

FIFTY-SIXTH REPORT

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE (1983-84)

(SEVENTH LOK SABHA)

MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS—RAILWAY SAFETY



Presented to Lok Sabha on

LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI

November, 1983/Agrahayana, 1905, (Saka)

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TO

FIFTY-SIXTH REPORT OF ESTIMATES COMMITTEE

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42		under the foot note add:-		
		"3.30 The witness further clarified that so far as the payment of compensation for the death of Railway Employees on duty on the train in question was concerned, it was done under the Workmen's Compensation Act. The witness added :		
		"Ticket holders holding ticket even worth 8 annas (50 paise) or one rupee will be entitled for this Rs.1 lakh compensation but the railway employee who performs duty on the train is not entitled under Indian Railways Act."		
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(1983-84)

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1. Shri T. R. Krishnamachari—*Joint Secretary*
2. Shri Bipin Behari—*Chief Financial Committee Officer*
3. Shri D. M. Chanan—*Senior Financial Committee Officer.*

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairman of Estimates Committee having been authorised by the Committee to submit the Report on their behalf, present this Fifty-sixth Report on the Ministry of Railways—Railway Safety.

2. The Committee took evidence of the representatives of the Ministry of Railways on 27, 28 and 30 May, 1983. The Committee wish to express their thanks to the Officers of the Ministry of Railways for placing before them the material and information which they desired in connection with the examination of the subject and giving evidence before the Committee.

3. The report was considered and adopted by the Committee on December, 1983.

4. For facility of reference the recommendations/observations of the Committee have been printed in thick type in the body of the Report, and have also been reproduced in a consolidated form in the Appendix to the Report.

NEW DELHI;
December 14, 1983
Agrahayana 23, 1905 (S)

BANSI LAL
Chairman,
Estimates Committee.

CHAPTER I

(a) Concept of Railway Safety

1.1 Railway safety has been defined as follows:

“Railway Safety is an all pervading term covering prevention of all accidents. An accident on the Railways is defined as any occurrence or consequence thereof, in the course of Railway working, which affects or may affect the safety of Railway, its engine, rolling stock, permanent way, works, passengers, servants or others or which causes or may cause interference with the normal working of or loss to the Railway.”

1.2 The concept of Railway Safety and the precise obligations of Railways in relation thereto were further clarified by the Representatives of the Ministry of Railways during their evidence before the Committee as follows:—

“Railway Safety has different aspects. The accidents may be due to failure of machine or negligence of men or the railway staff. That is one aspect of safety which we are concerned with. There are two other aspects. One is regarding the safety of our workmen. Then the other aspect, which has assumed great importance is the security of passengers who travel on our railways, who have to be saved from the anti-social elements and miscreants and the safety of the goods also.....

As far as the obligation of the railways is concerned, it has to see that the rules and instructions are implemented so that no safety hazard is there and that there is no danger to the passenger or goods. It is our obligation to see that the instructions which have been given are actually observed in practice and are implemented. It is also our obligation to see that in case of accidents due to our fault or negligence, the passengers are given relief and compensation, as per the rules which have been laid down in the Railways Act.”

(b) Funding of Railway Safety Measures

1.3 The Committee enquired of the representatives of the Ministry during evidence as to what were the resources out of

which the projects and programmes on 'Railway Safety' were being met; the expenditure on such programmes during the last 3 years; and the short-falls in expenditure on these projects and programmes. The witness replied as follows:—

"As far as the expenditure and the estimates are concerned, they are as follows, for the last three years:

1980-81—the revised estimates was Rs. 9.74 crores and the actual expenditure was Rs. 10.10 crores.

1981-82—the provision in the revised estimates was Rs. 10.87 crores and the actual expenditure was 10.80 crores.

1982-83—the provision is Rs. 21.50 crores but the actual figures will be available only sometime in July. The accounts will be closed only by the end of June.*

This comes out of the Accident Compensation, Safety and Passengers' Amenities Fund. This is on the basis of statistical compilation made at the rate of 5 paise for each II Class ticket, 10 paise for Air-conditioned Chair-car, 50 paise for I Class ticket and Re. 1 for Air-conditioned class. The surcharge on II Class monthly season ticket is 25 paise while on I Class monthly season ticket is Rs. 1.50. Taking the total number of tickets issued in the various classes into account and applying these rates, the total amount that is to be contributed to this fund is determined. That is transferred from revenue to this Fund. That Fund is built up from time to time and today we expect that at the end of 1983-84, we will have a balance of about Rs. 21 crores. What we contribute to the Fund in 1983-84 is Rs. 12.56 crores (Rs. 10.85 being contribution and Rs. 1.71 as interest earned). We propose to spend Rs. 20 crores from this Fund."

1.4 The Committee asked the witness as to when was the rate fixed and whether the fund accumulated would be enough for meeting the expenditure. The witness replied that "the rate was fixed in 1974. We have a balance of Rs. 21 crores."

1.5 Asked why the funds were not utilised when there was need for passenger amenities and safety, the witness replied:

"This is now part of the fare structure. Originally, when we started in 1974, this was shown as a separate surcharge.

*Final figure for 1982-83 is Rs. 18.8 crores.

As we came along, we gave up that practice and got it merged in the fare structure. Since we are carrying the balance, we do not find the need for increasing the surcharge at this stage. In fact, when the Railway Reforms Committee recommended that the accident compensation should be raised from Rs. 50,000 to Rs. 1 lakh they said that this should be done without introducing any additional charge and that it should be met out of the Accident Compensation Safety and Passengers Amenities Fund. At the moment, we are not in difficulty as far as this Fund is concerned."

1.6 The witness further clarified that "the passenger amenities is a very limited concept as far as this Fund is concerned. The money for passenger amenities mainly comes from the Development Fund". The witness further added:—

"In 1980-81, it was Rs. 9.74 crores (revised estimates) and the actual expenditure of Rs. 10.10 crores. In 1981-82, there is a marginal saving. It was Rs. 10.98 crores (revised estimate) and the actual expenditure was Rs. 10.80 crores. It has been fluctuating from year to year marginally. This is for all the three items put together, compensation, safety and limited passenger amenities".

1.7 When asked to explain "the limited passenger amenities", the witness responded:—

"Those items which have been specifically mentioned, such as, shelter over goods sheds, shelter for coolies and foot over-bridges, etc. These are very limited items. The passenger amenities are covered by the Development Fund. That is another Fund from which the bulk of the expenditure for passenger amenities comes. We are actually drawing down the balance. We are putting in only Rs. 12 crores whereas we are actually withdrawing Rs. 24 crores. Progressively, we are drawing it down. The highest balance that we had was in 1981-82. We had nearly Rs. 46 crores in the Fund".

1.8 The Committee wanted to know the reasons for non-utilisation of funds as it was not a sign of development. The witness agreed that "it is not a good sign of development" and stated:—

"We have started withdrawing double the amount that we are putting in. By the end of 1983-84, Rs. 46 crores will come down to Rs. 1 crores. We are drawing it down".

1.9 When asked how in spite of the huge accumulation of funds there was meagre allocation by the Planning Commission for Safety Measures, the witness replied that the "entire thing is put in the Plan resources for a year, in the Annual Plan. These funds to my way of thinking should be outside the Plan". The witness added:—

"It is certainly not a good thing. The question whether it is a part of the Plan funds or not has great significance, because when they put a total ceiling on the Plan funds, you can not spend more than that. This is one reason why in the Depreciation Reserve Fund also we accumulated a huge amount of nearly Rs. 300 crores. We are not able to spend because we have to accommodate expenditure within the total ceiling given by the Planning Commission in the Annual Plan. There are 20 to 30 Plan heads. When we have to limit the total expenditure to a particular size, we find it difficult to spend the money which we have in our own account. I admit, to keep the money, in the fund unspent is certainly bad."

1.10 The Committee asked the witness if the non-utilisation of funds was because the Ministry gave a low priority to the safety measures, the witness replied:—

"When there is a shortage or difficulty in respect of all the heads, there is some sort of balancing done. It is done by the Railways in consultation with the Planning Commission and the Ministry of Finance. This balancing is done taking into account the total resources available and the total amount that can be allowed to be spent from year to year, under each head. I certainly admit that we have to spend more on safety."

1.11 The witness however further added:—

"there are items like production of rolling stock, replacement of rolling stock, replacement of track, renewal of track, etc. All these are safety items. The Accident Compensation Safety Fund is only a very small component of safety."

1.12 The Committee sought the reaction of the witness to the suggestion that the A.C.S.P.A. Fund could be kept reserved for payment of accident compensations only. The witness replied that "it is a suggestion which can be considered. At the time when this was set up, the objectives were laid down. Your point is very well taken."

1.13. An 'Accident Compensation, Safety and Passenger Amenities Fund' was created in 1974-75 to meet the compensation claims and expenditure on certain Safety and Passenger Amenities works. The payment of compensation is but a minor part of the expenditure from the Fund. The amounts were allowed to accumulate to the extent of Rs. 46 crores as on 31 March, 1982. This shows that such improved safety measures and passenger amenities as could be provided were not provided. The reasons adduced by the Railways for this neglect are not convincing to the Committee. The moneys kept apart for specific purposes ought to be spent and the objectives realised. If there are any constraints imposed by the Planning Commission in this regard—the Committee wonder whether there could be any—the matter should be sorted out with them.

(c) *Safety Campaigns/Drives*

1.14. One of the functions of the Safety Organisation at the Railway Board's level is to issue "instructions for safety campaigns as required from time to time and monitoring the safety drives."

1.15. During evidence, the representatives of the Railway Ministry were asked to describe broadly the instructions issued in regard to the safety campaigns/drives and their monitoring; the form and mode of these campaigns; methodology for monitoring the safety drives, details of safety drives undertaken; and the impact of such drives. The witness replied:—

"Safety drives and campaigns are undertaken from time to time to focus attention on specific aspects and to create greater awareness among supervisory and field staff, which needs to be specially emphasised. Instructions are given for them to identify special areas to be given specific attention. An idea is given about the approximate period of the special campaign and the category of staff covered and also the type of supervision to be done. This is done to create more alertness and awareness among the staff. Cinema slides and mass media advertisements are given. This is to create more awareness among the road-users. The sighting and lighting of the signalling system is very important. If it is not correctly noted and understood by the driver, accident could happen. Suppose some lacuna is there; the driver will not be able to pick up signals properly. So, we have issued necessary instructions in

this regard. On suburban sections, in automatic signalling areas, the drivers have been asked to be extra careful. Those metropolitan areas are subjected to special monitoring. Publicity literature, posters, pamphlets and handouts are there. Also, we hold meetings and seminars. Groups of people representing the various categories of staff come and exchange ideas. There is no inhibition; they come out freely with their ideas, suggestions and difficulties. Specific sections got assigned to specific inspecting officers; a wide area is getting covered in this way. After the drive we get a brief report which gives the facts, which gives the areas covered, the staff involved etc. An officer from Directorate also goes to the field and checks back these things on random sampling basis. These special steps are undertaken by us in respect of road users and lighting and sighting arrangements of the signalling systems.

Regarding evaluation, there is no formal study as such. But we get the feedback from the Railways. This enables us to judge the effectiveness of it. We emphasise that there should not be any panic, but there should be complete consciousness and alertness among staff. As you know the test of the pudding is in the eating. I am glad to say that, over a period of time, these accidents have progressively come down."

1.16. Asked by the Committee when the safety organisation was created, the witness replied that the organisation was established in pursuance of a recommendation of the Kunzru Committee. As a result of the Report, it was felt that this aspect needed to be specifically focussed and this organisation was created in the field and at the Board's office. Prior to that there was no safety organisation. As regards the impact of the creation of safety organisation on the working, the witness elucidated:—

"This Safety Organisation has received much importance as it was necessary in the context of the ageing assets which we are not able to rehabilitate in time.... Safety organisation has helped in focussing attention on matters of safety."

1.17 When asked by the Committee to give details of some of the recent campaigns and their impact, the witness replied:—

"In 1982, there was a publicity campaign to educate road-rail users, through various media, particularly in local langu-

ages, regarding their observance of Motor Vehicle Rules while negotiating rail crossings and to take care in railway crossings. In June, 1982, we had an intensive campaign to ensure alertness of Cabin staff and while passing through the railway stations, to make sure that the driver is alert and the cabin staff are alert in exchange of signals. In September, 1982, we had a special to-day safety drive camp where field officers, Inspectors and certain other officers on the locomotives insisted upon dual objectives, one to see the sighting signals and also see the reaction of the Drivers and the Assistant Drivers and the other to see that the trains are not run beyond the speed restriction on the track which might have been imposed from time to time. In October, 1982, we had a special check to see that the drivers and the assistant drivers who go on duty were not under the influence of liquor. A large number of Inspectors and officers were deputed to make sure that they were not under the influence of liquor. In March-1983, we had a one-month campaign again to improve on the visibility of signals and alertness of drivers and assistant drivers because we found even after the drive we initiated, there was something which further required attention and the response was not upto the expectation. So, after March, when an accident had occurred in Calcutta, we had a special drive in the metropolitan suburban sections where we made sure that each driver of the EMU train was accompanied by either an inspector or an officer in certain sections, particularly to check his alertness. In automatic territory the Driver is required to stop the train before passing the signal at danger, taking certain precautions. Firstly, he will stop for a specified period and secondly, he will have to go at a restricted speed till the next clear signal and he will have to look out for the track ahead and make sure that there is no obstruction."

1.18 Asked by the Committee whether the campaigns/drives had been organised at all the zonal levels, the witness replied:—

"This was done at all levels in the suburban section in all the four metropolitan cities. In other places it is done in all Railways....The instructions were that they should cover all the areas."

1.19 In reply to query as to whether all the areas were covered, the witness replied, "according to the feed back given, I would say 'by and large, yes Sir'."

1.20 The Committee asked the witness whether any documentary films had been made on safety measures, the witness replied:—

“We have produced some films for our own staff some time ago. But I do not know whether any documentary films exist for the general public. It is a suggestion and we will take note of it.”

1.21 The witness further clarified that “there are dramas depicting safety measures to be taken, being staged in the zonal Railway Schools, where this kind of education is being imparted.”

1.22 In response to a query whether the officers were reluctant to join Safety Organisation, the witness replied:—

“After the recent upgradation in posts, we have got a concept of a controlling head of the department. Though the Chief Traffic Safety Superintendent is the head of the Department and he does not have a status equivalent to Chief Operating Superintendent, he is answerable to the General Manager.”

1.23 Asked if any incentives were given to officers to work in Safety Organisations, the Chairman, Railway Board, replied:—

“Now, CTSS is certainly not an unpopular post. We do select people with special care.... It is not post which has a glamour. As far as the particular department is concerned, the glamour centres round the Operating Superintendent's post. Hence I would not say that some of the unfortunately less intelligent people are being put to the CTSS post. We do select some analytical Superintendents, but certainly this post is not getting the glamour which is attached to some other post.”

1.24 A view was express during evidence that after each hard posting, the officer should be given a good posting, to which the witness replied as follows:—

“The point is noted, but no person is kept at a place for more than two and a half years. This is also seen that this does not become a kind of disincentive as you have indicated.”

(d) Safety Publicity

1.25 One of the functions of the Safety Organisation at the zonal level is stated to be “use of publicity media to create safety consciousness amongst staff and public.”

1.26 During their evidence before the Committee, the representatives of the Ministry were asked as to what publicity media had been utilised for education on Railway Safety. The witness replied:—

“As a publicity media we have been using the conventional posters, leaflets, pamphlets and some kind of aide memories etc. On a limited scale, we have made some cinema slides and some films also. Then in TVs some kind of announcements are also made. Apart from that what we find more productive is the man to man contact.”

1.27 Asked about the refresher courses, the witness replied:—

“It is there. In addition to that, we also have safety meetings and camps where people come in an informal atmosphere and can discuss their problems. Then we have Safety Seminars. Somebody from the supervisory side talks. Then the drivers and inspectors give their interaction. We have been laying more and more stress on the man to man contact.”

1.28 As TV is available in big cities only, the Committee desired to know of the steps taken to educate rural people from safety angle especially the safety measures required to be taken at level crossings. The witness replied that at present the refresher courses were confined to staff only.

1.29 The Committee enquired if the Ministry had got posters printed for the general public. The witness replied that “they have been printed and shown on the newspapers or at the stations.” The witness further added that “these are essentially for the staff and they are exhibited at the places where they work.”

1.30 A suggestion was made that the posters might be displayed on Booking Counters where people stood and watched in the queue so that they could see them. The witness accepted this suggestion as a valuable one and promised immediate action thereon.

1.31. The Committee find that the Safety Publicity and Safety Campaigns/Drives by the Railways are largely directed to educate the staff of the Railways and make them safety-minded. They feel that there is necessity for educating the general public also in aiding Railway Safety. The Committee recommend that the Railways should also produce safety publicity material and undertake campaigns/drives with a view to educating the general public and the railway users in regard to their responsibilities and role in main-

taining railway safety. In this context the Committee also recommend that besides publicity material like posters, leaflets, pamphlets, advertisements and slides, the Railways should also think in terms of having documentary films produced for display on TV and cinema houses for creating railway safety consciousness in the general public. The Committee further recommend that imaginative publicity posters should be displayed near the Booking Counters.

1.32. The Committee note that although a separate Safety Organisation has been created in Zonal Railways, the organisation does not attract talented people as it is bereft of the glamour attached to Departments like the operating Department and the head of the organisation does not carry the status equivalent to that of the Chief Operating Superintendent. In view of the importance of the organisation the Committee desire that a tenure in the organisation must be made rewarding career-wise for the officers and staff. The Committee would await the steps taken in this regard.

(e) *Organisational set up at Railway Board Level*

1.33 It is stated that "the Railway Board has a Safety Directorate under Member Traffic. Director (Safety) is assisted by two Joint Directors and a Deputy Director. Temporarily an Additional Director from the Mechanical Engineering Department is also working in the Safety Directorate."

1.34 During their evidence before the Committee, the representatives of the Ministry were asked about the reasons for posting temporarily an Additional Director from the Mechanical Engineering Department to the Safety Directorate, duties assigned to him and the line of demarcation of duties between the Director Safety and the Additional Director. The witness replied:—

"Firstly, this post of Additional Director is not the post of fulfledged Director. But it is a post in a lower grade. Its designation is Additional Director.

Secondly, with the increase in the level of traffic and the extent of utilisation of our resources, both rolling stock as well as the permanent way, we find that a large chunk of derailments were attributable to defects in carriage and wagon maintenance. The carriages and wagons, particularly the wagons, go from one part of the country to another. They are given attention at different places. At this time of increasing accidents, it is felt necessary that some more indepth study and inspection will have to be done and then it was considered that an officer from

the Mechanical Directorate could be inducted to work within the Directorate for looking after this one particular aspect which is increasing. This is purely a temporary measure which has been put in till the position normalises.

As far as the functions are concerned, the Additional Director works under the Director Safety and, as I mentioned, he carried out periodical analysis of the accidents due to mechanical defects and to bring into focus the areas which require special attention. Then he follows it up. He processes instructions and also monitors to see that these instructions are implemented. The Director (Safety) is in over-all charge of the Directorate dealing with all the aspects of accidents. There is no duplication. This is only a reinforcement in a particular area where it was found necessary that some attention had to be paid."

(f) Organisational set up at Zonal/Divisional Levels

1.35 It is stated that "at Zonal Railway levels, Chief Traffic Safety Superintendents have been provided in Senior Administrative Grade. They are assisted by either a Junior Administrative grade officer or Senior Scale Officer."

1.36 At Divisional level, there are Divisional Safety Officers..... Divisional Safety Officers are assisted by Safety Counsellors from major disciplines viz. Traffic, Mechanical/Electrical, Civil Engineering and S and T—disciplines connected with running of trains and maintenance of operational assets."

1.37 During evidence before the Committee, the representative of the Ministry was asked whether the existing organisational set up at the Zonal and Divisional level was adequate and what the exact role and status of the Safety Counsellors was and if any special training was given to them. The representative of the Ministry replied as follows:—

"The existing set up at the Zonal and Divisional level is generally adequate except thatin order to get people with adequate energy and maturity it will be necessary to upgrade the post in one or two cases. The structure as it is, is adequate. But what we found is that the existing organisations should work more purposefully by increasing the inspection as a follow up action. So, we have been stressing to get more and more

out of the existing set up. Among the Safety Counsellors also, we have seen that on certain Division full complement was not provided and in one or two cases complaints also come up that the quality of the counsellors provided was not up to the mark. Prior to creation of these posts, emphasis was on punitive measures. When we found that the driver has to react to the different situations imposed by the working conditions, a better human understanding of the person concerned was necessary rather than merely going by punishment and this concept of counselling was developed. The counsellors' duty is personnel oriented. He goes to the staff, drivers and sits with them, exchanges ideas with them and is able to influence by man to man contact and he also acts as a feedback. For example, in a particular case the man may be suffering from a particular difficulty. By just changing his headquarters may be we can get better things from him. So, this kind of human approach is possible with the help of counselling. We select the Counsellors and give them an orientation course. We give them psycho-technical training to find out in what manner better results can be achieved from these people. We are trying to give incentives also and are trying to make the counsellors a specialised body."

1.38 When asked what the designation of safety counsellors was, the witness replied:

"He is called there as Divisional Safety Officer; later, when he gets promotion, he is called Senior Divisional Safety Officer. The Safety counsellors are of the Senior Inspector's grade.

Since Railways' working has been specialised job, where our own staff and discipline are involved, we have not so far associated any people from outside. Recently, when the Minister constituted a safety team presided over by himself, he has associated people from the Departments of Defence and Electronics."

1.39 In response to a query if there was need for more such officers, the witness replied:

"So far, during our inspections we have found that the existing organisation is by and large adequate, except in

a few Divisions that I mentioned. In the context of the increasing traffic, we will definitely review to see if any strengthening is necessary."

1.40 The Committee have been informed by the Ministry of Railways that the set up at the zonal and divisional level is generally adequate except in a few Divisions. According to the Ministry the existing organisations should work more purposefully by increasing inspections and follow-up action. The Ministry have admitted before the Committee that complaints have also been received that the quality of Safety Counsellors at the Divisional Level is not upto the mark. The Committee desire that the organisation and its achievements should be critically reviewed and the organisation qualitatively strengthened.

(g) Revision of General Rules

1.41 It is stated that under Section 47 of Indian Railways Act, Central Government has framed General Rules for regulating the mode and the speed at which trains and rolling stock are to be moved so as to ensure safety of passengers, animals and goods.

1.42 It is further stated that framing and revision of the General Rules is one of the functions of the Railway Safety Organisation at the Railway Board level.

1.43 During evidence before the Committee, the representative of the Ministry of Railways was asked when the General Rules were last revised and what the position was regarding further revision of these Rules. The representative of the Ministry replied:

"The General Rules were last issued by the Central Government in 1929 under Section 47 of the Indian Railways Act, 1890. They give specific and fundamental guidelines and ordinarily no amendment to the Rules is called for merely as a matter of course, unless there is some basic change either in the method of operation, technology, working conditions etc. The modification of the Rules or amendment to the Rules has been done during the past 54 years on 72 or 73 occasions."

1.44. The witness added that the number of General Rules was about three hundred and odd. Reacting to the suggestion that the rules required a thorough revision, the witness replied that the

Rules have now been revised and a new set of rules has already been finalised and it is expected to be introduced by July, 1983.

1.45. The witness further clarified as follows:—

“The new Rules will be called General Rules 1976. So far we have been tinkering with the individual Rules. We have now considered it necessary to redraft the whole thing *de-novo* and I hope in a couple of months these will be introduced.”

1.46 The Committee trust that, as per the assurance given to them, the General Rules have since been revised and published.

(h) Study of Trends of Accidents

1.47 One of the functions of the Safety Organisation at Railway Board's level is stated to be “studying of trends of accidents on different Railways and carrying out analysis thereof for action by the Railway Board.”

1.48 During evidence before the Committee, the representative of the Ministry was asked if there was any system of bringing out periodically reports containing an analysis of the trends of accidents and making suggestions for action to prevent/avoid rail accidents. He was also asked to indicate a broad outline of the trends observed as a result of studies ad the directions given by the Railway Board in pursuance thereof and also to state what mechanism had been evolved by the Board to ensure implementation of its directions. The witness replied as follows:—

“Every year along with the Budget papers a review of the accidents, an analysis of their causes and the action taken is submitted. In addition every month the Safety Directorate makes out a review bringing out the salient points and this is also put up to the Board. In addition, whenever we have a meeting of the General Managers or a meeting of the Chief Operating Superintendents or Safety Superintendent or other technical officers, a review is put up, updated and is also discussed at these meetings. If there is any other special reason for review, for example, if we have to ask for additional funds or ask for completion of a particular work, at that time also this kind of a review is made. Now during the last review we have found that there was an increase in collisions in automatic block signalling

territory and at manned level crossings When the normal communication breaks down, other safety measures have to be taken to keep the trains going when the rules have to be meticulously observed and it was found that there was increased proneness to unsafe conditions. During 1982-83 several specific measures were taken."

1.49 When the Committee enquired of the representatives of the Ministry the reasons for the recent incident of fire in the pantry car of the Rajdhani express, the Chairman, Railway Board replied:—

"In the dining car the cooked food articles were kept in an almirah and smoke was found coming out of it as it was over-heated. They get panicky and then pulled the alarm signal. Unfortunately in doing so, due to the sudden application of the brake the hose pipe between the two coaches parted because the hose broke down. A very heavy application of the brake took place. Even now the Rajdhani and other trains are still running with screw couplers and not CBC couplers and the screw couplers due to the sudden application of brakes, broke. That is how this thing happened. There was no specific fire as such, but there was panic all-round; there was massive application of brake by many people."

1.50 The Committee pointed out to the witness that if brakes could not be applied, the chances of accidents would always be there. The Chairman, Railway Board replied:—

"More and more coaches are being added on to the trains, 22 23 coaches. The solution and the salvation for us is to have more and more CBC couplers in the passenger trains, as is the universal practice abroad. To avoid such emergencies and contingencies, we will have to go in for compressed air-brakes; we will have to go in for CBC couplers. That is the only solution."

1.51 When asked if the sudden application of brakes could cause derailment, the Chairman, Railway Board, replied that sudden application of the brakes will not result in derailment in the case of passenger trains.

1.52 The replacement of the screw couplers by CBC couplers, provision of compressed airbrakes and introduction of automatic warning system on high density railway routes would reportedly result in greater railway safety and avoid accidents by collision. The Committee would like the Ministry of Railways to undertake a planned effort to introduce these improved devices in accordance with a time bound programme. The Committee would like to be kept apprised of the steps taken by the Ministry in this direction.

(i) *Incentives for Railway Safety*

1.53 During their evidence before the Committee the representatives of the Ministry of Railways were asked whether there was any scheme for incentives/awards for recognising the merit of individual members of the staff or group of staff in maintaining railway safety. The witness-replied:

"We have a scheme of giving awards to the individuals. In that way the work is rewarded. We have a system of giving cash awards. When the officers go on inspection or during the Railway Week celebrations this is done to give them a little more public recognition. During 1982 more than 330 people were awarded at the level of the General Manager and the amount came to Rs. 32,000. In addition, the Divisional Managers also give it. Suppose a cabin man does something which averts an accident, immediately on the spot he is awarded. In the same way, if an employee goes out of his way to prevent an accident, he is given an award, sometimes by the Railway Minister himself during the Railway Week. We select the most outstanding and give them public recognition. During the current year, 5 railway staff were given awards, four of the North East Frontier Railway who during the Assam agitation did some very remarkable and wonderful piece of work for avoiding accidents. We have also instituted a scheme of giving an employees a cash award of Rs. 1,000 if he retires with no accident to his discredit.... Group awards are also giving for outstanding performance in particular areas."

1.54 When asked why advance increments were not given in cases of exemplary work, the witness replied that "there is a general order of the government banning advance increment for meritorious work."

1.55 Asked to state whether there was a system of giving out-of-turn promotions to staff who has shown exemplary merit in the field of railway safety, the witness stated that "there are certain posts where there is selection; there this is a plus factor."

1.56 The Committee asked the witness whether the Ministry of Railways had always to approach the Finance Ministry in such matters, the witness replied "we are governed by the general rules issued by the Finance Ministry."

1.57 Reacting to a suggestion that Railways being the biggest employer in country, should approach the Cabinet for exemption from general rules in the matter of grant of advance increments or out-of-turn promotions, the witness stated that "if the Committee makes such a recommendation, it will strengthen our hands."

1.58 The Committee recommend that the Ministry of Railways may examine in consultation with the Ministry of Finance whether it could be possible to liberalise the general Rules and Instructions in regard to grant of advance increments for meritorious work and for out-of-turn promotions in the case of Railway personnel who are adjudged to have made outstanding contribution in ensuring Railway Safety.

...

CHAPTER II

(a) *Track Renewal*

2.1 The requirement of track renewal during the 6th Plan period is stated to be of the order of 29048 Kms. as follows:—

	Primary	Secondary	Total
Arrear at the beginning of the 6th plan period	7788	5260	13048
Arisings during the 6th plan period	11500	4500	16000
TOTAL	19288	9860	29048

2.2 It is also observed from the Preliminary Material furnished to the Committee by the Ministry that the 6th Plan (1980—85) provides an outlay of Rs. 500 crores for a physical target of 10,000 Kms. of primary and 4000 Kms. of secondary renewals. The renewals during the first three years of the 6th Plan have, however, been only 4220 Kms. (primary: 3400 and secondary: 820) at a total cost of Rs. 397.4 crores.

2.3 During evidence before the Committee, the representative of the Ministry was asked whether the inadequacy of the funds was brought to the notice of Planning Commission. The witness replied:

"The Railways have been bringing this to the notice of the Planning Commission. In the 6th Five-Year Plan period itself, we estimated that we would need 11,670 Kms. of primary renewals. They had curtailed it, because our original plan allocation was drastically curtailed. We had planned for this 10,000 Kms. keeping in view the cuts in the Railway outlays. For the renewal of 10,000 Kms. in 1978-79, we estimated the cost to be Rs. 500 crores. But there has been a sharp increase in the price of rails. Prices have gone up for the 52 Kg. rails from Rs. 1500 in 1979-80 to Rs. 4,000 in 1982-83. The cost of CST-9 sleeper has gone up from Rs. 132 in 1979-80 to Rs. 266 and that of fish plates from Rs. 105 to Rs. 245. We found that this

amount of Rs. 500 crores was not adequate, even for doing this 10,000 Kms. We would require something like Rs. 1,000 crores. The funds allotted so far are: Rs. 109 crores in 1980-81 Rs. 137 crores in 1981-82 and Rs. 170 crores in 1982-83. In 1983-84 we have asked for Rs. 220 crores. We hope to get a little more. In 1984-85, we should get Rs. 300 crores.”

2.4 When asked if the funds allocated for the first three years of the Plan had been fully utilised, the witness replied “yes, we have exceeded it. There are no savings.”

2.5 The Committee asked the witness that in face of paucity of funds how would it be possible for the Ministry of maintain the track, the witness replied:

“Where the track is bad, we impose speed restrictions. In 1968, we had speed restrictions on 780 Kms. of our entire track. In 1982 because of arrears, we have imposed it on 2,000 Kms; and in 1983 on 2700 kms. This is one way of trying to maintain the tracks. Because of the arrears in renewals, we are getting into other problems also. The rails are getting fractured. Fortunately, it does not cause so many derailment as such but it causes lot of distress to traffic. In 1968-69 there were 471 rail fractures whereas in the year 1966 there were no arrears of track renewals. Thereafter, it started building up progressively because in 1966 the cost for renewing the track was Rs. 1.3 lakhs per kilometre whereas today it is almost of the order of Rs. 9 lakhs to Rs. 10 lakhs per kilometre.”

2.6 The witness added that the Railway Reforms Committee had also recommended allocation of more funds for track renewals and this was also within the knowledge of the Planning Commission.

2.7 When asked how could superfast trains be introduced if the track was weak, the witness replied:

“we have reduced the safety margins. The number of rail fractures is progressively increasing.”

2.8 Reacting to the suggestion made during evidence that the Ministry should not hesitate to raise more fund, the witness stated:

"I will keep your advice in mind Sir and we will ask for more money saying that if you do not give more money, we will stop the trains."

2.9 When asked about the track renewals on branch lines where a number of accidents had occurred due to defective track, the witness replied that the tracks on branch lines would be taken up after the track renewal on the main line was completed.

2.10 Asked as to how many accidents had taken place due to defective track, the witness replied:

"In 1979 out of a total number of 692 derailments on the Indian Railways, 90 have been attributed to track; in 1980-81 out of a total number of 825 derailments, 111 have been attributed to track; in 1981-82 out of 936 derailments, 19 are attributed to track. When I say 'track' there are two aspects; one is failure of the equipment and the other is human failure in not maintaining it in proper shape; there are cases where the rails have been removed while doing some work without giving proper protection. My analysis shows that in 1979-80 there were five derailments due to rail fractures, in 1980-81 nine derailments due to rail fractures, in 1981-82, 16 derailments due to rail fractures, and in 1982-83, 10 derailments due to rail fractures. I would not say that this is a small number and that it is something to be complacent about. We should take into account the total rail fractures because of which the train operations were affected. In 1980-81 there were 4,517 rail fractures. In 1988-89 there were 471, in 1981-82 there were 4,980. In 1982-83 there were 5,610. Almost every day there were about 16 to 18 rail fractures on the Indian Railways. The situation is quite alarming. Therefore, renewals must be done."

2.11 The witness clarified that if 3,300 km. of track was renewed every year than the arrears would be wiped out in 10 years. For this Rs. 430 crores per annum would be required.

2.12 Asked about the accidents on Metre Gauge track, the witness explained that the TISCO and ISCO have stopped manufacture of 60 Lbs and 75 Lbs rails. It had now been decided to import rails for Metre Gauge and hence the delay in replacement of track.

2.13. The Committee are alarmed to find that during the 6th Plan period the requirement of track renewal had reached a total of 29048 Kms. comprising of the arrears of track relevant at the beginning of 6th Plan period to the extent of 13048 Kms. and arising during the 6th Plan period of 16000 Kms. Of the total of 29048 Kms. of track renewal requirement, 19288 would be primary renewals and 9760 secondary renewals. As against the requirement, the 6th Plan (1980—1985) provided an outlay of Rs. 500 crores only for a physical target of 10000 Kms. of primary and 4000 Kms. of secondary renewals making a total of 14000 kms. which was less than half of the total requirements. As against the provision in the 6th Plan, during the first three years of the 6th Plan only 4220 kms. (primary 3400, secondary 820) could be renewed at a total cost of Rs. 397.4 crores. The Ministry of Railways have told the Committee in evidence that the physical achievements against costs have been much less than the estimates because of high degree of cost escalation. It was represented to the Committee that it would be possible to cover the arrears of track renewal as also the current arisings in the next ten years if 3300 kms. of track was renewed every year for which an allocation of Rs. 430 crores per annum would be required. In view of the increase in the number of rail fractures which were admitted to have assumed the proportions of 16 to 18 every day and also considering the fact that Railways are trying to maintain the track by imposing speed restrictions covering as much as 2700 Kms. of track in 1983, the Committee cannot but strongly urge upon the Government the need for higher allocations for track renewal programme of the Railways. They hope that the Government and the Planning Commission would, considering the seriousness of the problem, make suitable allocations for undertaking track renewal programme of the Railways on a crash basis.

(b) Interim Measures for Maintaining Track Safety

2.14. It is stated in the preliminary material that despite non-renewal of old track "no length of track is allowed to become a safety hazard" and that pending renewal of the track, the following measures are taken:

- (i) Imposition of speed restrictions on the deteriorated track;
- (ii) Increase in maintenance effort;
- (iii) Increase in vigilance to detect defective rails; and
- (iv) Increase in casual renewal input.

2.15. During evidence before the Committee the representative of the Ministry of Railways was asked if he considered the above measures adequate to ensure Railway Safety. The witness replied that "these measures are necessary. But they are not adequate enough."

2.16. Asked about the number of ultrasonic detectors available with the Ministry, the witness replied that they had 85 such detectors. Asked about the technique employed, the witness stated: "It is done by hand. We are importing a car which will record directly and will go faster."

2.17. In reply to another query by the Committee as to whether the existing number of detectors was sufficient, the witness replied in the negative. He added that earlier the detectors were imported. However, recently ECIL and a private firm of Bombay had started manufacturing them. When asked how many cars were likely to be imported the witness replied, "we are now getting one for trial. After trial we will get more cars." The witness clarified further that the car likely to be imported was a trial one. However, "we will see how it will perform here. It would be used for Broad Gauge and for Metre Gauge indigenous technology would be developed."

2.18. As regards the manually operated detectors, the witness added that another 37 more detectors were required but because of the limited capacity of the manufacturers, it was taking more time. The witness further explained that "the hand driven detectors does not do visual recording . . . It is only doing audio aid. We want visual aid....ECIL had been requested to develop it."

2.19. Reacting to a suggestion made during evidence that instead of importing cars, the money could be better utilised by acquiring more hand driven detectors and the whole track could be subjected to ultrasonic detection, the witness stated that it was precisely for this reason that only one car was being imported for trial. According to him, a hand operated detector could do 30 km. per month or 360 km. per year. The 122 hand operated detectors would therefore be able to cover 40,000 kms. in a year

2.20. When it was suggested that the Ministry should re-assess their requirement so that the entire track was examined once a year the Chairman Railway Board replied:

"Your point is very well taken. The long-term solution would lie in importing these track detecting cars which cannot only cover the entire length of the Indian Railways, but at the same time we can have visual records completely."

2.21. The witness added that the total requirement would be of 9 imported cars if the entire track i.e. Metre Gauge and Broad Gauge was to be examined each year. When asked by the Committee as to why the Metre Gauge had been neglected, the witness replied that

it was also examined; however, the density of traffic was less on Metre Gauge track.

2.22. The Committee have been assured by the Ministry that despite non-renewal of old track, no length of track is allowed to become safety hazard and that, pending renewals, certain measures like imposition of speed limits, increase in maintenance effort and vigilance to detect defective rails etc. are being taken.

2.23. For detecting the defects in the track, the Ministry have 85 hand operated ultrasonic detectors. The Ministry's further requirement for these type of detectors has been assessed as 37. The Ministry have informed the Committee that they are importing one power driven detector car for trial. With this car it is possible to have visual detection of defects. The future requirement of this type of car is assessed by the Ministry as 9 cars.

2.24. The Committee are of the view that the whole track including metre gauge specially high density areas like Rajasthan should be tested at least once a year and that the tests should be thorough, leaving no scope for doubt as to the results. With this end in view, the Committee would like the Ministry to re-assess their total requirement of the most suitable detector car and procure these at the earliest to minimise chances of accidents on account of defects in Railway track.

(c) Conditions of Bridges

2.25. The bridges which require either heavy repairs or complete re-building are classed as "bridges under observation". It is stated that there are 2539 such railway bridges out of which on 202 bridges speed restrictions have been imposed on consideration of their conditions. It is further stated that "in the 6th Plan (1980 to 1985) Rs. 90 crores were allocated under Plan Head 'Bridges'. In the three years period from 1980 to 1983 Rs. 50 crores have been used and on the basis of present allotment Rs. 40 crores is available for remaining two years of the Plan period. The Ministry of Railways have suggested to the Planning Commission to increase this outlay to Rs. 110 crores provided ways and means permit."

2.26. During evidence before the Committee, the representative of the Committee was asked about the latest position in regard to the availability of additional funds as desired by the Ministry. The witness replied:

"I think, some portion of the additional funds which we asked for is likely to come this year and some in the next year."

2.27. When asked as to how many bridges had outlived their normal life, the witness replied:—

“2,539 bridges are under observation. When you say ‘outlived their life’, theoretically speaking, the foundations will have to go for 100 years and the super-structure is supposed to go for 60—70 years. But sometimes we find cracks in the bridges. These are not dangerous. What we do is we keep them under observation. Every three months they are observed whether crack is widening or not. 202 such bridges we found were not safe. We have put restrictions of speed on those bridges and we are rebuilding them.”

2.28. When asked how much funds had been accumulated under the head “bridges” in the Depreciation Reserve Fund, the witness replied:

“When we make the contribution it is for the total railway system but when we withdraw from that Fund it is on the basis of annual allocation for specific purposes—for locomotives so much, for tracks, so much bridges so much Break up is done at the time of withdrawal from year to year.”

2.29. The witness added that the balance in Fund would be Rs. 90 crores by the end of the year 1983-84.

2.30. When the Committee drew the attention of the witness to the meagreness of money in the Fund, the witness replied:

“From Rs. 200 crores contribution to this Fund three years back, we have raised it to Rs. 850 crores in 1983-84. This is the level of increase we are doing. We will like to raise it further. But again it depends on how much resources we can mobilise.”

2.31. The witness added:

“The money in the Depreciation Reserve Fund is spent only on replacement and renewal. It is not spent on anything else. In the earlier years, the contributions were at a lower level and we have been criticised very badly for that. It was done because the financial position was very bad. The rate of contribution to this fund was only

about Rs. 130 to 140 crores. It was brought upto Rs. 200 crores three years back. It has been stepped upto Rs. 850 crores in 1983-84."

2.32. On the question of mobilisation of funds from the World Bank, the witness replied:

"The World Bank loan does not give us any additional resources. We only get the foreign exchange. The loans are given to the Government of India and the money that comes by way of foreign loan is taken into the overall resources kitty. The railways have to limit the expenses within the Plan allocation made to them. The loan repayments are made by the Finance Ministry. We only get the facility of importing the equipment and using the foreign exchange. The loan is not given to us."

2.33. When asked why the funds available in the Depreciation Reserve Fund were not used for modernisation of Railways the witness replied that the fund had been used for renewals and replacements and had not been diverted. The witness further explained that although Plans were formulated for 5 years yet funds were allotted on yearly basis.

2.34. When asked about the total requirement of the funds for the 6th Plan, the witness informed the Committee as follows:

"As far as the total requirements are concerned, a working group was set up by the Planning Commission with the Chairman, Railway Board as its Chairman to assess the requirements for 1980-85. The requirements came to more than Rs. 11,000 crores. As against that only Rs. 5,100 crores have been provided for in the Plan. It is subject to mid-term appraisal. Mid-term appraisal is going on. We have asked for Rs. 7,000 crores."

2.35. Dealing with the replacement of over-bridge at the Railway crossings, the witness observed:

"If it is in replacement of the level crossing, the burden is to be shared with the State Government. Initiative also comes from the State Government. They have to have matching fund for their portion of the work. The programme is made jointly."

2.36. The Committee note that out of 2539 railway bridges which require heavy repairs or complete rebuilding and have been classified as "bridges under observation", speed restrictions have been imposed on —202 bridges which are found unsafe. In the Sixth Five Year Plan, Rs. 90 crores have been allocated under the Plan head "Bridges". Out of this, Rs. 50 crores have been used and, on the basis of present allotment, Rs. 40 crores are available for the remaining two years of the Plan. However, the Ministry have asked the Planning Commission to increase the Plan allocation to Rs. 110 crores. The Committee have been informed during the evidence that the additional funds asked for by the Ministry are likely to come in the remaining two years of the Plan.

2.37. The Committee cannot but too strongly emphasise the need for increasing the Plan allocations for the Sixth Five Year Plan period for railway bridges. This is absolutely necessary for the replacement or heavy repairs to such railway bridges as are found to be in dilapidated conditions and are accident prone.

(d) Signalling Equipment

2.38 Ministry of Railway have stated that out of 1221 stations at which the signalling equipment is due for replacement, the number of stations at which signalling equipment had become a safety hazard is 250. It is further stated that "as against the requirement of Rs. 30 crores for replacement of signalling assets per annum on an average, the actuals have been in the region of Rs. 5—10 crores only because of which the replacement arrears are mounting."

2.39 During evidence before the Committee, the representative of the Ministry was asked the reaction of the Planning Commission to the demand of the Ministry for more funds. The witness replied:

"In the year 1983-84, there had been favourable response from the Planning Commission. This year they have allotted Rs. 35 crores as against Rs. 29 crores in the previous year, out of which Rs. 16.3 crores are being allotted to the replacement work and we are also likely to get another Rs. 5 crore. So, from the allotted amount of Rs. 35 crore, it will go up to Rs. 40 crores and we may get some more funds for the replacement. There have been arrears but our efforts will be to clear all these arrears and when we project more and more, we will pressurize next year. It has been said that 1221 stations are due for replacement of signalling equipment. It is a fact that this year we have succeeded to some extent and I think we will continue to exercise our pressure."

2.40. Asked about the time by which the old signalling equipment would be replaced, the witness replied that if Rs. 30 crore were allotted each year, then within a period of five or six years it could be done.

2.41. As regards the technology, the witness apprised the Committee as follows:—

“As far as signalling equipments are concerned, Indian Railways have got the knowledge of those equipments. Here there is no collaboration because in the Railways the Signal Engineers are competent. When our people go abroad, they do study this system and these systems are being done by ourselves. In axle and other areas, we are trying to contact the indigenous source and we are in touch with the local authorities. In the case of electronic design system, we are now trying to develop this system and we are having collaboration with ITI, Delhi.”

The witness further explained that:

“No import is required for this purpose. Sophisticated technology like electronic inter-locking system, etc. is something which is being developed in consultation with the ITI and the Department of Electronics.”

2.42. When asked if a number of accidents occurred due to defective signalling equipment, the witness replied in the affirmative.

2.43. The witness further explained that replacement of the signalling equipment was a continuous process.

2.44. Asked about the steps taken when the signalling equipment failed, the witness replied that in such circumstances caution orders are given to the drivers and non-interlocking is resorted to.

2.45. The Committee are perturbed to learn that the number of railway stations where signalling equipment has become due for replacement has reached the figure of 1221 and that at as many as 250 stations the equipment has become a safety hazard. According to the Ministry of Railways, the position has become acute because of shortage of fund allocated for the purpose in the past. The Committee are informed that as against the annual requirement of Rs. 30 crores for replacement of out dated signalling equipment, the actual expenditure has been in the region of Rs. 5 crores to Rs. 10 crores per year, with the result that arrears of replacement have mounted and the system is fast becoming a safety hazard. Replacement of signalling equipment which has become a safety hazard should be adequately provided for so that railway accidents which are often caused by failure of signalling equipment could be avoided.

2.46. The Committee have elsewhere in the Report recommended augmentation of financial allocations for different purposes to make travel by railways less hazardous. There is always a trade-off between addition of new assets and replacement and renewal of existing assets. The Committee has received an unmistakable impression that the replacement and renewals programmes of the Railways have been grossly neglected in the past. This neglect has been widespread in regard to tracks, Bridges, signalling equipment etc. which pose a severe threat to safety of Railways' operation. The Committee welcome the recent emphasis on rehabilitation programmes and desire that this effort should be intensified by making adequate allocation for the remaining period of the 6th Plan and for the 7th Plan so that arrears are overtaken.

(e) *Replacement of old coaching stock*

2.47 The total holding of coaches at the beginning of the 6th Plan together with the number overaged is indicated below:

Holdings			Nos. Overaged		
BG	MG	NG	BG	MG	NG
20562	13381	1518	1595	1109	672

2.48 The total funds made available by the Planning Commission in the 6th Plan is 2100 crores. At the rates prevailing at the beginning of the Plan, it was estimated that this amount will be utilised *inter alia* for manufacture of 5680 coaches.

2.49 According to the Preliminary Material, the Sixth Plan provision for acquisition of 5680 coaches falls very much short of the need based requirements of 14141 coaches comprising of 7742 coaches for meeting the needs of replacement of overaged coaches and 6399 coaches for meeting the growth of 5.5 per cent in non-suburban passenger traffic. The provision in 6th Plan is short even for the replacement needs alone.

2.50 Against the provision of 5680 coaches to be manufactured in the Sixth Plan, the actual coaches placed on line during the first two Years i.e. 1980-81 and 1981-82 are given below indicating the break up between those on additional account and those manufactured for replacement of overaged coaches:

No. of coaches placed on line

	Additional a/c			Replacement a/c			Total					
	BG	MG	NG	BG	MG	NG	BG	MG	NG			
1980-81	,	.	.	420	35	14	166	106	14	586	141	28
1981-82	.	.	.	369	33	..	299	131	15	608	164	15

2.51 The Ministry of Railways have stated that for replacement of coaches the two problems which are required to be overcome are constraints of funds and production capacity. While the Ministry is pursuing its case for additional allotment of funds with the Planning Commission, simultaneously a proposal for another coach factory has also been formulated so that both these problems could be tackled simultaneously.

2.52 The total annual capacity for manufacture of coaches in the country has been indicated as follows:

	<i>Sanctioned capacity</i>	<i>Max. achievement</i>
ICF	750	750
BEML	400	300
JESSOPS	250	100
RAILWAY Workshops	90	92

2.53 The above capacity includes that for EMU coaches also manufactured by ICF and Jessops. If these are excluded the capacity available from the three units for manufacture of coaches will be about 1100 to 1200 depending on the number of EMU coaches manufactured. Thus, the total manufacturing capacity available in the five year plan period also falls short of even the replacement requirements.

2.54 During evidence before the Committee, the representative of the Ministry was asked as to what special efforts had been made by them to procure more funds from the Planning Commission lest the overaged coaches became safety hazards and if any assessment of the cost of heavy and additional maintenance to keep the overaged coaches in safe working order had been made. The Chairman, Railway Board replied:—

“The total funds provided were Rs. 2100 crores. Now, this has been split into four parts:

Locomotives	Rs. 420 crores
Coaches	Rs. 447 ..
EMUs	Rs. 33 ..
Wagons	Rs. 1200 ..

In the case of coaching stock, Rs. 447 crores would get us 5,680 coaches equipments at the rate of 1136 coaches production per year. Unfortunately, as far as the coach production is concerned, today in our country, it ranges between the number of 1140 to 1150 only because of constraints of non-availability of capacity in the various workshops."

2.55 He added that because of the limited capacity, the Ministry had been impressing upon the Planning Commission to sanction an additional factory with an annual capacity of 400 coaches. The Planning Commission has sanctioned the factory. The gestation period based on fund allotment for a coach factory is about 4 years. Consequently setting of the new factory will go beyond the Sixth Plan. The witness further stated:—

"Unfortunately even for this there is a little constraint. The Planning Commission has stated that the funds must be found out of the total allotment which they have made to us. We have cut out many on-going projects.....

If any additional allotment is made, then only we can set apart money for the coach factory..... We are planning to replace only 2000 coaches (overaged) leaving another 2000 coaches approximately overaged at the beginning of Seventh Plan period to be made good gradually after a new Coach factory comes up."

2.56 The Committee asked the witness if the setting up of only one new factory could solve the problem. The witness replied that if a new factory with a capacity to manufacture 750 Coaches per annum was set up, the requirements of the Railways would be fully met.

2.57 The witness clarified that as a safety measure overaged coaches were not attached to mail and express trains.

2.58 When asked if the number of overaged coaches included the condemnable coaches, the witness replied the overaged coaches were those coaches which have outlived their normal life and the normal age of a steel coach was 25 years.

2.59 As regards the safety hazards posed by the overage coaches, the Ministry have stated that notwithstanding the age of the stock, adequate care is taken to maintain stock satisfactorily and ensure

safe running. This is achieved through preventive maintenance schedules and periodic overhaul in the workshops. Overaged coaches are maintained at a satisfactory level through increased maintenance effort and expense. It therefore becomes essential to phase out the overaged stock so that maintenance effort is not unduly employed on them at great cost without resultant commensurate gain.

2.60 The Committee note that out of a total Sixth Plan period requirement of 14141 coaches comprising of 7742 coaches for meeting the needs of the replacement of overaged coaches and 6399 coaches for meeting the growth of 5.5 per cent in non-suburban traffic, the Planning Commission have provided in the Sixth Plan for the manufacture of 5680 coaches and have allocated Rs. 447 crores therefor. This falls much short of the need based requirement of the Ministry even for replacement of overaged coaches.

2.61 The Committee have been informed by the Ministry that in addition to paucity of funds, the existing industrial capacity to manufacture coaches is another factor upsetting the Ministry's programme to replace overaged coaches. According to the Ministry at present the capacity to manufacture coaches is about 1100 to 1200 coaches per annum which again is below the replacement need.

2.62 The Committee have further been informed that the Planning Commission has approved the setting up by the Railways of a new factory for the manufacture of coaches with an annual capacity of 400 coaches per annum with the stipulation that the funds therefor must be found out of the existing allocation of funds for the Railways. The Ministry are, however, finding it difficult to set up the coach factory until the allocation of funds for the Railways is increased. The Ministry have further stated that the new coach factory should be of an annual capacity of 750 coaches per annum and only then the programme of replacing overaged coaches could be expedited. The Committee would commend this enhanced capacity. The Committee trust that while enhancing the capacity for the manufacture of coaches and drawing up the production programme, the need for indigenous manufacture of the EMU coaches in adequate number so as to cater for the suburban traffic in Bombay Calcutta and Delhi, would receive due attention. The Committee are anxious that the programme of replacement of overaged coaches should be accelerated in the interest of comfort and safety of Railway travel.

CHAPTER III

RAILWAY ACCIDENTS

(a) *Causes of Railway Accidents*

3.1 According to the 'Review of Accidents on Indian Railways (1980-81)', out of a total of 1013 accidents occurring in 1980-81, 592 were due to "failure of railway staff."

3.2 During evidence before the Committee, the representative of the Ministry was asked what steps had been taken or envisaged to increase the efficiency of the railway staff and making them safety conscious. He replied:

"The accidents are of two kinds. First there is staff failure.

The staff failure can occur either when a person is ignorant or not trained about the job he is doing or when there is deliberate negligence or failure or omission on his part. These are very easily identifiable. The correction for that is, where the person is lacking in training, you have to intensify training methods and make him fit for the job he is doing. Wherever there is deliberate negligence or where punitive action is to be taken, that has to be taken.

There is another category of failure which is causing a lot of concern and which is also responsible for a large number of major accidents where a large number of people are getting killed or injured. This is a failure which is due partly to environment factors and partly due to individual reaction factors. For example a driver of a train passes the signal at "danger" and causes a serious accident. He knows that he is the first man to die. He has so suicidal tendency that he wants to do that; he does not want to commit suicide and die. I can mention about cases where there are very good drivers with very good record, in a large number of cases, where they just forget or overlook the caution for a moment and cause an accident. This is a kind of environmental factor which is causing us a lot of concern."

3.3 The environmental factor was defined by the witness as relating to "their working conditions, hours of work, the rest factor." The witness continued:

"Then, we have tried to find out category-wise the number of persons who have been held responsible for the collisions. In 1981-82, there were 48 drivers and 21 Station Masters. In 1982-83, the number of drivers was 32 and the number of SMs was 19. Fortunately, the number of collisions attributed to staff failure had dropped from 86 in 1981-82 to 52 in 1982-83.

You cannot say that the drivers are poorly paid. They are one of better paid employees in the railways. It is not the financial worry as such which could be causing accidents. They get adequate rest. After a certain prescribed hours of duty, they are relieved and they get proper rest. They have got good rest houses and all that. But even then we find there are a large number of people who are safetyisks. There are also people who are not as alert as they should be or whose reaction has not been prompt enough to avert an accident. We tried to make a psychological analysis of their attitudes. But I am sorry we have not been able to come to any specific conclusion though we have tried to make use of the psycho-technical cell. Generally, we find that people who are in advanced age are more prone to cause accidents than others. The illiterate drivers are more prone to accidents. The people who wear spectacles have a tendency to miss the signals. These are all tentative field survey samples. But, they could not come to any definite conclusion. We have also recently appointed a Committee of Senior Officers to lay down the recruitment procedure. People are prone to get some particular diseases on particular jobs. The present rules of medical examination are good enough to decide whether the man is good. For medical check up other than eye sight examination, we expect a complaint from the employee before we do it. A regular systematic check up should be done. But, if we find people not responding, what should we do? Are we to remove them? In that case, what alternative jobs can we give them? If his pay is protected, it will become a drain. What is to be done with regard to them? Is the procedure to be changed? Is the method of recruitment to be changed? These are some of the problems which the Department is grappling with. For the present, we insist on their training.

We have tightened up their medical examination. Initially, there was no refresher course. The refresher courses have been started now. We also travel with them and see whether something could be done to improve their efficiency. We make sure that there is no laxity in the hours of work or in the position of signals. If the man is held responsible for the accident, punitive action is taken.

As regards ASMs and SMs, they live in way side stations where, according to the present standards, the conditions of living are miserable. Government has not provided accommodation, the basic necessity of life, to some of them. This is one difficulty which today is causing them mental agony. There are no educational facilities for their children also. Unless they educate their children, their future will be deemed. It is due to these unsatisfactory and miserable conditions of living at the places of their posting, that they are unwilling to take their family members along with them to their places of work. They leave their family members behind. They are living under difficult conditions, away from their families. In many cases, the houses which are provided to the staff are not worth living in. They have no proper latrines. What the railways spend on welfare measures of their employees is woefully inadequate compared to public sector undertakings. First of all, we have to improve the living conditions of the staff before we expect good work from them."

3.4 When asked to suggest remedial measures to avert human failure, the Chairman, Railway Board enumerated a number of steps taken to improve the performance of key personnel e.g. in Superfast trains a number of drivers have regular hours of duty. Rest Rooms are provided to them. The rest rules provide atleast five periods of not less than 22 consecutive hours each including a full night at Headquarters at home or four periods of not less than 30 hours each at Headquarters in a month so that they may look after their personal problems. They are eligible to atleast 16 hours' headquarters rest when duty performed is 8 hours or more and atleast 12 hours rest at Headquarters whenever duty performed is less than 8 hours. If after making eight hours, they go to some outstation, they are eligible for eight hours rest; if the total duty period is less than 8 hours, they are eligible for rest at outstation equal to the total duty period performed. Normally they are not expected to do more than 8 to 10 hours duty. The take-home pay of the drivers is quite handsome.

3.5 When asked by the Committee whether the percentage of the accidents that occurred in 1980-81 and 1981-82 due to human failure was not on the higher side, the witness replied that "we are very much concerned about this factor." The witness added that there were four or five major categories of staff who were more accident prone e.g. drivers, train examiners and fitters, Engineering PWI, Staff, keymen, etc. The Ministry were trying to educate them. Another safety step envisaged was the provision of a telephonic link between the driver and the guard.

3.6 In reply to a query from the Committee as to what punitive action had been taken against the erring staff during the year 1982-83, the witness furnished the following information:—

"Dismissal or removal from service	..	75
Compulsory retirement	..	17
Reduction in grade	..	177
Withholding of increments	..	695
Withholding of other privileges like passes, P.T.Os etc.		87
Cus in Death-cum-Retirement Gratuity		4
Withholding of promotion		13
Censure	..	92
Total	..	1160

3.7 The witness added that "in some cases criminal cases have been instituted by the State Government concerned."

3.8 When asked how the problem of drinking among drivers was controlled, the witness replied that when a driver reported for duty to foreman, the latter had to certify that former was fit to drive. Loco sheds had been provided with breathalysers. The Inspectors also give such a test to drivers. The witness clarified that in 1981-82, no accident took place because the driver was drunk.

3.9 The Committee pointed out that in some trains no seat was reserved for TTIs. The witness replied "this point is noted."

3.10 Asked about the qualifications of the drivers, the witness stated:

"As far as drivers are concerned, in olden days we used to take about 50 to 60 per cent through direct recruitment where the qualification is VIII Standard or Matriculation. But now a days recruitment of drivers is by promotion from cleaners. From there, they become Second Firemen, then they become First Firemen and after that they

become shunters, and then from shunters they become drivers. That is why through the psycho-technical Cell we are insisting that they must be tested psychologically. Today there is no specific qualification for the driver, but we are again trying to insist that at least 50 per cent of the people who have to become drivers should have a certain minimum qualification especially in view of the fact that the diesel locomotives and electric locomotives cost us as much as 50 to 60 lakhs of rupees and they are highly sophisticated. We have now stated that there must be a category of drivers who must have the minimum educational qualification. I will read this out: "50 per cent by the usual selection procedures from amongst Firemen-B, who are VIII Class; but over 50 per cent by departmental examination from Firemen who are matriculates and who have got 3 years of service."

3.11 It was pointed out that with the type of pay and perks given by the Railways, even engineering graduates could be recruited as drivers, with which the Chairman, Railway Board agreed.

(b) Study of Causes of Accidents

3.12 It has been brought to the notice of the Committee through a written note by the Ministry that a team of Joint Directors from the Railway Board has visited all the Railways for sample checks to see if there are any deficiency or lacunae in operating or maintenance practices and whether any shortcut methods are being employed in working of trains. They discussed their observations with the local supervisors, Divisional Railway Managers and General Managers of the Railway concerned to initiate corrective action.

3.13 During evidence before the Committee, the representative of the Ministry was asked about the outcome of the study conducted by the team of Joint Directors. The witness summed up the findings as follows:—

- (1) The basic rule of exchanging signals between the driver, the guard and the cabin man was not followed.
- (2) When a train had come and was stopping at a station, the man who pulls the signals did not put the lever collar on the lever so that even by mistake it was not pulled.
- (3) The practice of giving daily Caution Order to the control was not followed scrupulously.

- (4) In certain cases the drivers were not found fully conversant with safety rules.
- (5) The rule re: the Assistant Drivers' looking at the signal and the drivers confirming it was not followed.
- (6) The quantum of inspection and the nature of inspection by officers was not adequate. The principle of man to man contact was flouted.
- (7) There was no check back system to point out not only the individual irregularities but also of the failure of system.
- (8) In certain workshop the quality of periodic overhauling was not satisfactory.
- (9) The procedure for ultrasonic check up of the axles was not always followed.
- (10) The roller bearings were not examined properly.
- (11) The safety brackets to check the falling of brakes were not secured some time.
- (12) The checking of the track including ultrasonic checking was not done as required.
- (13) The instructions as to the speed of a train were not followed.

3.14 The witness added that corrective and remedial measures had been taken to rectify the above lacunae.

3.15 The Committee find that the major cause of railway accidents is "failure of railway staff". This failure is the result of variety of causes both personal and environmental which include wilful negligence.

3.16 Stressing the importance of keeping the Railway staff in proper trim and cautioning against any complacency in this regard, the Committee would like to make the following suggestions:

- (i) Maximum and minimum age limits should be prescribed on realistic basis for active service in the case of sensitive posts connected with the moving of trains.

- (ii) Minimum standard of health should be prescribed for persons manning such sensitive posts. There should be a compulsory periodical medical check up and the continuance of persons in these posts should be subject to continued medical fitness. This should not be confined to eyetests as at present.
- (iii) Minimum educational and technical qualifications and experience should be laid down for such posts at different levels. Appointment should not be made to these posts merely by way of providing job opportunities at higher level to junior cadres.
- (iv) There should be a system of periodical compulsory refresher courses with a view to maintain the standard of technical competence of the persons and also to make them aware of technical innovations and changes made from time to time in procedures and practices.
- (v) As far as possible persons holding such posts should not be allowed to work over-time beyond a minimum time.

3.17 As regards the conditions of living of the Station Masters and Asstt. Station Masters who are required to live in way-side stations without adequate facilities, the Committee would like the Ministry of Railways to try to improve the facilities especially housing.

3.18 The Committee find that at present the field of recruitment for loco drivers is the category of firemen, who are mostly unskilled and in many cases hardly literate. The Committee are of the view that with the emoluments and perks attached to the post of loco driver the Railways can have far better skilled and qualified drivers. The Ministry have assured the Committee that they are going to amend the rules for recruitment of railway drivers to provide for 50 per cent of them being selected on the basis of departmental examination from fireman who are matriculates and have got 3 years service. The Committee feel that even this measure may not go a long way in the recruitment of efficient and qualified drivers. They would like the Ministry to examine whether the field of recruitment could be enlarged by inducting even outsiders with minimum prescribed qualifications such as graduation or diploma in Mechanical Engineering, who could be given training before assigning them regular duties.

3.19 The Committee note that a team of Joint Directors from the Railway Board has visited all the Railways for sample checks to see if there are any deficiencies or lacunae in operating or maintenance practices and whether any short cut methods were being employed in the working of trains. The outcome of the study showed a number of lapses on the part of the staff in following the laid down procedures and practices. The Committee would like the Ministry to take immediate and intensive corrective steps to make the staff safety conscious. The Committee hope that the Ministry would undertake such studies periodically in future also so that necessary steps are taken as and when required to keep the staff alert.

(c) Railways' Liability in Accidents

3.20 It is stated that Railway Administration is liable to pay compensation in the event of an accident to a train resulting in injury or death of passengers. Rules for payment of compensation in respect of passengers killed or injured in train accidents have been made under the Indian Railways Act."

3.21 During evidence before the Committee, the representative of the Ministry was asked if the adequacy of the compensation was reviewed from time to time. He replied:

"Adequacy of the scale of compensation is reviewed from time to time. In 1973 the amount of compensation payable in the case of death and total disablement was increased from Rs. 20,000 to Rs. 50,000. Recently, just a couple of months ago, it has been reviewed again and it has been decided to increase this compensation to Rs. one lakh. I think that has been announced in the Parliament also and an amendment is proposed to be introduced shortly.

Regarding the amount of compensation paid, upto 1981-82. I have got the figures. The figure for 1982-83 is not yet available. During 1979-80 the total compensation given was about Rs. 17.87 lakhs. In 1980-81 it was Rs. 45.38 lakhs and in 1981-82 it was Rs. 46.12 lakhs."

3.22 Asked about the time normally taken to pay the compensation, the witness replied:

"We have tried to take a tally of the major accidents. During 1980-81 about whatever claims were settled in major

accidents we found that the average time taken between the date of the accident and the actual payment to the claimants varies from 180 days to 300 days. In the case of minor accidents the average time taken varies from 270 days to as much as 1731 days in one or two cases."

3.23 When asked about the reasons for the inordinate delay in paying the compensation, the witness stated:—

"The procedure used to be a too long-drawn-out one in the sense that the State Government used to come to us with nomination of judicial officer in response to our request and then the Railway Board used to issue a notification and in this process itself a lot of time is taken."

3.24 The witness further added:

"As regards the delay in the case of major accidents one main stage at which the delay occurs is the formality in connection with fixing up *ad hoc* Claims Commissioner and issuing a notification. It takes three to four months in some cases. We have now taken steps to cut down this delay. We have given more powers to the General Managers so that they can go ahead; except for notification which is still issued by us. Consultation with State Government, etc., is done by the General Manager. In the earlier years there were no powers to create the matching posts or supporting posts to help the Claims Commissioner, but now these powers have been delegated and they can straightway take action. Also the ban on the appointment of retired judicial officers as Claims Commissioners has been lifted. In the case of the Howrah accident, it was possible for us to issue the notification regarding appointment within a month. We hope we will be able to cut down the delay.

As far as minor accidents are concerned, the District Magistrate or the Additional District Magistrate functions as *ex-officio* Claims Commissioner and he has to do it along with his other duties. Here the delay is inherent in the civil judicial process as in other cases. Where the magnitude of the case is such that the *ex-officio* Commissioner will take a lot of time, we have permitted them to appoint *Ad-hoc* Commissioners, and in the last one or two cases this has been done. On the recommendation of the Railway Convention Committee, a three-member Com-

mittee is already on the job of streamlining the existing procedure and finding out how best the matter can be further improved, whether a standing panel of Claims Commissioners for each Railway will be of some help, whether payment of honorarium to the ex-officio Claims Commissioner for deciding a case within six months should be necessary for minor accidents, where the ex-officio Claims Commissioner is heavily overloaded whether more *ad hoc* Commissioners should be appointed, whether there should be more than one *ad hoc* Claims Commissioner in the case of major accidents, and so on. All these things are under the purview of this particular Committee consisting of two Directors from the Railway Board and also one representative from the General Insurance Company nominated by the Ministry of Finance. This Committee is on the job and we expect that, within the course of the next one or two months, this job will be completed and we will be able to take a further view on this and come to concrete steps whereby these delays could be curtailed or avoided."

3.25 The Committee enquired of the witness as to why the classification of accidents into major accidents and minor accidents was made when deaths were there in both the types of accidents. The witness replied:

"I can only say that it perhaps depends on the quantum of workload. That is why we have appointed *ad hoc* Commissioners even in the case of minor accidents, in two or three cases where we felt that this was necessary."

3.26 Reacting to the suggestion that all accidents should be treated on the same footing, the witness stated that "the suggestion has been noted and would be remitted to the Committee who was looking into the matter." The witness added that the distinction had a limited aspect as far as compensation was concerned.

3.27 The Committee asked the witness whether, after an accident had occurred, the only thing that was determined was the identity of the rightful claimant or the quantum of compensation was also determined. The witness replied that "the quantum in the case of death is fixed. It is the genuineness of the individual who is making the claim that has to be gone into."

3.28. It was suggested that the claimant could go to a judge or magistrate or any other pre-determined judicial authority and get the succession certificate which could be done in one or two months. That would cut short the delays in payment of compensation.

3.29 The witness replied:

"This aspect will definitely be gone into by the Committee. If I can hazard an explanation, it is not only the question of the entitlement, but in some cases there may be more than one claimant. And in these cases whether the succession certificate would make things move quicker is a matter which has to be seen. The point you have raised will be noted. This will also be gone into by this Committee."

*3.30 The witness further clarified that so far as the payment of compensation for the death of Railway Employees was concerned, it was done under the Workmen's Compensation Act. The same procedure was followed if a Railway Employee travelling on a pass died in an accident. The witness added:

"Ticket holders holding ticket even worth 8 annas (50 paise) or one rupee will be entitled for this Rs. 1 lakh compensation but the railway employee who travels on duty or is going on a pass is not entitled."

3.31 In regard to the payment of claims, the Committee enquired of the witness if there was a time limit. The witness replied "There is a time limit for preferring the claim" but no time limit had been fixed for payment of compensation.

3.32 Continuing with the compensation payable to railway employees, the witness clarified that the dependents of an employee who died in an accident were entitled to family pension if the deceased had opted for it. In addition the Ministry tried to give some appointment to deceased's family members. The time limit was 5 years for seeking employment in such cases.

3.33 He clarified that in case of accidents, the Ministry had the powers to pay ex-gratia relief only but the quantum of compensation was decided by *ad-hoc* Commissioners or Courts. If any body was dissatisfied with the *ad-hoc* Commissioners verdict, he could prefer an appeal in a Court. In case of death the amount of compensation was fixed and the earning capacity of the deceased was not taken into account.

*At the time of factual verification, the Ministry of Railways had suggested certain alterations in the paragraph. The paragraph as so altered would read as follows:—

3.34 In regard to the elaborate procedure for getting the compensation, the witness further stated:

"So far as the payment of compensation is concerned, we have to establish the legal claim and all that. This is a point which we will ask the Committee to go into so that a simplified procedure could be evolved. I can only submit one thing in this connection that in the case where we have to settle the provident fund dues after the retirement or death of the employees, we find that the process of getting a succession certificate takes much longer period. But as I said this will certainly be looked into by the Committee so that a simplified procedure could be evolved."

3.35 It was pointed out to the witness that the conditions like obtaining of Income-tax and Wealth tax Clearance Certificates before payment of compensation were causing undue hardships to poor people who never paid such taxes. Suggestions were also made that Compensation could be paid on the basis of succession Certificates. The witness said that "these were good suggestions and we will refer these to the Committee."

3.36 **The Railway Administration is liable to pay compensation in the event of an accident to a train resulting in injury to and/or death of passengers.** The Committee have been informed that amount of compensation payable in the case of death is proposed to be raised to Rs. 1 lakh from Rs. 50,000 and an amendment to the Indian Railway Act will be introduced in Parliament shortly. The Committee trust that the amendment would be carried out early.

3.37 The Committee leave that the average time taken for settling claims in major accidents varies from 180 days to 300 days. However, in the cases of minor accidents the average time varies from 270 days to as much as 1721 days. Whereas there is a time-limit within which claim should be filed there is no time limit for payment of compensation. The Committee feel that there ought to be a time limit for the latter also.

3.38 The Committee strongly feel that the poor and illiterate people who are injured or bereaved should not be harassed and the procedures for payment of compensation leave a lot of scope for simplification. The Committee have been informed that on the recommendation of the Railway Convention Committee, a three-member Committee consisting of two Directors from Railway

Board and one representative from the General Insurance Company nominated by the Finance Ministry is already on the job of streamlining the existing procedure and finding out how payment of compensation could be expedited.

3.39 During evidence the representative of the Ministry assured that he would refer the following suggestions made by the Estimates Committee to the three-member Committee:—

- (i) Separate procedure for payment of compensation in the case of major and minor railway accidents are not necessary as in both cases death or injuries are caused to the travelling public. A single unified procedure may be evolved for all such railway accidents.
- (ii) Procedure for payment of compensation should be simplified by accepting the identity of the rightful claimant who produces a succession certificate in the case of a death of a passenger. Independent determination of the identity of the rightful claimant by the Claims Commissioner is not necessary.
- (iii) Conditions for payment of compensation like production of income-tax and wealth-tax clearance certificate before payment were causing undue hardships and should be given up.

3.40 The Committee would await with interest the report of the three member Committee and would like to be apprised of the recommendations of the Committee and the action taken thereon.

3.41 The Committee have been informed that the payment of compensation to the Railway employees on duty or travelling on passes or PTOs was governed by the provisions of the Workmen's Compensation Act. The Committee feel that so far as the workers on duty are concerned the existing practice has some relevance but in the case of Railway employees travelling on PTOs. or passes, they shold be treated at par with the general public.

(d) *Railway Liability in Accidents involving loss of goods or animals*

3.42. The Committee have been informed that "claims for compensation for booked goods and animals damaged or destroyed in accidents are dealt with under the relevant sections of the Indian Railways Act."

3.43 During evidence before the Committee, the representative of the Ministry was asked whether any rules had been framed for payment of compensation for loss or destruction in accidents of goods and animals booked with Railways. The witness replied:

"As far as the claims for loss, damage, destruction, deterioration or non-delivery of the consignments booked including loss due to accidents, etc. are concerned, the present Indian Railway Act is fairly comprehensive. We have not felt the need for framing of any rules. So, there is no provision in the Act for framing rules for this specific purpose."

3.44 The Committee asked the witness as to the level at which the claims were settled. Stating that 'the claims were settled in the Railways at various levels depending on the amount involved', he clarified:

"For settling the claims, the General Managers of different Railway Zones have got no limits. Then the Chief Commercial Superintendent (Claims) can settle claims upto the value of Rs. 40,000. The Additional Chief Commercial Superintendent (Claims) has the power to settle the claims upto the value of Rs. 25,000. So also Deputy Chief Commercial Superintendent (Claims) has the power to settle the claims upto Rs. 15,000. Senior Commercial Officers (claims) have the power to settle claims upto the value of Rs. 8000. Assistant Commercial Officers (Claims) can do it upto the value of Rs. 4,000 and at selected important stations, the station Masters and the inspectors have been given powers to settle claims upto the value of Rs. 400."

3.45 In reply to a query from the Committee, the witness replied that "there is no specific (time) limit fixed" for settling claims yet the Ministry insisted that it should be done at the earliest. On an average the claims were settled in 6 or 7 weeks but there had been cases where it took years.

3.46 In the case of death of animals, compensation was paid if it was proved that the animals died due to a mistake on the part of Railways.

3.47 The Committee pointed out that the Railway Ministry's attempt was always to prove that there was no fault on the part of Railways and because of that poor people had to suffer a lot. The witness replied the Railway officers had discretionary power

and they were sympathetic in case of loss of animals during transit. However since public money was involved, the Ministry had to exercise caution.

- 3.48 When asked as to when the powers were delegated to the officers, the witness replied that "those powers have been decided two years back. These are upgraded powers."

3.49. The Committee enquired whether responsibility was fixed where people went in appeal to courts and won against the refusal of officers to admit claims for compensations. The witness said that cases were reviewed.

3.50 Asked about the payment of fake claims in collusion with the officers, the witness replied:

"One check is that some percentage of the cases which have been decided by the lower authority, are put up to the next higher authority for scrutiny. Then the cases where we suspect malafide or where the complaints have come, it is looked into by the Chief Commercial Superintendent depending on the nature of the claim. In addition, we have the Vigilance Department to whom specific cases are sent for examination."

3.51 The Committee asked the witness if some Special Authority could be created to go into the malafide payment of compensations, the witness replied that "it is a suggestion, I will have to consider it. There is no specific machinery."

3.52 The witness added:

"I will have to check up the number of specific fraud cases, but we do not have the machinery you are mentioning. But we have a Vigilance Department. There is a procedure."

3.53. When the Committee drew the attention of the witness to the general impression that because of collusion between the Claim Inspector and the Claimant even false claims could be settled, the witness responded:

"Unfortunately where vested interests develop, this kind of a malpractice is there. We try to deal with it administratively, and see if some kind of a rotational transfer can be done in respect of these staff. Where cases come to our notice, our vigilance organisation is there and we try to do our best. It is a difficult task. A comparatively small

number of people have created this impression. It is tarnishing the image of the Railway, and we want that it should be nipped in the bud."

3.54 The Committee asked the witness if the Ministry had a set of lawyers from outside the Railways available to them, both at the divisional and zonal levels. The witness replied that the Ministry had a divisionwise panel.

3.55 Asked how panel was formed and whether the names were recommended by the District Judge, the witness stated: "whether we are consulting the judges or not is some thing I am not sure of."

3.56 The witness added that the payment to lawyers was made on case basis. The witness added:

"He goes only for pleading our case in the court. Suppose one person serves a legal notice to the Railways authority, that notice is examined by the Law Officer in G.M.'s office. If he considers necessary to take the specific views of an advocate, he does so."

3.57. The Committee pointed out that since the lawyers were not paid for tendering legal advice, a number of cases were pending in courts. The lawyer should be paid for legal advice. The witness replied that "it was warranted to be paid."

3.58. As regards the legal set up at Zonal level the witness replied that there is one Law Officer who is in the Senior Scale and he is assisted by one or two Assistant Law Officers and some Inspectors."

3.59 Asked if the set up was sufficient the witness replied that "the machinery was not adequate but this is what we are having at the present. We are aware of the inadequacy."

3.60. When asked if the Ministry would remedy the position, the witness replied, "the intention is to see to what extent this can be remedied."

3.61. According to the Ministry of Railways claims for compensation for booked goods and animals damaged or destroyed in accidents are dealt with under the relevant sections of the Indian Railway Act. The Committee have been informed that the claims were settled in 6 or 7 weeks but in exceptional cases, it has even taken years. The Committee feel that there is need to specify the period

within which the claims should be settled. This would instil in the minds of officers concerned a sense of urgency to dispose of the claims at the earliest.

3.62. There is a feeling among the public that there are corrupt practices in the matter of settlement of claims and that even false claims are admitted by Railway officials in collusion with the claimants. In order to dispel this impression, the Committee recommend that Railways should devise a stricter system of supervision and random checks on the work and performance of claims officials at various levels and for deterrent action against those found to be indulging in corrupt practices.

3.63. The Committee recommend that the intransit conditions of transport of animals by rail should be reviewed keeping in view the health and safety of the animals. They also recommend that in the case of death of or injury to animals during transit by rail the claims for compensation should be considered in a sympathetic manner so that the poor owners of the animals are not put to undue loss on account of negligence of the Railways.

3.64. It has been admitted during evidence that the legal Advisory set up at the Divisional and Zonal level of the Railways is inadequate. This is bound to result in delays in settlement of cases in courts. Besides, ineffective pleading of Railway cases in courts could also result in decisions by courts unfavourable to Railways. The Committee therefore recommend that the Ministry should review the legal advisory system at the Divisional, Zonal and headquarters level in consultation with the Ministry of Law to make it more effective.

(e) *Unmanned Railway Crossings*

3.65 During evidence before the Committee the representative of the Ministry was asked to give Zone-wise number of unmanned railway crossings and the number of crossings to be converted into manned level crossings in view of the changed traffic patterns. The witness replied as follows:—

“The Zonewise break up of unmanned level crossing is as under:—

Railway	Number of unmanned level crossings
Central .	1,221
Eastern .	764
Northern	3,192
North Eastern	2,699
Northeast Frontier .	1,172
Southern	2,836
South Central	2,272
South Eastern .	3,571
Western	4,900
TOTAL :	22,627

It has been laid down that level crossings having density of more than 000 TVU's (multiplied figure of No. of Trains & road vehicles per day) or where visibility is severely restricted should be manned. A quinquennial census is taken at every unmanned level crossing to determine the requirement of manning. In year 1981-82 the number of level crossings which so required manning was 210. After Kolanur accident on South Central Railway, it was also decided by the Railways to man the level crossings where buses regularly ply. Some of the level crossings will fall in both the categories. About 1600 such level crossings have been identified for manning on programme basis. Since cost of manning is Rs. 1.5 lakhs each the total cost involved is about Rs. 24 crores. In 1982-83, 152 such level crossings have been manned."

3.66. When asked about the arrangements with States in regard to the conversion of the unmanned crossings into manned ones, the witness stated:—

"As per the extant rules the initial cost of manning of an unmanned level crossing is required to be borne by the State Government in case the need for manning of level crossing has arisen due to increase in both road and rail traffic. To assist the State Governments in financing these works, the Indian Railways have constituted a fund called Railway

Safety Works Fund (RSWF) with effect from 1.4.1986—20 percent of this fund is exclusively used for taking up the works of upgrading/manning of unmanned level crossings. Inclusive of 1983-84 Budget estimates the total amount allotted for manning of level crossings from RSWF so far is Rs. 4.19 crores. In addition to the above, with a view to accelerate the pace of manning of unmanned level crossings from the year 1978, the Railways have undertaken the manning of potentially hazardous unmanned level crossings entirely at the cost of the Railways. There are the level crossings having a traffic census of more than 6,000 train vehicle units (a multiplied figure of number of trains on the sections and number of road vehicles using the level crossing per day) or those level crossings having poor visibility due to sharp curves on approaches. About 50 such level crossings are sanctioned for manning every year. After the accident of Jayanti-Janta Express with a road bus at Kolanur on South Central Railway in March, 1982, the Railways decided to man on programme basis, such level crossings where buses ply regularly. 1600 such unmanned level crossings have been identified. The Railway has decided to take up manning of 1200 of these unmanned level crossings entirely at the Railways' cost. Only in respect of 40 such level crossings, the State Governments have been asked to share the initial cost which will also be reimburseable to them from the 80 per cent portion of the RSWF. This programme is proposed to be completed in phases of 4 years' time, subject to availability of funds.

Presently there are 22,627 unmanned level crossings on Indian Railways. The manning of an unmanned level crossing involves an initial expenditure of Rs. 1.5 lakhs and recurring cost of Rs. 20,000 per annum."

3.67. When questioned whether the estimate of expenditure was not on the higher side the witness replied: "we have to provide for gate lodges... We have to make arrangements for water supply, telephones and lifting barriers. Two quarters are to be constructed."

3.68. As regards, the provision of telephones, the witness explained that these were provided where the gateman could not see the approaching trains on a curve.

3.69 On the question of the cost of installing a telephone on the crossing, the witness replied that the normal expenditure was to the tune of Rs. 50,000.

3.70 As regards the accidents at the railway crossings, the witness clarified as follows:—

"This accident at level crossing has been causing us a lot of concern. Some of these rules, regulations, norms, equipments, conditions etc. have been laid down quite sometime ago when perhaps the level of traffic both on road and rail was much less intensive. According to these regulations, certain classifications have been made, viz., special class level-crossing gate, 'A' class level-crossing, 'B' Class etc., depending upon the width of the road, the level of traffic, metalling, number of men to be posted at the gate, inter-locking, lighting etc.

Since these accidents have been of a recurring nature, we have found that some of those rules and guidelines perhaps are not serving the purpose. So, from time to time, we have been reviewing this and making certain arrangement by providing men on unmanned level-crossings. A level-crossing where traffic is beyond 6,000 train vehicles units is to be considered first. Then, in certain cases, even if the traffic was much less, the visibility being extremely obstructed, we felt it extremely necessary to men them.

Secondly even though level of traffic is not up to the mark, at certain places public buses ply regularly because of the recent development that has taken place in the country side. Therefore, here also, manned level-crossings are to be provided. Similarly, at the moment, we are undertaking a review to see what should be the criterion now in the context of present level of traffic and development. We have laid down stricter guidelines for the provision of telephone and increasing the number of gatemen and lifting barriers in place of the normal swing gates and all that. Now, we will be able to study the situation and provided some kind of distinct guidelines."

3.71 When asked whether there was any time bound programme to convert unmanned crossings into manned one, the witness replied that after every five years the situation was reviewed.

3.72 On the question of sharing with the State Governments the expenditure on converting unmanned crossings into manned ones, the witness stated that it was on the basis of initial cost being borne by State Governments and recurring cost by the Railways. The State Governments share of cost is reimbursed from the Railway Safety Works Fund.

3.73. The Committee have been informed that at present there are 22,627 unmanned level crossings on the Indian Railways. According to the criteria evolved so far, about 1600 level crossings have been identified for manning on programme basis. Out of these, the Railways have decided to take up the manning of 1200 such crossings at their own cost. For 400 such crossings, State Governments have been asked to share the initial cost which will be reimburseable to them. The Committee underline the need for earnest implementation of the conversion programme on 1600 Railway level crossings so as to complete it within 4 years as envisaged.

3.74. Since cases of Railway accidents at Railway crossings have lately shown an increase, the Committee would like the Ministry of Railways to have the review of "rules, regulations, norms, equipment, conditions etc." regarding Railway crossings recently undertaken by them, completed soon and as a follow up provide such additional facilities at the Railway crossings as may be necessary to prevent or at least minimise accidents in future.

CHAPTER IV

CRIMES ON RAILWAYS

(a) *Crimes against the personal property of Railway Passengers*

4.1. During evidence before the Committee, the representative of the Ministry of Railways were asked whether there had been an increase in the Crimes on Railways. The witness replied:

“There has been a slight increase in the incidence of crime on the Railways over the last two years. Murders have gone up in Bihar, U.P. and West Bengal. Dacoity cases have gone up in Bihar, Maharashtra and West Bengal.

In Maharashtra, there was an Iranian (Gypsy) gang near Bhusaval. Robberies have gone up in Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, U.P. and West Bengal. Thefts have gone up in Andhra Pradesh and Bihar. In Madhya Pradesh, it has remained high. In Maharashtra, it remains very high; also in Rajasthan, U.P. and West Bengal. As far as our checks and analysis go, it would appear that the increase is mainly limited to various sections in each of the States through which these trains pass—mainly in North Bihar on the South bank from Kiul, along parts of U.P., northern and western parts of West Bengal, etc. It is there in and around Calcutta and in and around Bombay and parts of Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. In the matter of thefts, they are there in pockets between Waltair and Vijayawada, and Vijayawada and Bitrugunta. The reasons for all these, to our mind, are the socio-economic conditions in these pockets.

Hon. Members of this Committee are well aware that the constitutional provisions have allotted the subject of Maintenance of law and order and policing to the State Governments, according to the State List (List No. II) in Schedule VII. In our evidence also, we had taken this up with the Railway Reforms Committee; the Railway Reforms Committee has specifically made the following recommendations.

Law and order, security of travelling public and their belongings, and investigations of cases pertaining to property are all matters within the domain of Government Railway Police, which is a part of the State Government. The Railway Protection Force has no role to play either

by law or by the manner of its creation, in law and order activities or in the protection of passengers and their belongings".

4.2 Reaching to a suggestion made during evidence that Railways should have some machinery to pursue that the cases registered with G.R.P. are taken to Law Courts, the witness stated: "I agree with you but we were not able to get the information as to how many cases have not been registered at all".

4.3 The Committee suggested that the Ministry should establish some machinery to ensure that crime cases were taken to court. The witness replied that "we are taking note of this point. This is a very good point".

4.4 The Committee asked the witness as to the action taken against officials who were involved in crime cases. The witness replied:

"He is placed under suspension immediately and if some departmental action is also required to be taken, a charge sheet is issued to him".

The witness further clarified:

"Whenever the railway employees are held guilty and they are dismissed from service".

4.5 When asked about the involvement of unlicensed coolies in crime, the witness replied that "they are all unauthorised people who come inspite of our efforts. Only thing is that our efforts are not adequate". As to the suggestion that the Ministry should check the entry of unlicensed coolies to the railway platforms, the witness said that "we will exercise more care to tackle this problem". He opined that the problem could be solved if the passengers carried their luggage in trolleys themselves as is the practice at aerodromes.

4.6 When asked if the railway paid to States 50 per cent of expenditure on GRP, the witness replied:

"It is only because of the historical reasons. Possibly, when the Railways were companies, I think they were paying it. RPC have said it is not our obligation but we have agreed to pay under duress".

4.7. The Committee enquired of the witness if the existing law could be amended to enable Railways to have their own police force to maintain law and order on Railway Stations. The witness replied that it would require amendment of the Constitution. In this connection, the witness drew Committee's attention to the following recommendation of the Railway Reforms Committee:

"The maintenance of law and order in railway premises should be purely the State Police authority's responsibility. Similarly, control of crime both in static establishments and areas and on running trains, escorting of passenger trains and maintenance of mobile courts, aiding the railways to check ticketless travel, alarm chain pulling, etc. even by forming special units or companies for the purpose, registration of crimes, investigation of crimes and prosecution of cases involving crimes on the railways should also be the State's responsibility".

4.8. However, the witness stated, the Ministry of Railways had agreed to contribute funds for augmenting the strength of G.R.P.

4.9 When asked whether any amendment of the law was envisaged to allow the Railways to run the trains safely, the witness replied:

"We are getting the Act amended only to the extent where it will permit us to arrest a person pilfering railway property and prosecute him.

Then, the Railway Reforms Committee has recommended that the Government Railway Police should be merged with the district police. Some of the other recommendations are that the non-registration of crimes should be tackled by taking proper measures; the lodging of FIR should be simplified and all that".

4.10. The witness further explained that the Ministry had suggested the merger of GRP with district police. This would make the police officers conversant with environment beyond the railway precincts—the list of goondas, thieves, pick-pockets, robbers was available with local police. The witness expressed an opinion that presently only unwanted persons were posted to GRP.

4.11. The Committee drew the attention of the witness to the general impression that the crimes on railways were committed through the connivance of the police. The witness added that unless and until, specific case were brought to their notice it was difficult for them to take any action.

(b) *Protection of Railway Property*

4.12. During evidence before the Committee the representative of the Ministry was asked about the duties of RPF and efforts made by this force to check crimes on Railways, the witness replied:

"The duties of the RPF (assigned to them under Section 11 of the RPF Act) are as follows:

"To execute promptly all orders lawfully issued to him by his superior officers.

To protect and to safeguard Railway Property.

To remove any obstruction in the movement of Railway Property and to do any other act conducive to better protection and security of Railway Property."

4.13. The witness continued that the Railway Reforms Committee have gone into the duties of RPF and they have suggested the following as its proper future role:

"For the primary objective of protection of Railway Property.

For the secondary objective (albeit in a limited way) in checking ticketless travelling, alarm chain pulling activities etc.

For gathering and providing information and intelligence to the concerned superior officers in its primary and secondary functions and in identifying the bastions of criminals".

4.14. The witness added that to protect the Railway Property, the following efforts were being made:

- (1) Yards are being protected against intrusion by anti-social elements.
- (2) Trains carrying valuable consignments are being escorted by the RPF.
- (3) The RPF personnel are also deputed for track-patrolling in vulnerable sections on foot with or without arms."

4.15 The witness continued:

"They are provided with arms. They are much more disciplined. We send them to areas where theft is on the increase. They are sent to Eastern, S. Eastern, North, North-Frontier Railways. They will be much more effective than the GRP. They move in company. With the arms, their presence will have a deterrent effect."

4.16. The Committee have been informed that there has been an increase in incidence of crimes on Railways but the increase in cases of murders, theft, pilferage etc., is confined to certain pockets and sections of Railways. They also note that law and order being a State subject, it is the responsibility of the States to check and handle crimes on Railways.

4.17. At present the Railways have no machinery of their own to ensure that cases of crimes on Railways registered with Government Railway Police (GRP) are taken by the latter to Courts and the Railways even do not know the number of such cases registered with the GRP. This is not a happy state of affairs. The Committee would like the Ministry of Railways to keep track of such cases occurring on Railway premises or on moving trains and inform themselves of the state of progress of such cases by the GRP in a systematic manner. It should be possible for the Railways to elicit cooperation of the State Governments in this matter as the Railways are contributing to the cost of maintaining the GRP. The Committee wish to emphasise that greater efforts are needed to check the crimes in moving trains to ensure safer travel. The Committee would like to know the steps taken in this regard.

4.18. Theft of Railway Property is going on unabated. Besides other steps that Railways may be taking or contemplating to contain and arrest the problem, the Committee would like the Ministry of Railways to evolve a system whereby an individual officer or a unit of RPF is made personally responsible for the protection of Railway Property under his/their charge and in case of theft, suitable action should be taken against him/them.

NEW DELHI;

December 14. 1983.

Agrahayana 23, 1905(S).

BANSI LAL,

Chairman,

Estimates Committee.

APPENDIX

Statement of Recommendations/Observations

Sl. No.	Para	Recommendation/Observation
1	2	3
1.	1.13	<p>An 'Accident Compensation, Safety and Passenger amenities Fund' was created in 1974-75 to meet the compensation claims and expenditure on certain Safety and Passenger Amenities works. The payment of compensation is but a minor part of the expenditure from the Fund. The amounts were allowed to accumulate to the extent of Rs. 46 crores as on 31 March, 1982. This shows that such improved safety measures and passenger amenities as could be provided were not provided. The reasons adduced by the Railways for this neglect are not convincing to the Committee. The moneys kept apart for specific purposes ought to be spent and the objectives realised—If there are any constraints imposed by the Planning Commission in this regard—the Committee wonder whether there could be any—the matter should be sorted out with them.</p>
2.	1.31	<p>The Committee find that the Safety Publicity and Safety Campaigns/Drives by the Railways are largely directed to educate the staff of the Railways and make them safety-minded. They feel that there is necessity for educating the general public also in aiding Railway Safety. The Committee recommend that the Railways should also produce safety publicity material and undertake campaigns/drives with a view to educating the general public and the railway users in regard to their responsibilities and role in maintaining railway safety. In this context the Committee also recommend that besides publicity material like posters, leaflets, pamphlets, advertisements and slides, the Railways should also think in terms of having documentary films produced for display on T.V. and</p>

cinema houses for creating railway safety conscienteness in the general public. The Committee further recommend that imaginative publicity posters shculd be displayed near the Booking Counters.

3. 1.32 The Committee note that although a separate Safety Organisation has been created in Zonal Railways, the organisation does not attract talented people as it is bereft of the glamour attached to Departments like the operating Department and the head of the organisation does not carry the status equivalent to that of the Chief Operating Superintendent. In view of the importance of the organisation the Committee desire that a tenure in the organisation must be made rewarding career-wise for the officers and staff. The Committee would await the steps taken in this regard.

4. 1.40 The Committee have been informed by the Ministry of Railways that the set up at the zonal and divisional level is generally adequate except in a few Divisions. According to the Ministry the existing organisations should work more purposefully by increasing inspections and follow up action. The Ministry have admitted before the Committee that complaints have also been received that the quality of safety Counsellors at the Divisional Level is not upto the mark. The Committee desire that the organisation and its achievements should be critically reviewed and the organisation qualitatively strengthened.

5. 1.46 The Committee trust that, as per the assurance given to them, the General Rules have since been revised and published.

6. 1.52 The replacement of the screw couplers by CBC couplers, provision of compressed air-brakes and introduction of automatic warning system on high density railway routes would reportedly result in greater raiway safety and avoid accidents by collision. The Committee would like the Ministry of Railways to undertake a planned effort to introduce these improved devices in accordance with a time bound programme. The Committee would like to be kept apprised of the steps taken by the Ministry in this direction.

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7. 1.58 The Committee recommend that the Ministry of Railways may examine in consultation with the Ministry of Finance whether it could be possible to liberalise the general Rules and Instructions in regard to grant of advance increments for meritorious work and for out-of-turn promotions in the case of Railway personnel who are adjudged to have made outstanding contribution in ensuring Railway Safety.

8. 2.13 The Committee are alarmed to find that during the 6th Plan period the requirement of track renewal had reached a total of 29048 kms. comprising of the arrears of track renewal at the beginning of 6th Plan period to the extent of 13048 kms. and arisings during the 6th Plan period of 16000 kms. Of the total of 29048 kms. of track renewal requirement, 19288 would be primary renewals and 9760 secondary renewals. As against the requirement, the 6th Plan (1980-85) provided an outlay of Rs. 500 crores only for a physical target of 10000 kms. of primary and 4000 kms. of secondary renewals making a total of 14000 kms. which was less than half of the total requirements. As against the provision in the 6th Plan, during the first three years of the 6th Plan only 4220 kms. (primary 3400, secondary 820) could be renewed at a total cost of Rs. 397.4 crores. The Ministry of Railways have told the Committee in evidence that the physical achievements against costs have been much less than the estimates because of high degree of cost escalation. It was represented to the Committee that it would be possible to cover the arrears of track renewal as also the current arisings in the next ten years if 3300 kms. of track was renewed every year for which an allocation of Rs. 430 crores per annum would be required. In view of the increase in the number of rail fractures which were admitted to have assumed the proportions of 16 to 18 every day and also considering the fact that Railways are trying to maintain the track by imposing speed restrictions covering as much as 2700 kms. of track in 1983, the Committee cannot but strongly urge upon the Government the need for higher allocations for track renewal programme of

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the Railways. They hope that the Government and the Planning Commission would, considering the seriousness of the problem, make suitable allocations for undertaking track renewal programme of the Railways on a crash basis.

9. 2.22
to
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The Committee have been assured by the Ministry that despite non-renewal of old track, no length of track is allowed to become safety hazard and that, pending renewals, certain measures like imposition of speed limits, increase in maintenance effort and vigilance to detect defective rails etc. are being taken.

For detecting the defects in the track, the Ministry have 85 hand operated ultrasonic detectors. The Ministry's further requirement for these type of detectors has been assessed as 37. The Ministry have informed the Committee that they are importing one power driven detector car for trial. With this car it is possible to have visual detection of defects. The future requirement of this type of car is assessed by the Ministry as 9 cars.

The Committee are of the views that the whole track including meter gauge specially high density areas like Rajasthan should be tested at least once a year and that the tests should be thorough, leaving no scope for doubt as to the results. With this end in view, the Committee would like the Ministry to re-assess their total requirement of the most suitable detector car and procure these at the earliest to minimise chance of accidents on account of defects in Railway track.

10. 2.36
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2.37

The Committee note that out of 2539 railway bridges which require heavy repairs or complete rebuilding and have been classified as "bridges under observation", speed restrictions have been imposed on 202 bridges which are found unsafe. In the Sixth Five Year Plan, Rs. 90 crores have been allocated under the Plan head "Bridges". Out of this, Rs. 50 crores have been used and, on the basis of present allotment, Rs. 40 crores are available for the remaining two years of the Plan. However, the Ministry have asked the Planning Commission to increase the Plan allocation to Rs. 110

crores. The Committee have been informed during the evidence that the additional funds asked for by the Ministry are likely to come in the remaining two years of the Plan.

The Committee cannot but too strongly emphasise the need for increasing the Plan allocations for the Sixth Five Year Plan period for railway bridges. This is absolutely necessary for the replacement or heavy repairs to such railway bridges as are found to be in dilapidated conditions and are accident prone.

11. 2.45 The Committee are perturbed to learn that the number of railway stations where signalling equipment has become due for replacement has reached the figure of 1221 and that at as many as 250 stations the equipment has become a safety hazard. According to the Ministry of Railways, the position has become acute because of shortage of fund allocated for the purpose in the past. The Committee are informed that as against the annual requirement of Rs. 30 crores for replacement of out dated signalling equipment, the actual expenditure has been in the region of Rs. 5 crores to Rs. 10 crores per year, with the result that arrears of replacement have mounted and the system is fast becoming a safety hazard. Replacement of signalling equipment which has become a safety hazard should be adequately provided for so that railway accidents which are often caused by failure of signalling equipment could be avoided.

12. 2.46 The Committee have elsewhere in the Report recommended augmentation of financial allocations for different purposes to make travel by railways less hazardous. There is always a trade-off between addition of new assets and replacement and renewal of existing assets. The Committee has received an unmistakable impression that the renewals programmes of the Railways have been grossly neglected in the past. This neglect has been widespread in regard to tracks, Bridges, signalling equipment etc. which pose a severe threat to safety of Railways' operation. The Committee welcome the recent emphasis on rehabilitation programmes

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and desire that this effort should be intensified by making adequate allocation for the remaining period of the 6th Plan and for the 7th Plan so that arrears are overtaken.

13. 2.60
to
2.62

The Committee note that out of a total Sixth Plan period requirement of 14141 coaches comprising of 7742 coaches for meeting the needs of the replacement of over-aged coaches and 6399 coaches for meeting the growth of 5.5 per cent in non-suburban traffic, the Planning Commission have provided in the Sixth Plan for the manufacture of 5680 coaches and have allocated Rs. 447 crores therefor. This falls much short of the need based requirement of the Ministry even for replacement of over-aged coaches.

The Committee have been informed by the Ministry that in addition to paucity of funds, the existing industrial capacity to manufacture coaches is another factor upsetting the Ministry's programme to replace over-aged coaches. According to the Ministry at present the capacity to manufacture coaches is about 1100 to 1200 coaches per annum which again is below the replacement need.

The Committee have further been informed that the Planning Commission has approved the setting up by the Railways of a new factory for the manufacture of coaches with an annual capacity of 400 coaches per annum with the stipulation that the funds therefor must be found out of the existing allocation of funds for the Railways. The Ministry are, however, finding it difficult to set up the coach factory until the allocation of funds for the Railways is increased. The Ministry have further stated that the new coach factory should be of an annual capacity of 750 coaches per annum and only then the programme of replacing over-aged coaches could be expedited. The Committee would commend this enhanced capacity. The Committee trust that while enhancing the capacity for the manufacture of coaches and drawing up the production programme, the need for indigenous manufacture of the EMU coaches in adequate number so as to cater for the suburban traffic in Bombay, Calcutta and Delhi, would receive due

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attention. The Committee are anxious that the programme of replacement of over-aged coaches should be accelerated in the interest of comfort and safety of Railway travel.

14. 3.15
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 3.16

The Committee find that the major cause of railway accidents is "failure of railway staff". This failure in the result of variety of causes both personal and environmental which include wilful negligence. Stressing the importance of keeping the Railway staff in proper trim and cautioning against any complacency in this regard, the Committee would like to make the following suggestions:—

- (i) Maximum and minimum age-limit should be prescribed on realistic basis for active service in the case of sensitive posts connected with the moving of trains.
- (ii) Minimum standard of health should be prescribed for persons manning such sensitive posts. There should be a compulsory periodical medical check up and the continuance of persons in these posts should be subject to continued medical fitness. This should not be confined to eyetests as at present.
- (iii) Minimum educational and technical qualifications and experience should be laid down for such posts at different levels. Appointment should not be made to these posts merely by way of providing job opportunities at higher level to junior cadres.
- (iv) There should be a system of periodical compulsory refresher courses with a view to maintain the standard of technical competence of the persons and also to make them aware of technical innovations and changes made from time to time in procedures and practices.
- (v) As far as possible persons holding such posts should not be allowed to work over-time beyond a minimum time.

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15. 3.17 As regards the conditions of living of the Station Masters and Asstt. Station Masters who are required to live in way-side stations without adequate facilities, the Committee would like the Ministry of Railways to try to improve the facilities especially housing.

16. 3.18 The Committee find that at present the field of recruitment for loco drivers is the category of firemen, who are mostly unskilled and in many cases hardly literate. The Committee are of the view that with the emoluments and perks attached to the post of loco Driver the Railways can have far better skilled and qualified drivers. The Ministry have assured the Committee that they are going to amend the rules for recruitment of railway drivers to provide for 50 per cent of them being selected on the basis of departmental examination from firemen who are matriculates and have got 3 years service. The Committee feel that even this measure may not go a long way in the recruitment of efficient and qualified drivers. They would like the Ministry to examine whether the field of recruitment could be enlarged by inducting even outsiders with minimum prescribed qualifications such as graduation or diploma in Mechanical Engineering, who could be given training before assigning them regular duties.

17. 3.19 The Committee note that a team of Joint Directors from the Railway Board has visited all the Railways for sample checks to see if there are any deficiencies or lacunae in operating or maintenance practices and whether any short cut methods were being employed in the working of trains. The outcome of the study showed a number of lapses on the part of the staff in following the laid down procedures and practices. The Committee would like the Ministry to take immediate and intensive corrective steps to make the staff safety conscious. The Committee hope that the Ministry would undertake such studies periodically in future also so that necessary steps are taken as and when required to keep the staff alert.

18. 3.36 The Railway Administration is liable to pay compensation in the event of an accident to a train

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resulting in injury to and/or death of passengers. The Committee have been informed that amount of compensation payable in the case of death is proposed to be raised to Rs. 1 lakh from Rs. 50,000 and an amendment to the Indian Railway Act will be introduced in Parliament shortly. The Committee trust that the amendment would be carried out early.

19. 3.37 The Committee learn that the average time taken for settling claims in major accidents varies from 180 days to 300 days. However, in the cases of minor accidents the average time varies from 270 days to as much as 1731 days. Whereas there is a time-limit within which claim should be filed there is no time-limit for payment of compensation. The Committee feel that there ought to be a time-limit for the latter also.

20. 3.38 The Committee strongly feel that the poor and illiterate people who are injured or bereaved should not be harassed and the procedures for payment of compensation leave a lot of scope for simplification. The Committee have been informed that on the recommendation of the Railway Convention Committee, a three-member Committee consisting of two Directors from Railway Board and one representative from the General Insurance Company nominated by the Finance Ministry is already on the job of streamlining the existing procedure and finding out how payment of compensation could be expedited.

21. 3.39 & 3.40 During evidence the representatives of the Ministry assured that he would refer the following suggestions made by the Estimates Committee to the three-member Committee:—

(i) Separate procedure for payment of compensation in the case of major and minor railway accidents are not necessary as in both cases death or injuries are caused to the travelling public. A single unified procedure may be evolved for all such railway accidents.

(ii) Procedure for payment of compensation should be simplified by accepting the identity of the rightful claimant who produces a succession certificate in the case of a death of a passenger. Independent determination of the identity of the rightful claimant by the Claims Commissioner is not necessary.

(iii) Conditions for payment of compensation like production of income-tax and wealth-tax clearance certificate before payment were causing undue hardships and should be given up.

The Committee would await with interest the report of the three member Committee and would like to be apprised of the recommendations of the Committee and the action taken thereon.

22. 3.41 The Committee have been informed that the payment of compensation to the Railway employees on duty or travelling on passes or PTOs was governed by the provisions of the Workmen's Compensation Act. The Committee feel that so far as the workers on duty are concerned the existing practice as some relevance but in the case of Railway employees travelling on PTOs. or passes, they should be treated at par with the general public.

23. 3.61 According to the Ministry of Railways claims for compensation for booked goods and animals damaged or destroyed in accidents are dealt with under the relevant Sections of the Indian Railway Act. The Committee have been informed that the claims were settled in 6 or 7 weeks but in exceptional cases, it has even taken years. The Committee feel that there is need to specify the period within which the claims should be settled. This would instil in the minds of officers concerned a sense of urgency to dispose of the claims at the earliest.

24. 3.62 There is a feeling among the public that there are corrupt practices in the matter of settlement of claims and that even false claims are admitted by Railway Officials in collusion with the claimants.

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In order to dispel this impression, the Committee recommend that Railways should devise a stricter system of supervision and random checks on the work and performance of claims officials at various levels and for deterrent action against those found to be indulging in corrupt practices.

25. 3.63 The Committee recommend that the intransit conditions of transport of animals by rail should be reviewed keeping in view the health and safety of the animals. They also recommend that in the case of death of or injury to animals during transit by rail the claims for compensation should be considered in a sympathetic manner so that the poor owners of the animals are not put to undue loss on account of negligence of the Railways.

26. 3.64 It has been admitted during evidence that the Legal Advisory set up at the Divisional and Zonal level of the Railways is inadequate. This is bound to result in delays in settlement of cases in courts. Besides, ineffective pleading of Railway cases in courts could also result in decisions by courts unfavourable to Railways. The Committee therefore recommend that the Ministry should review the legal advisory system at the Divisional, Zonal and headquarters level in consultation with the Ministry of Law to make it more effective.

27. 3.73 The Committee have been informed that at present there are 22,627 unmanned level crossings on the Indian Railways. According to the criteria evolved so far, about 1600 level crossings have been identified for manning on programme basis. Out of these, the Railways have decided to take up the manning of 1200 such crossings at their own cost. For 400 such crossings, State Governments have been asked to share the initial cost which will be reimbursable to them. The Committee underline the need for earnest implementation of the conversion programme on 1600 Railway level crossings so as to complete it within 4 years as envisaged.

28. 3.74 Since cases of Railway accidents at Railway crossings have lately shown an increase, the Com-

mittee would like the Ministry of Railways to have the review of "rules, regulations, norms, equipment, conditions etc." regarding Railway crossings recently undertaken by them, completed soon and as a follow up provide such additional facilities at the Railway crossings as may be necessary to prevent or at least minimise accidents in future.

29. 4.16
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4.17

The Committee have been informed that there has been an increase in incidence of crimes on Railway but the increase in cases of murders, theft, pilferage etc., is confined to certain pockets and sections of Railways. They also note that law and order being a State subject, it is the responsibility of the States to check and handle crimes on Railways.

At present the Railways have no machinery of their own to ensure that cases of crimes on Railways registered with Government Railway Police (G.R.P.) are taken by the latter to Courts and the Railways even do not know the number of such cases registered with the G.R.P. This is not a happy state of affairs. The Committee would like the Ministry of Railways to keep track of such cases occurring on Railway premises or on moving trains and inform themselves of the state of progress of such cases by the G.R.P. in a systematic manner. It should be possible for the Railways to elicit co-operation of the State Governments in this matter as the Railways are contributing to the cost of maintaining the G.R.P. The Committee wish to emphasise that greater efforts are needed to check the crimes in moving trains to ensure safer travel. The Committee would like to know the steps taken in this regard.

30. 4.18

Theft of Railway Property is going on unabated. Besides other steps that Railways may be taking or contemplating to contain and arrest the problem the Committee would like the Ministry of Railways to evolve a system whereby an individual officer or a unit for R.P.F. is made personally responsible for the protection of Railway Property under his/their charge and in case of theft, suitable action should be taken against him/them.