours with effect from

1-10-1960. It misses connection at Poona with 21 Dn Southern Railway train conveying R.M.S. Section B-22 In (Poona—Miraj). The mails from Bombay side for Satara and Kolhapur District thus get stuck up at Poona. The same train was having connection at Dhond with 401 Dn Dhond—Manmad passenger train, conveying R.M.S. Section B-15 Out (Dhond—Manmad). This was a long established connection which was lost in October, 1960 time table changes. As a result of this, mails from Bombay side for Ahmednagar District have been diverted *via* Manmad resulting in avoidable delay. All alternative proposals made by the P.M.G. Bombay to avert these changes were ignored.

APPENDIX III

Summary of conclusions/recommendations contained in the Report.

Serial No.	Reference to para No. of the Report	Summary of conclusions/recommendations
1	2	3
POSTAL SERVICES		
1	5	The Committee doubt if the present criterion for the formation of a new Division based on the strength of staff provides the best method of assessment. There is need for evolving more rational criteria for the formation of a new Division or its upgrading which should take into account such factors as the work load, the stage of postal development, the special problems to be faced in that connection, and the population and area served.
2	8	The Committee urge that necessary action, which is long overdue should be taken early to review the formula for determining the cost and income of post offices as also the cost ascertainment of services, as recommended by the Postal Development Committee.
3	11	The Committee hope that constant efforts will be made to increase the frequency of delivery of mail in rural areas and improve the efficiency of local delivery.
4	12	The Committee hope that the number of "no dak" villages will be substantially reduced during the Third Five Year Plan.
5	14	The Department could take advantage of the development of roads under the Community Development and National Extension Service Schemes and in tune with the spirit of serving the rural areas en-joined under these schemes, provide such villages with speedier communication facilities by converting existing footlines into cycle lines etc. This, the Committee consider, will also result in economy since the benefit of longer distances that can be covered

-
- by a person by the speedier mode of transport will more than make up for the additional initial cost.
- 15 The Committee feel that in view of the strategic importance of the country's border areas, senior officials of the Department may pay visits to these areas so as to ensure that development of communication facilities is not neglected there.
- 17 The Committee feel that the present procedure relating to renting of buildings is leading to unnecessary delay in taking final decisions. The whole procedure needs to be reviewed in consultation with the Ministry of Works, Housing and Supply. A time limit for issuing such certificates by Central Public Works Department may be laid down. In the alternative, the feasibility of reverting to the earlier practice of acting on the certificates from the local rent authorities or district authorities may be examined.
- 8 19 The Committee recommend that Government may draw up a phased programme for housing of post offices in their own buildings, both in urban and rural areas.
- 9 23 The Committee hope that the Department will ensure that the orders regarding training of extra-departmental staff are strictly complied with and that every extra departmental agent has a good working knowledge of the rules, rates, procedure, etc. before he is allowed to assume full charge of his office. Inspectors visiting Branch Offices may make sure that the staff have knowledge of up-to-date rules etc. They may also be asked to comment specially on this aspect in their Inspection Reports.
- 10 25 The Committee feel that the procedure in regard to fixing of pay and allowances of extra departmental staff should be simplified. Broad rules may be laid down for fixing their pay and allowances and Superintendents of the Divisions may be enabled to fix their emoluments, including of those in leave vacancies, in accordance with these rules. The present procedure, apart from being cumbersome, leads to unnecessary delay and avoidable hardship to the staff.
- 11 29 The Committee urge that the suggestion of the Mechanisation Committee to get the machines required by post offices manufactured in companies should be vigorously pursued.
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| 12 | 30 | The Committee hope that the work in designing the automatic stamp cancelling machines and electric sorting machines in Calcutta Workshop and the Indian Telephone Industries respectively would progress speedily and that after testing the prototypes the machines would be manufactured expeditiously. |
| 13 | 32 | The Committee hope that the Postal Research Centre will be set up soon and that officials well acquainted with the working of post offices and their problems will be appointed therein. The Committee also hope that with the setting up of this Research Centre, greater attention will be paid to the problems of mechanisation in post offices which need serious and constant consideration. |
| 14 | 33 | The Committee recommend that literature on the progress of mechanisation in post offices in foreign countries may be obtained regularly and studied and useful ideas implemented. It might also be useful to send officers to advanced countries to make a study of their postal services with a view to introduce the improvements here. |
| 15 | 34 | The Committee endorse the recommendation of the Mechanisation Committee that a lump-sum grant of Rs. 50,000 to Rs. 1,00,000 should be set apart every year for experiment and research. |
| 16 | 35 | The Committee feel that it should be possible for the Posts and Telegraphs Department to replace the conventional balances in use in post offices by automatic scales, at least in the busy post offices located in towns and cities. The question of indigenous manufacture of scales which can give dependable and sturdy service, say, in the National Instruments Ltd., Calcutta may also be examined. |
| 17 | 38 | The Committee feel convinced that it should be possible to manufacture franking machines indigenously. The Posts and Telegraphs Department may explore the possibilities of getting the machines manufactured in the country and encourage their use by wide publicity. |
| 18 | 39 | It may be examined why complaint/suggestion books which are kept at post offices other than branch offices cannot be kept in branch offices also. |
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1	2	3
19	40	The Committee hope that in all post offices the complaint/suggestion book is prominently displayed.
20	41	The Committee feel that besides informing the complainant in writing, the action taken on the complaint may be recorded in the complaint book itself.
21	43	The Department may keep a close watch to see how far the remedial measures taken for reducing delays in the delivery of money orders in rural areas have proved effective, and improve upon them in the light of experience. The Committee recommend that remedial measures should also be taken to reduce the delays in regard to delivery of registered and insured articles.
22	44	The number of complaints received by the Posts and Telegraphs Department regarding misbehaviour or misconduct of staff is very high. A proper sense of courtesy and politeness should be enjoined on the staff and any breach of good manners may be taken serious note of. The Committee also suggest that "behaviour towards the public" may be one of the important points to be commented upon in the confidential reports of postal employees dealing with the public.
23	48	The Committee hope that serious attention will continue to be given by the Department to the problem of pilferage of mail and that all possible measures will be taken to eradicate this evil completely.
24	50	The express delivery system is a facility which the public have enjoyed for several years now and the Committee hope that it will not be abolished but so organised as to make the service efficient and truly express.
25	52	While recognising the need for expeditious handling of claims cases, the Committee would also stress the importance of analysing the claims specially those relating to insured articles and savings bank and for taking remedial action so as to reduce loss to Government.
26	53	Deterrent and swift action may be taken against staff who are found responsible for frauds. The Committee were informed in this connection that the

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present procedure in regard to disciplinary proceedings stood in the way of expediting decisions and that the Posts and Telegraphs Department had taken up this matter with the Ministry of Home Affairs. The Committee hope that it will be possible to evolve a satisfactory procedure which will make for expedition in such cases.

- 27 55 The Committee suggest that instructions may be issued to the effect that no sooner does the foreign parcel reach the Foreign Post Office, than an intimation thereof is sent to the addressee. This can be followed by another intimation to the addressee on completion of customs scrutiny.
- 28 57 The Committee expect that the consultations with the Central Board of Revenue regarding the procedure for the clearance of parcels through the Customs will be concluded soon and trust that the procedure in this regard will be streamlined and made less cumbersome.
- 29 59 The Committee recommend that a study may be made of the methods of stacking parcels in the Foreign Post Offices with a view to making it more systematic and to utilise the available space to the best advantage. They recommend that continuous efforts should be made to improve the efficiency of Foreign Post Offices and in this context suggest that a study of working of Foreign Post Offices in more advanced countries would prove useful.
- 30 62 Stamps find their way to all parts of the world. It is, therefore, of great importance that the issue of stamps should be scientifically studied and planned. There is no reason why with the rich tradition of Indian art we should not be able to produce attractive stamps of high philatelic value. Incidentally, stamps of good philatelic value could also earn us valuable foreign exchange.
- 31 66 The sale of stamps through the Philatelic Bureaux has not been satisfactory. The Committee feel that there is considerable scope for improvement both in the quality of stamps and the organisation of publicity.
- 32 67 The Committee recommend that the decisions on the proposals for enhanced delegation of powers to Heads of Circles may be expedited.

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33	68	The Committee recommend that the Heads of Circles may go by a common nomenclature.
34	70	The Committee hope that the remaining recommendations of the Conferences of Heads of Circles will receive consideration and final orders passed thereon soon.
35	73	The Committee recommend that the whole question of freight rates for mails carried by air may be examined afresh by Government with a view to secure more equitable rates than what obtain now.
36	75	The Committee hope that the vacancy of the post in the Universal Postal Union till recently held by an Indian national would soon be filled up by another Indian national.
37	76	The Committee feel that there is scope for improvement in the quality and colour of the inland letter and aerogrammes. They hope that it will be possible to get over the difficulty of obtaining better quality paper from Indian paper mills. The colour of the paper should also be improved so as to show up the writing on it better. A red and blue border may also be provided in the case of aerogrammes.

RAILWAY MAIL SERVICE

38	86	The Committee are not convinced that the remedy for the present ills of the R.M.S. lies in its separation from the Postal Services. It is doubtful if this will make for greater efficiency. Moreover, the intimate coordination that should exist between the Postal and R.M.S. Branches might become difficult if rival interests are created. There are many common problems between the Postal and R. M. S. Branches and it might be inadvisable to have two sets of people doing the same work. The result of the experiment of separating the technical problems of R.M.S. from the Postal Branch by the appointment of Directors of R. M. S. on regional basis on "no extra cost" basis should be carefully watched. The Committee feel that it should be possible to solve the difficulties of the R. M. S. and make it into a modern, efficient and streamlined organisation provided the officials concerned and the P. & T. Directorate make a determined effort in this direction.
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39	F 87	The Committee feel that the Director R.M.S. in the Directorate should be relieved of his extra duties so that he could devote full attention to the problems relating to R.M.S. It would also enable him to do the necessary touring so as to gain first hand knowledge of R.M.S. problems.
40	F 88	The Committee consider that complete separation of the R.M.S. from the Postal Branch is not warranted in the circumstances and that there is no necessity of creating a separate post of D.D.G. (R.M.S.).
41	90	The Committee hope that the P. & T. Directorate will take all steps necessary to build up adequate man-power with sufficient technical training to man the R.M.S. branch. It is advisable that only officers with adequate R.M.S. experience are appointed to look after R.M.S. work in the circles. In this connection the Committee were glad to know that the Indian Postal Service recruits would also be given training in R.M.S. work. Special emphasis may be laid during this training on their acquiring practical experience of the working of the R. M. S.
42	93	The Committee feel that there is much to be said in favour of the recommendation of the R.M.S. Committee to have larger R.M.S. Divisions. In the light of their recommendation, there may be a review of the jurisdiction and administrative set up of these Divisions.
43	95	The Committee have seen that earlier instructions in regard to the issue and printing of Sorting Lists have not been given effect to and hope that the recommendations of the R.M.S. Committee will be speedily implemented.
44	F 97	The Committee recommend that the Regional Directors appointed for R.M.S. work may take special care to ensure that in all the R.M.S. sections, the Sorting Lists are revised regularly and are maintained in a proper way in accordance with instructions. Any lapses in this regard may be seriously taken up.
45	99	The Committee recommend that where new furniture is supplied in R. M. S. offices either for the first time or in replacement of old furniture, it should be ensured that the standard approved designs are adhered to. Inspection staff may be asked to specially

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check this. It may also be ensured that every R.M.S. office has the minimum requirements of furniture.

- 46 100 Effective supervision should be ensured with a view to improving sorting arrangements. Random sample checking may be carried out to ensure that sorting is being done correctly. Similarly, post offices might be asked to report about postal articles wrongly sent to them. When defects or wilful negligence of duty is noticed, effective action may be taken.
- 47 102 The Committee feel that a comparative study might usefully be made of the advantages of the system of centralised and decentralised sorting as they exist in various towns and cities today. It might also be advantageous to study the practice followed by other countries and adopt improved methods in vogue there.
- 48 103 The Committee suggest that speeder methods of collection of letters from letter boxes may be introduced wherever possible. The use of cycles in rural areas and motor cycles or scooters in towns and cities should be encouraged. Efforts may also be made to increase the frequency of clearance of mails from letter boxes.
- 49 104 One effective means of publicity for encouraging the use of delivery zone numbers might be to indicate the Zone number in the Delivery Stamp with the request to the addressee that he may ask his correspondents to indicate that Zone number invariably.
- 50 109 The Committee hope that the problem of proper co-ordination between the R.M.S. and the Railways will be given closer attention both by the Railway Board and the P. & T. Directorate. There should be the fullest consultation between the Railway and R.M.S. authorities especially in matters affecting changes in timings of trains which carry mail.
- 51 111 The Committee hope that the P. & T. Directorate will bring to the direct notice of the Railway Board all cases where the Railway Administrations have not been adhering to the agreement relating to the construction of accommodation for the R.M.S. in Railway buildings in letter and spirit or where difficulties have not been resolved at the Divisional

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		or Zonal level. There should be close liaison between the Directorate and the Railway Board in this matter.
52	112	The Committee suggest that it might be desirable to assess the overall requirements of the R.M.S. in regard to accommodation at Railway stations and request the Railway Board to chalk out a phased programme for its implementation.
53	114	The Committee feel that it might be worth while to undertake a study of mail van accommodation especially in the South to assess its adequacy or otherwise, and to prepare a phased programme in consultation with the Railways both for the provision of additional vans and for replacement of old vans.
54	115	Improvements effected in mail vans in Western countries could be profitably studied and adapted with necessary variations to suit local needs. Suitable furniture, healthy conditions of work, ventilation, lighting and provision of basic amenities like drinking water etc. for staff should be given particular attention. Wherever possible and within the funds available, it might be desirable to introduce some cooling arrangements in the vans, especially in the trains passing through areas where the temperature rises very high.
55	116	Several modern gadgets are in use in the Railways, in U.K. and other Western countries, viz. for automatically picking up or dropping mail in stations as the mail trains speed through at upto 75 miles an hour. These gadgets may be studied and adopted wherever possible. Every effort should be made to modernise our service and make it comparable to the best in other advanced countries.
56	118	The Committee recommend that the negotiations with the State Transport Corporations may be expedited and a satisfactory solution found for the conveyance of mail by road.
57	124	The Committee feel that it is not desirable to postpone decision regarding the revision of the system of Bag Accounts as the present system, apart from being complicated, also involved the appointment of a large number of clerks on bag accounting work. The P. & T. Directorate may therefore go in detail into the matter and devise a more workable and efficient arrangement.
58	125	The Committee recommend that the question of reduction of the variety of bags for accounting purposes should also be considered while revising the system of bag Accounts.

APPENDIX IV

Analysis of recommendations contained in the report

I. *Classification of recommendations—*

TOTAL

A. <i>Recommendations for improving organisation and working.</i>	
S. Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 38, 39, 41, 43, 44, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57 and 58	48
B. <i>Recommendations for effecting economy</i>	
S. Nos. 5, 35, 40 and 42	4
C. <i>Miscellaneous</i>	
S. Nos. 32, 33, 34, 36, 37 and 45	6

II. *Analysis of the more important recommendations directed towards economy—*

Serial No.	No. as, per summary of re- commendations	Particulars
1	5	Conversion of footlines into speedier modes of transport will also result in economy since the benefit of larger distances that can be covered by a person by the speedier mode of transport will more than make up for the additional initial cost.
2	35	Review of freight rates for mails carried by air, with a view to secure more equitable rates.
3	40	The separation of the R.M.S. from the Postal Branch is not warranted and there is no necessity of creating a separate post of D.D.G. (R.M.S.).
4	42	Creation of larger R.M.S. Divisions.