

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE (1981-82)

(SEVENTH LOK SABHA)

THIRTY-FOURTH REPORT

MINISTRY OF SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT

PORT BLAIR

Presented to Lok Sabha on.... 28 APR 1982



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ESTIMATES COMMITTEE
(1981-82)

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Shri K. S. Bhalla—*Chief Financial Committee Officer*

Shri H. C. Bahl—*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 Thirty-fourth Report on the Ministry of Shipping and Transport—Port Blair.

2. The Committee took evidence of the representatives of the Ministries of Shipping and Transport and Home Affairs and the Shipping Corporation of India Ltd., and Andaman and Nicobar Administration on 11th February, 1982. The Committee wish to express their thanks to the officers of the Ministries for placing before them material and information which they desired in connection with the examination of the subject and for giving evidence before the Committee.

3. The Report was considered and adopted by the Committee on 20th April, 1982.

4. For facilities of reference the recommendations/observations of the Committee have been printed in thick type in the body of the report. A summary of recommendations/observations is appended to the report.

NEW DELHI;

April 26, 1982.

Vaisakha 6, 1904(S).

S. B. P. PATTABHI RAMA RAO,

*Chairman,
Estimates Committee.*

CHAPTER I

PORT MATTERS

The Andaman and Nicobar Islands in the Bay of Bengal forms the most isolated port of Indian Union. The Andaman Group has a total of 204 Islands and Nicobar Group 19 Islands. The Administration Headquarters of these Islands is situated at Port Blair which is 1191 kms. from Madras and 1155 kms. from Calcutta by sea. Shipping is the life line of this territory as the water-borne crafts constitute the only means of transportation of these remote Islands. For sustenance of the economy and also for development of all other infrastructure facilities, the maintenance of a proper shipping service is, therefore, a must. Numerous difficulties of shipping and shippers were brought to the notice of the Committee during their brief visit to the Islands in January, 1982. These have been discussed in this Report.

A. Berthing Capacity

1.2 It was stated in a memorandum that "Andaman and Nicobar Islands is under fast development and the frequency of the ships is constantly increasing. Therefore more berthing capacity of port is urgently required for the proper handling of cargoes which are at present being damaged at Port due to short space, also for the movement of passengers, as the travelling from here to Mainland is mostly dependent upon the Ships".

1.3 At Port Blair, there are two wharves—one is Hadeo Wharf which can accommodate one passenger-cum-cargo vessel of 150 metres length, and the other is Chatham Wharf which can take at a time one log carrier of 115 metres length and one general cargo vessel of 60 metre length. The capacity of these two berths for handling traffic is 2 lakh tonnes per annum. The Ministry stated that at present a number of mainland vessels calling at Port Blair wait in anchorage as the existing berthing facilities at Chatham and Hadeo are insufficient.

1.4 The users of port also brought to the Committee's notice the need for augmenting berthing capacity at Port Blair. It was stated that the length of the berth at Chatham is not sufficient. It could take only one ship at a time. Also at certain spots at the Chatham berth the draft is considered not adequate.

1.5 The Ministry stated that a scheme for constructing one more wharf of length of 180 metres at Hope Town for handling general cargo at an estimated cost of Rs. 243 lakhs was expected to be sanctioned shortly. This was to be taken up and completed by 1985-86. With the completion of this berth, it would facilitate handling one more passenger-cum-cargo vessel from the mainland, thus increasing the total capacity from 2 lakh tonnes to 3 lakh tonnes per annum.

1.6 The existing Chatham wharf of 180 metre length is being extended by 35 metres to enable the port to berth simultaneously one log carrier of 115 metre in length and one cargo vessel of 95 metre length. The work estimated to cost about Rs. 34 lakhs is already under execution and is expected to be completed by December, 1982.

1.7 The Committee wanted to know the period for which the scheme for construction of an additional wharf at Hope Town was under consideration and when it was likely to be sanctioned. The Development Adviser, Ministry of Shipping and Transport informed the Committee that the proposal was received in the Ministry in September, 1980. There were some problems connected with it. First, it was felt that the design should be slightly changed. This took a few months then the proposal was to be discussed with Central Electricity Authority as part of the expenditure had to be borne by them because this would also be utilised for getting shipments for coal and for thermal power stations. On this account there was another few months delay. Secretary, Ministry of Shipping and Transport stated (February, 1982) that the matter had already been referred to EFC, the final sanctioning authority, and it was expected that the sanction would be issued within this month (February, 1982). He informed the Committee that he had already instructed his engineers to ensure that the building time of the wharf should be reduced from 3 to 2 years.

1.8 The Committee learnt during informal discussions at Port Blair that the Port organisations had not been removing siltage from waters at Chatham berth regularly in the past. The Port administration assured the Committee that the dredging of shallow waters will be done regularly hereafter.

1.9 Asked why dredging operations had not been undertaken regularly in the past at Chatham berth the Ministry stated that there was no dredging requirement near the Chatham wharf as there was no siltation. The depths have been reduced to some extent locally due to spillage of cargo during unloading operations. This spillage would be cleared with the help of wharf crane installed on the wharf. The Ministry added that this spillage had not posed any problems in berthing the cargo vessels alongside. Secretary

(Shipping and Transport) stated in evidence that by nature there was no siltation at Port Blair. He assured the Committee that no ship would be affected for lack of draft and that whatever spillage of cargo was there, it would be cleared with the help of the wharf crane.

1.10 The berthing capacity at the two wharves of Hadoo and Chatham at Port Blair is insufficient. It can handle a traffic of 2 lakh tonnes per annum. According to the Ministry's own admission, at present a number of mainland vessels calling at Port Blair have to wait in anchorage. The need for augmenting berthing capacity at Port Blair has been brought to the Committee's notice by users also. The length of the Chatham wharf is also reported to be insufficient. Its length is being extended to enable it to berth simultaneously one log carrier and one cargo vessel. The Committee hope that the work will be completed by December, 1982 as scheduled. (Sl. No. 1) . . .

1.11 A scheme for construction of one more wharf at Hope Town which will facilitate handling one more passenger-cum-cargo ship from the main land has been under consideration since September, 1980. It was expected to be sanctioned by February, 1982. The Committee are not happy at the long time taken in finalising of this scheme by the Ministry. They would urge the Ministry that as assured by Secretary (Shipping and Transport) in evidence the project should be completed and commissioned within two years. (Sl. No. 2)

1.12 The Committee find that even though there is no siltage at Chatham berth of Port Blair, the draft there has admittedly been reduced due to spillage of cargo during unloading operations. Even if it was spillage of cargo and not the siltation, which had reduced draft, the Port authorities should have cleared the spillage without delay and not let it lie there indefinitely. The Committee hope that the spillage must have been removed by now and such problems will not remain unduly unattended in future. (Sl. No. 3)

B. Rangat Jetty

1.13. It was represented to the Committee that the design of Rangat Jetty was defective. The defective design poses danger to the safety of ships using it.

1.14 The Ministry denied that the design of Rangat Jetty was defective. It admitted that "the Rangat Bay has got certain limitations—it is exposed to open sea and subject to swells even in moderate weather".

1.15 The Ministry added that the Inter-island ships calling at Rangat Port are coming alongside the jetty in fair weather. However there are difficulties in berthing a vessel due to non-availability of sufficient sheltered harbour basin in the area even in slightly rough weather. Though vessels bigger than Inter-island vessels owned by private parties come alongside the jetty in fair weather, the difficulty in berthing such bigger vessels in moderate to rough weather was reported in October, 1980 and December, 1980. To facilitate berthing of the inter-island vessels round the year in all weathers, it is proposed to create a sheltered harbour basin by providing a breakwater of 700 m. length. This breakwater project is included in the Sixth Five Year Plan in the State Sector scheme at an estimated cost of Rs. 75.00 lakhs with a provision of Rs. 30 lakhs during the Sixth Plan. The work is proposed to be taken up in 1983-84 only. As an interim measure, fender blocks are being provided under normal maintenance.

1.16. The Committee were informed that the jetty was designed and drawings were prepared in September, 1974 and was completed in January, 1977. The structure was designed by the Assistant Engineer (Designs) who possessed post graduate qualification in Civil and Harbour Engineering. The design drawings were further scrutinised by the Executive Engineer and approved by the Principal Engineer (Marine). The layout of the jetty and other salient features were approved by the Chief Engineer after joint site inspection with the Principal Engineer (Marine) and the Assistant Harbour Master, Port Blair. It has been pointed out that similar designs have been adopted for the jettys at Little Andaman, Campbell Bay and Fisheries Jetty at Port Blair and all these structures are safe and functioning satisfactorily.

1.17 Explaining the progress regarding the proposed breakwater, Secretary (Shipping and Transport) stated during evidence that "there has been some delay in the design of breakwater which is under study in Poona. We are trying to expedite it".

1.18 The Development Adviser explained that the jetty was meant for inter-island ships in fair weather. It was not meant for working in the rough reason. This was because the breakwater construction takes a long time. This jetty could be constructed quicker and put into limited use.

1.19 The Committee are unable to appreciate the argument advanced by the Ministry that Rangat Jetty is not defective but it is The Rangat Bay which has certain limitations in that it is exposed to open sea and subject to swells even in moderate weather. If, as

admitted by Ministry, there are difficulties in berthing a vessel due to non-availability of sufficient sheltered harbour basis in the area, "even in slightly rough weather", obviously either the design of the jetty is defective or the designers failed to take into account all the essential features of the site selected for Jetty while preparing the design. In either case, it is a serious matter which the Committee would like to be enquired into by an independent expert body and the outcome reported to the Committee within six months.

(S. No. 4.)

1.20 The Committee are informed that it is now proposed to create a sheltered harbour basin by providing a breakwater of 700 m. at an estimated cost of Rs. 75 lakhs. This is proposed to be taken up in 1983-84 during the Sixth Plan. As provision for only Rs. 30 lakhs has been made in the Sixth Plan, it is likely to spill over to Seventh Plan period. From this and from the admitted fact that the designing of the breakwater has already been delayed, the Committee feel that this project is being pursued in a very lackadaisical manner. This is regrettable. As it is, the investment on this petty which was completed in 1977 in its present defective form, remains unproductive for the greater part of the year. . .

The Committee feel that it would not be prudent to delay the construction of breakwater any longer. The Committee would urge the Ministry to give this project high priority and ensure that the construction of the breakwater at Rangat Jetty is taken up at the earliest and completed in the shortest possible time so as to make this jetty serviceable throughout the year. (S. No. 5).

C. Cargo—Handling and Storage

(i) Damage to Cargo

1.21. It was represented to the Committee that the cargo transported from mainland to Port Blair is damaged during transit. Many commodities like potatoes and onions are so much damaged that at times they are found unfit for human consumption and have to be thrown away. When the traders demand a certificate from the Port Administration as to the condition of cargo or on the extent of damage done to cargo or the shortages, the certificate is not given by the Port Authorities with the result that the consignees are not able to raise any claims either against the carriers or against the Port Administration or claim any compensation from the Insurance. They are thus put to a great loss on this account.

1.22. The Committee were informed by the representative of the Shipping Corporation of India during tour that cargo was surveyed

by Port officials after unloading and its unloading was supervised by port officials.

1.23. The port users informed the Committee that the reason for damage to the cargo in transit was that it was not properly stacked in the ships at the port of loading. Heavy parcels were heaped over fragile articles and vegetables. They were not properly arranged in the ship.

1.24 The port users also informed the Committee that they had lodged innumerable complaints and claims with the Port Administration but nothing had come out of it. There is hardly any response or relief given by the Administration. They had now stopped making complaints out of frustration.

1.25 It was suggested by them that the cargo loading should be supervised by Administration officials at Calcutta, Visakhapatnam and Madras to ensure that the consignments are loaded carefully and placed in proper order to avoid any damage during transit.

1.26 According to the Andaman & Nicobar Administration cargo destined for Port Blair is tendered by the shippers directly or through their Forwarding and Clearing Agents in the Port Trust Godown in advance according to their booking accepted by Shipping Corporation of India agents. The loading of cargo is supervised by the Ship's Officers and also by the Supervisors of the Stevedoring Contractors, who act under the overall control of the Port Trust. The administration, the Ministry stated, has no say in the matter nor do they have any agency to supervise such cooperations. However, the Andaman and Nicobar Administration has reported that they are approaching the Government for creation of 2 posts to be manned by DANI Cadre Officer (Group 'B' posts) to implement the suggestion. A decision on this would be taken on merits.

1.27 As regards Survey Certificate, the Ministry stated that "the Harbour Master has been issuing short landing certificates to the Consignees on demand. The number of certificates issued during the 3-4 years are given below—

1.28 A Muster Board has been constituted by the Administration for conducting survey of Government cargo received from the mainland in damaged conditions.

1.29 The Ministry added that "for private cargo no such arrangements are available at present. While short landing certificates are being issued, it has been decided to form a Survey Board consisting of (i) the Harbour Master, (ii) the Manager, Shipping Corporation of India, Port Blair, (iii) the Controller, Andaman Labour Force, (iv) a representative of Andaman Chamber of Commerce and (v) the affected party concerned for private cargo.

1.30 The Ministry confirmed that "it is a fact that complaints have been received by the Harbour Master from private traders. The number of complaints for the previous years is given below:—

(1) 1978-79	141
(2) 1979-80	127
(3) 1980-81	176
(4) 1981-82 (Till Jan. 1982)	225

1.31 These complaints are stated to have been taken into consideration and short landing certificates have been issued by the Harbour Master. The Ministry added that follow up action is also being taken to form a Survey Board consisting of representatives of S.C.I., Chamber of Commerce and Harbour Master or any other officials authorised by him which will verify the claims legally.

1.32 After Survey Board is constituted, the issues regarding damages will be sorted out wherein the representatives of the carriers will also be present. It is expected that after the examination of the legal aspects of this proposed Survey Board, it will be put into operation immediately.

1.33 The Committee were assured by Chief Secretary, A & N Administration during their visit to Port Blair that they would start issuing survey certificates about condition of private cargo and shortages immediately.

1.34 Asked whether traders' complaints regarding improper stacking of goods in SCI vessels and damage sustained by them during transit had come to the A. & N. Administration, the Chief Commissioner, A & N Islands stated that "of course some complaints come

from time to time. Sometimes they are received directly by SCI and some times they are given to the Harbour Master who works under the Administration. The complaints relate mainly to improper loading of things at the main port, that stacking is not done properly. Sometimes fragile and perishable articles are put under heavy material and all that. After the arrival of the ships in the Island Port, there are sometimes reports of short landing or some damage to the articles".

1.35 The Chief Commissioner informed the Committee that to sort out these matters there was a regional Committee on which Regional Director of the Shipping Corporation of India and Administration's Officers were there. These matters were discussed there from time to time, once in 1978 and again in February, 1980. The Committee were informed that two decisions had been taken in this direction—one, to detail officers for supervision at the time of loading and two, watch and ward of the ship at the time of unloading.

1.36 The Committee pointed out that even with the taking of these two decisions, the matters had not improved as was evident from the complaints made by the port users. When asked whether this matter had been specially brought to the notice of the Ministry of Shipping and Transport after February, 1980, the Chief Commissioner replied in the negative. He added that the matters had been under correspondence at the regional level with the Shipping Corporation of India and the Administration. These things, he stated, had been taken note of and steps taken but he admitted that "there is further scope for improvement".

1.37 When asked why this matter had not been brought to the notice of the Ministry, the Chief Commissioner replied that it was felt that these could be solved at the level of the Regional Director.

(ii) Storage

1.38 It was represented to the Committee that the present warehousing facilities at Port Blair are quite inadequate. The cargoes are heaped up in the godown for want of space. There is no separate storage facilities for the cargoes intended for outside Municipal area which amounts charges of Municipal tax to the rural consumers.

1.39 The Ministry stated that sufficient warehousing space was available at Port Blair.

1.40 To meet the additional requirements, two more Transit sheds at Haddo Wharf are stated to be under construction. The Ministry added that often delays were caused in clearing the cargo from the

dock. This was mainly attributable to the delay in receipt of the Bill of Lading by the consignees from the Shipping Corporation of India, receipt of unmarked items and consignees not taking delivery of the cargo meant for other stations for want of inter-island communications.

1.41 The Ministry stated that these problems were being tackled by the Administration by contacting Shipping Corporation of India for expediting despatch of Bill of Lading and advising the consignees to take delivery of the cargo from the dock.

Clearance

1.42 It was brought to the Committee's notice, that the cargo is not removed by consignees quickly from the godowns and warehouses of the Port. One of the reasons was stated to be the low godown charges at the Port than those outside. Besides there is no incentive to quick clearance of cargo from the port premises.

1.43 It was also brought to the Committee's notice that storage in the warehouses and godowns of the port was haphazard and un-systematic. This created difficulties for the consignees to remove their consignments and hence delays in clearance.

1.44 The Ministry stated that no godown charge is collected from any of the consignees at this port. However, demurrage charges at the rate of only 10 paise per package per day after a lapse of seven days of landing of the cargo are collected from the consignees. These charges were fixed by the Administration in March, 1967. This rate is too low and a proposal for upward revision of these rates which was received recently from A&N Administration is under the consideration of the Government.

1.45 The Ministry hoped that increase in the revised charges would prompt the merchants to remove the cargo quickly. The Administration has also proposed that they may be permitted to auction the cargo which is not removed within three months.

1.46 As regards the stacking of cargo, the Ministry stated that when the cargo found on board the ships in a haphazard and un-systematic manner, it had to be unloaded in the same way from the ship to the shore and that affects proper stacking in the godown. The A&N Administration has reported that, immediately after the unloading is over from the ship, the consignments are sorted out mark-wise and cargo-wise and stacked properly in the godown for delivery to the consignees.

1.47. Complaints have been made to the Committee that cargo transported from the mainland to Port Blair is damaged during transit and when the traders demand certificate from the Port Administration as to the condition of cargo or the shortages, the certificate is not given with the result that the consignees are not able to raise any claims. The Andaman and Nicobar Administration has confirmed that, excepting short-landing certificate, no other certificate regarding damage to or shortage of cargo in transit is issued at present in respect of private cargo. After the Committee pointed out these lacunae during tour, the Andaman and Nicobar Administration took decisions to set up Survey Boards to issue survey certificates and to verify claims legally. It is highly deplorable that the Administration should have remained insensitive to the port users' interests and turned a deaf ear to their complaints all these years and the Ministry too should not have cared to set things right. The Committee would like that the system of issuing survey certificates and verifying claims should be started immediately, if not already done, and port users' complaints attended to promptly.

(Sl. No. 6)

1.48. The reason for damage to cargo in transit is stated to be improper and haphazard stacking of cargo at the port of loading. Heavy parcels are reportedly heaped over fragile articles and vegetables. While admitting the phenomenon of un-systematic and haphazard stacking of cargo in ships, the A&N Administration has pleaded its innocence in this regard as it has no say in the matter nor does it have any agency to supervise loading operations at present. The Committee welcome the suggestion that the cargo loading should be supervised at Calcutta, Vishakhapatnam and Madras either by Administration's own officials or through agencies to be nominated by it in order to ensure that the consignments are loaded carefully and placed in proper order to avoid any damage in transit. The A & N Administration has, it is seen, already approached the Government for creation of posts to implement this suggestion. The Committee would like a decision in this matter to be taken soon and officers or agencies placed in position to supervise the loading. (S. No. 7) ..

1.49. The Committee learn that a Regional Committee with officers of the Shipping Corporation of India and of A & N Administration had been set up to sort out the complaints of port users about loading and damage in transit. But regrettably this Committee has not met since 1980. This Committee had earlier taken decisions to detail officers for supervision at the time of loading and to deploy watch and ward at the time of unloading but despite these decisions

the position has not improved as is evident from the complaints made by the port users. In fact its decision to detail officers for supervision at the time of loading has yet to be implemented. The Committee would like that the complaints received from port users against the cargo handling operations of the Shipping Corporation of India should be brought to the notice of the Ministry of Shipping and Transport to enable the latter to take such corrective action as it may deem proper. The A & N Administration should also play a more active role in conjunction with officers of Shipping Corporation of India to remedy the defects in loading and thus prevent damage to cargo in transit.

(S. No. 8)

1.50. Space for warehousing of cargo is stated to be sufficient at Port Blair for the present. To meet additional requirements two more transit sheds are under construction. There are, however, delays in removal of cargo by consignees from the port premises and godowns. In the absence of any godown charge and negligible demurrage rate the consignees are obviously under no compulsion to remove their cargo from the port premises promptly. A proposal for upward revision of demurrage rate is stated to be under consideration of Government. The Committee would like the Ministry to consider levying godown charge and raising demurrage rate appropriately to discourage the tendency on the part of consignees to use port premises as their private godowns.

(S. No. 9)

1.51 Delays in clearance of cargo are also attributable to delay in receipt of Bills of lading by consignees from the Shipping Corporation of India, receipt of unmarked items and consignees not taking delivery of cargo meant for other stations for want of inter-island communications. Two of the three problems, viz., late receipt of B/bading and unmarked items can be tackled by the A&N Administrations with the cooperation of the Shipping Corporation of India. The Committee hope that the Administration will pursue these matters with the Shipping Corporation of India and find practical solutions.

(S. No. 10)

1.52 It should be the duty of A&N Administration and port officials to ensure that after the goods are unloaded at Port Blair, they are stored and stacked at the wharves or in the warehouses and godowns of the Port in a systematic manner so that there is no difficulty in removing the consignments. This would also go a long way in avoiding delays in clearance.

(S. No. 11)

(iii) Pilferage

1.53 It was brought to the Committee's notice by a non-official organisation that out of the cargo handled by Port Blair about 10 per

cent is being lost due to breakage and pilferage. On the other hand, the Committee were informed by Port Officials during visit the Port Blair that there were no cases of pilferage at the port.

1.54 Asked to reconcile these two statements, the Ministry stated that "on the basis of records available with the Harbour Master's Office and the Controller of Andaman Labour Force, the Andaman and Nicobar Administration had stated that no complaints from the private traders regarding pilferage of items in the wharf or godowns had been received.

1.55 Asked as to the steps taken to avoid pilferage of consignments while in custody of the port, the Ministry stated that, "Supervisory officials like the Shed Master and Assistant Shed Masters had been posted in the Port for supervising works of Tally Clerks and other workers of the Shipping Godowns. Security guards under the supervision of an Inspector and a Sub-Inspector of Police had been posted in the Godown premises on round the clock duty.

1.56 The following extracts from the Proceedings of the third meeting of the Shipping Review Committee for A&N Islands held on 27-12-1978 at Shipping House, Calcutta are relevant in this connection.

1.57 "The Regional Director, SCI stated that pilferage of cargo was taking place at Port Blair, although the losses on Port Blair route were less than other places in the world. The Harbour Master pointed out that his organisation had suggested certain steps to be taken. These were, the question of positioning of watch and ward at the hatches by the SCI, hatch survey by representatives of SCI and the concerned departments on opening of hatches at Port Blair and immediate and prompt survey of all broken packages.

1.58 The Regional Director, SCI agreed to issue suitable instructions on these aspects, particularly hatch survey which suggestion he welcomed. He, however, requested that the Administration may provide the watch and ward from the Andaman Police for which expenditure can be met by the SCI".

1.59 In the face of port users' complaints and the statement made by Regional Director, Shipping Corporation of India at a meeting held in December 1978, it is difficult to accept the statement made by the Andaman & Nicobar Administration that there were no cases of pilferage at Port Blair. Lack of formal complaints from traders on this account does not necessarily mean lack of pilferage. The Committee would like the Andaman & Nicobar Administration to shed

the sense of complacence which it seems to have developed in this regard and tighten security measures at the port to prevent pilferage.

(S. No. 12)

D. Labour

1.60 It was brought to the Committee's notice that labour strength at Port Blair was inadequate with the result that the Wharves remained cluttered with cargo which was not removed for many days.

1.61 The Andaman and Nicobar Administration had also admitted that there was an imbalance between the strength of the Andaman Labour Force which worked on the docks and the shore godown staff which worked on the shore. The rate of clearance of cargo discharged from the ship to the shore did not match with the rate of clearance of cargo from the dock to the cargo sheds.

1.62 It was submitted by port users before the Committee that low productivity of labour at the port was due to fact that the two types of labour were working under two different authorities and there was no co-ordination between the two.

1.63 The Ministry stated according to the Andaman and Nicobar Administration the loading and unloading of cargo to and fro the ships are undertaken by the stevedore workers of the Andaman Labour Force, which has a strength of 300 mazdoors, who work in 3 shifts round the clock. This force is controlled by the Controller of Andaman Labour Force. For removal of the cargo required to be taken into the shipping godown, the Shipping Department has 60 workers under the control of the Harbour Master.

1.64 The Srinivasan Committee has recommended in this connection that: "Stevedoring on board the private vessels should also be undertaken by the Andaman Labour Force. To this labour force, the shore labour strength of 60 should be added. It would be necessary to add another 100 to 150 (to make up a total strength of about 500). This strength will enable the port Administration to undertake all cargo handling operations on board and as well as on the shore from and to SCI and private vessels".

1.65 Asked to state their experience on the working of labour force under two different managements and whether integration of the two labour forces would not lead to higher efficiency, the Administration have stated that Shri R. Srinivasan, Adviser, Ports (Operations) in his report has recommended the merger of these 2 forces to improve the operations. He has also recommended that

such force should also undertake stevedoring operations of the private vessels also. His report is under active consideration of the Administration.

1.66 It has also been brought to the Committee's notice that while dock labour gets incentive for quicker work, the shore labour does not get any such incentive. Asked why the two labour forces were treated differently in the matter of incentives, the Ministry stated that the under an incentive scheme, the stevedoring workers of the Andaman Labour Force are paid incentive allowances on more work more pay basis, while the workers of the shipping godown are paid overtime allowances. The Ministry added that when the recommendations of Shri Srinivasan were implemented, these 2 forces would be brought under the command of one Organisation and the different types of payments of incentive allowances and O.T.A. would also be uniform.

1.67 There are two categories of labour at Port Blair. Andaman Labour Force works on the docks and shore godown staff works on the shore. Inadequacy of the labour strength and low productivity due to lack of unified control and coordination have been brought to the Committee's notice. The Ministry has admitted imbalance between the two sets of labour. The Srinivasan panel has recommended the integration of the two labour forces and increase in the strength of the total labour force from 260 to about 500. The Report is stated to be under active consideration of the Administration. The Committee are also of the view that integration of the two labour forces will improve the efficiency of loading and unloading operations. They would like an early decision to be taken on the recommendations of the Srinivasan panel.

(S. No. 13)

E. Consultations with Port Users

1.68 It was brought to the Committee's notice that there was no forum at Port Blair at which the port users and port officials could meet to discuss their problems and find solutions.

1.69 There is no administrative machinery in the Port for consultation with port users in regard to the facilities needed by them and for the identification of their problems and looking into their grievances with a view to find out solutions. The Harbour Master has been informally extending the facilities and identifying the problems of the port users.

1.70 The Ministry stated that Administration is now, as suggested by the Estimates Committee during their visit to Port Blair, taking

action to form a consultative machinery to be chaired by the Harbour Master wherein the representative of the carriers and Chamber of Commerce will be included to review the problems in this area.

1.71. The Committee hope that the Consultative forum to hear the port users' problems and find solutions thereto by collective discussions must have been set up by now as promised by the Andaman & Nicobar Administration. They would like that this forum should meet at regular intervals and the decisions taken at its meeting should be followed up. (S. No. 14)

CHAPTER II

SHIPPING

A. Shipping Capacity

2.1 It was very emphatically brought to the Committee's notice during on-the -spot visit that shipping was the life line of Andaman and Nicobar Islands and the present shipping capacity between mainland and Port Blair and for inter-Island traffic was grossly inadequate. This is likely to affect the economic development and social life of the people of these Islands. It was represented that the Islands need 1000 tonne cargo capacity once every week between mainland and Port Blair. Besides, a number of smaller ships of 800—1000 tonne capacity are needed for inter-island traffic. At present there are hardly any ships available to private trade for inter-island traffic. The Ministry explained the position as follows:—

2.2 The following vessels are plying on the Mainland/ Andaman Sector:—

1. M. V. 'Andamans'.
2. M. V. 'Harshavardhana'.
3. T. S. S. 'Nancowry'.

The first two vessels, *viz.* M. V. 'Andamans' and M. V. 'Harshavardhana' are by and large, operating between Andaman and Calcutta whereas T. S. S. 'Nancowry' is plying between Andaman and Madras. The schedules of these vessels are prepared by the Shipping Corporation of India Limited and are finalised with the consent of the Andaman Administration who decide the sailings as per their requirement and as per the exigency of the traffic movement.

2.3 The following vessels are plying on Inter-Island Service:

1. S. S. 'Cholunga'.
2. T. S. S. 'Yerewa'.
3. M. V. 'Onge'.

The first two vessels *viz.* S. S. 'Cholunga' and T. S. S. 'Yerewa' are owned by the Andaman Administration and M. V. 'Onge' is owned by the S. C. I.

2.4 The following timber carriers, in addition to passenger-cum-cargo vessels, as stated above, are operating between Mainland and Andaman:— ..

1. M. V. 'Diglipur'.

2. M. V. 'Shompen'.

Both these vessels are owned by the Shipping Corporation of India Limited.

2.5 The broad particulars of the vessels, as mentioned above, are given below:—

	Owned by	Year of built	DWT	GRT	Passenger carrying capacity	Cargo carrying capacity
M V Andaman	Govt.	1957	2659	5934	618	1150 M/T
M V Harshavardhana	SCI	1974	5563	8871	749	1500 M/T
TSS Nancowry	SCI	1948	9841	10294	900	2000 M/T
M V Diglipur	SCI	1977	6779	4100	..	5000 M/T
M V Shompen	SCI	1963	4384	2943	..	3500 M/T
TSS Yerewa	Govt.	1965	390	1552	209	200 M/T
SS Cholunga	Govt.	1948	239	390	199 (Fair Season)	70 M/T
M V Onge	SCI	1959	371	1308	204	200 M/T

2.6 Besides, some smaller crafts belonging to the Administration are also utilised for Inter-Island transportation of cargoes. In case any serious hardship is felt in the movement of any commodity such as timber, Andaman Administration can re-schedule the sailing programme to meet the situation.

2.7 The cargo carrying capacity of the vessels operating between Mainland and the A&N Islands is given below:—

Mainland/Andaman	DWT	Capacity (Bale) CU M
1 M V Andamans (Passenger-cum-cargo vessel)	2659	8697
2 M V Harshavardhana Passenger-cum-Cargo Vessel. . . .	5563	3650
3 TSS Nancowry Passenger-cum-Cargo Vessel	9841	6822
4 M V Shompen (Timber carrier)	4384	5119
5 M V Diglipur Passenger-cum- Cargo Vessel	6779	8226

2.8 The frequency of sailings is as follows:—

- (A) Calcutta|Andamans|Calcutta—2 Sailings a month
- (B) Madras|Andaman|Madras—2 Sailing a month
- (C) Vizag|Andamans Vizag—4 Sailings in a year

Thus, it will be seen that these three vessels provide, on an average, 2 sailings a month both from Calcutta/Andamans, Madras/Andamans/and vice-versa. In addition, 4 sailings in a year are being provided from Andamans to Vizag and vice-versa by adjusting sailing schedules for Calcutta and Madras.

2.9 On an average, about 400 tons of cargo are carried each way by passenger-cum-cargo vessels on the Andaman Mainland run.

2.10 In respect of two Timber Carriers operating on this main route the vessels carry essentially timber/timber products as per forward programme drawn up by the Forest Department from Andaman Islands to Mainland in reverse direction. These vessels carry mainly essential commodities on an average of 1000 tons per sailing. Between these two cargo vessels on an average 14 sailings per year are provided.

2.11 The cargo carrying capacity of the vessels plying on the Inter-Island Service is as follows:

Inter-Island		DWT	Capacity (Bale) CU CU M
1. M.V. Ongé (Passenger-cum-cargo vessel)	.	371	1123
2. TSS Yerewa	.,	390	1117
3. SS Cholunga	.,	239	446

2.12 By and large, 12 sailings a month are provided by these three vessels. These services and schedules are operated and controlled by the Harbour Master under the Andaman Administration, Port Blair according to their requirements.

Thus, it will be seen that in respect of mainland/Andaman services the cargo carrying capacity is more than adequate. Shipping Corporation of India is trying to locate, on behalf of A&N Administration, a suitable second-hand passenger-cum-cargo vessel to replace M. V. 'Andamans', which is more than 20 years old.

2.13 In respect of Inter-Island Service, the need is catered to at present by the above three passenger-cum-cargo vessels. Government have already sanctioned construction of two 'Onge' type of vessels by Mazagon Docks for the Inter-Island Service. These are expected to be pressed into service in May, 1982 and November, 1982 respectively. With their addition, the position is likely to improve considerably.

2.14 During evidence, Secretary (Shipping and Transport) stated that the study of the Ministry showed that the traffic was high during the peak period of 4 months. For the rest of the 8 months the ships do not have full passenger capacity to utilise. Some special arrangements have got to be made, therefore, for these 4 months.

2.15 Regarding cargo capacity, Secretary (Shipping and Transport) was of the opinion that it was equal to the demand. There were distortions at times. Sometimes the cargo is more and sometimes less than the capacity. He informed the Committee that a decision was taken in May, 1981 at the Prime Minister's level that M. V. Andamans should be replaced as it was no longer an efficient ship. The witness stated that "In spite of all our instructions to the Shipping Corporation of India they have not been able to finalise the selection of the ship." Since suitable second hand ship was not forthcoming, the Ministry was worried that the Budget amount might lapse and might not be available to the Ministry next year.

2.16 The representative of the Shipping Corporation of India informed the Committee (February 1982) that foreign ships were very high speed ships and did not have bunks at all. They also needed high grade oil which was not available on the coast for such ships running between Calcutta and Andamans and if this oil was procured for them, the freight and fare rate would not be met the ship's viability. These ships were not suitable for the requirement of Andamans traffic. The A&N Islands administration had since diluted their requirements. Four ships had now been located and were being examined by technical officers. Even after selecting a ship, it would have to be modified to meet the immediate requirement which would take two or three months more.

2.17 When attention of the Secretary (Shipping and Transport) was invited to the unsatisfactory condition of the passenger vessel "Non-Cowry", he stated that "We feel that ship 'Non-Cowry' is still in a good condition. If we can spend even a crore or two, we can run it for five years more. This will be known when the ship goes for a survey."

2.18 The witness added that the ship of the size 'Non-Cowry' would cost nothing less than 20—30 crores of rupees." In the circumstances, it is better to put her through a survey in 1983 to extend her life for four or five years and we can possibly order a ship and till it comes, we can use this ship".

2.19 The Chief Commissioner stated in evidence that both in the passenger and cargo sectors capacity was available. There was no shortage at present. He added that the replacement of 'Andmans' had to be done as it had become very old. He stated that the problem arose only during peak periods—vacations and the tourist season. He expressed the view that the capacity would have to be increased to cope with the demand. When asked whether the administration should not plan for extra capacity to cope with the peak period demand, Secretary (Shipping and Transport) conceded that "We have to have some extra capacity for the peak period."

2.20 The Committee enquired whether a perspective plan for ship building or for replacement of old ships had been prepared and whether the demand for passenger and cargo capacities had been examined in detail. The Chief Commissioner (A & N Islands) replied that the perspective plan for capacities and requirements till the year 2000 A. D. had been prepared and it was being reviewed from time to time. The A&N Islands administration kept in view the requirements and capacity and how the requirements and capacity would have to be met.

2.21 When asked again whether any scientific survey had been made to find out the requirements during the peak period and provisions made for the next five years, the Secretary stated:

"I do not know exactly. We will look into it. This tourist traffic is a new phenomenon. We shall do a little more study very soon."

2.22 Chief Commissioner (A&N Islands) reiterated that the capacity at present was adequate but for the future it had to be increased. He told the Committee that last year (1980-81) and this year (1981-82) there had been a phenomenal increase in tourist traffic.

2.23 The Committee observed that the Ministry should take up the matter with Moghul Lines to deal with the rush during the peak period (vacations). The Secretary promised, "We will do that."

2.24 In the context of the Ministry's claim that the capacity was at present adequate, the Committee pointed out that on many occasions the Shipping Corporation of India vessels had reportedly

refused to take cargo. There were no foodgrains in Andaman and the foodgrains lying at Madras Port could not be shipped because the vessels refused to carry the cargo. Secretary (Shipping and Transport) stated:—

“The administrative system there needs improvement. In Calcutta and Madras the cargo has to be kept ready when the ships arrive. But in Andamans Administration sometimes they start collecting the cargo after the ships arrive and delay the ships.”

Inter-Island Service

2.25 The Committee pointed out that shortage of vessels for inter-island service, was brought to their notice and it was stated that one of the biggest mills in Asia had to stop its operation for want of timber and many other mills had been closed. The Chief Commissioner explained that they had three bigger vessels, out of which one remained inoperative most of the time and only two were available for inter-island service. He admitted that there was a shortage of vessels. Two new vessels had been ordered and were under construction in Mazagaon docks. One was expected to be delivered in March, 1982 and the other in November, 1982. With the arrival of these two ships and acquisition of three ‘Triveni’ type boats by the middle of 1983, the position was expected to improve considerably.

2.26 Strong representations were made to the Committee that the present shipping capacity between mainland and Port Blair and for inter-island traffic was grossly inadequate. The Ministry of Shipping and Transport and the Andaman & Nicobar Islands Administration have, however, maintained that the passenger and cargo carrying capacities between mainland and Port Blair were adequate to meet the current demand except during peak periods (vacancies and tourist season) when the problems arose to cope with the rush. In the Committee's opinion the adequacy of the capacity should be judged with reference to the peak periods. Judging it with reference to lean periods, as the Ministry and A&N Islands Administration seem to be doing, will be irrelevant and unrealistic. Now that the Ministry has acknowledged the need to augment capacity to meet the rush during vacation period and tourist season, it should not lose time to provide extra capacity to cope with the traffic, if necessary, by requisitioning extra ships on a temporary basis as a stop-gap arrangement, pending procurement of new ships on permanent basis

(S. No. 15)

2.27 Even though the Ministry has claimed that the cargo carrying capacity between mainland and Port Blair was adequate, it appeared from the complaints received by the Committee that Shipping Corporation of India vessels had at times refused to take cargo, even essential commodity like foodgrains. The Ministry stated that this was due to the fact that the cargo was not kept ready when the ships arrived. The Ministry conceded, there was need for improving the administrative system to avoid such incidents. The Committee would like the Ministry to look into the matter and take remedial measures to ensure better cargo management, and more efficient loading operations. (S. No. 16)

2.28 The Committee learn that a decision has been taken in May, 1981 to replace M. V. Andamans—a ship which at present plies between the mainland and the Port Blair—as it was no longer an efficient ship and had become too old. They, however, regret to note that the Shipping Corporation of India has not been able to finalise the selection of a ship to replace M.V. Andamans. The Committee wish that the Ministry and all other authorities charged with the responsibility of procuring a ship in replacement of M.V. Andamans should pursue this matter with a sense of urgency and procure a suitable ship and commission it without delay. (S. No. 17)

2.29 According to the Ministry, TSS Nancowry—a ship plying between mainland and Andamans sector—is still in a good condition and can run for another 4-5 years if it is put through survey and some money is spent on its essential spares. While this should be done as early as possible, the Committee would advise the Ministry to take a decision on the replacement for this ship now and initiate action in that direction so that a new ship is actually available after 4-5 years when TSS Rancowry even after necessary repairs is considered due for retirement from service. (S. No. 18)

2.30 The Committee are informed that the perspective plan of capacities and requirements has been prepared by the Andamans & Nicobar Islands Administration till the year 2000 A.D. and it is reviewed periodically. While the general survey appears to have been done, as stated above, the Committee are concerned to note that the Ministry or the Andaman & Nicobar Islands Administration has not made any scientific survey of the requirements and capacity during peak periods when the Islanders visit the mainland or when the tourist season rush starts. In view of the fact that there has been a phenomenal increase in traffic between the mainland and Port Blair since 1980-81, the Committee would like that a

fresh and detailed survey of the traffic demand with special reference to peak periods should be made expeditiously so that the administration and the Ministry have a sound basis to plan for the future.

(S. No. 19)

2.31 The Committee would recommend that the passenger and cargo capacity available and planned should then be renewed in the light of the fresh survey and the capacity planned and augmented to cope with the demand in peak periods. In the Committee's opinion, the capacity available should always be slightly ahead of the demand to ward off any inconvenience to the tourists or the Islanders in the event of sudden spurt in traffic. (S. No. 20)

2.32 The Committee would also like to suggest that whenever there is excessive rush in any season on any account and the existing shipping services cannot cope with the demand, the Ministry and the Andaman & Nicobar Islands Administration should not hesitate to provide special service to clear the rush. (S. No. 21)

2.33 The Committee find that out of three bigger vessels used for inter-island traffic, one generally remained inoperative and only two remain in service. The Chief Commissioner, A&N Islands Administration, admitted that there was a shortage of vessels for inter-island traffic. Two new vessels are stated to have been ordered. One was expected to be delivered in March, 1982 and the other in November, 1982. With the arrival of these two ships and acquisition of three 'Triveni' type boats by the middle of 1983, the position is expected to improve considerably. Why these measures to augment the shipping capacity for inter-island traffic were not taken well before the shortage has occurred, has not been explained by the Ministry or the A&N Administration. This, the Committee feel, shows lack of advance planning. The Committee cannot over-emphasise the need for keeping the capacity available slightly ahead of actual demand and initiating action to augment capacity well in advance. .. (S. No. 22)

B. Idle Ships

2.34 The Committee have been informed that the Andaman & Nicobar Islands Administration has 33 vessels of different categories out of which on date, (Feb. 1982) 20 were in operation and the remaining 13 were out of operation. Most of these vessels, especially motor launches, are stated to be very old needing extensive repairs and replacement of parts and machinery. The details of the vessels which are out of operation and the reasons for delay in carrying out repairs to the vessels are indicated in the Appendix.

2.35 The Ministry explained that "the repairs could not be carried out more promptly due to non-availability of requisite materials like plates etc. in stock, considerable delay in procurement of the materials from mainland through DGS&D and shortage of manpower/workshop facilities."

2.36 The Ministry agreed to the view that "the ideal situation would be that not more than 2 to 3 vessels are sent out for repairs at a time." The Ministry stated that keeping in view the workshop facilities at Port Blair, it might not be possible to adopt this norm in the near future. In order to expedite repairs to vessels, the Andaman & Nicobar Administration has been recently permitted by the Government of India to have major items of work like plating, etc. done through Calcutta Inland Water Transport Corporation. The Administration has entered into a contract with CIWTC for undertaking repairs to the vessels and at present they have undertaken plating work of one vessel M.V. Yamuna.

2.37 When asked to state the reasons for delay in the repairs of various vessels, Chief Commissioner Andaman & Nicobar Islands Administration explained:

"The reason is that organisationally both on the operative side and on the maintenance and repairs side we are extremely weak. There should be no idea of hiding this. That is because they have no qualified engineers and there is a shortage of officers. They are not available. There is no marine engineer; there is no pilot and we have no qualified Masters of the ships. The DG (Shipping) has been giving us dispensation with the support of the Ministry, but that dispensations being given only for a month or two. So, the basic thing is to be improved. We have to have a proper organisation for operations as well as for maintenance."

2.38. Chief Commissioner informed the Committee that this matter "has been discussed from time to time. All these problems have been brought to the notice of our Secretary (Shipping) who visited Andaman in December 1980."

2.39 About the improvement of facilities at the port the witness added that at the instance of the Ministry, Shri Srinivasan had studied the matter and given a Report which was under the consideration of the Ministry. In regard to improvements in the workshop an engineer had been invited from the Madras Port

Trust and certain other measures had been taken. Permission to procure spare parts directly from Madras Port Trust had also been given by the Ministry.

2.40 When the Committee pointed out that the ship "cholunga" was lying idle since August 1981 and nobody knew who was to repair it, Secretary (Shipping & Transport) stated "I have no idea as to when they gave it for repairing".

2.41 The Committee pointed out that the Andamans and Nicobar Islands being a union territory, Shipping, so far as this territory is concerned, was ultimately the responsibility of the Ministry of Shipping and Transport of the Government of India. The Committee asked as to how Secretary of this Ministry could absolve himself by saying that he was not aware of it.

2.42 Secretary (Shipping & Transport) stated "I said only about "cholunga". However, I myself visited this place in December, 1980 and I am absolutely dissatisfied with the maintenance facilities. I told the Chief Commissioner to tie up the maintenance services with the Madras Port. I got a special dispensation that he can order equipment from Madras Port. But I am convinced that they do not have the technical skill. What I suggested was that since they are building a dry dock they should ask some established units to start the work by providing infrastructure facilities etc." The witness added that "I was thinking that somebody must come from the main land and take over the dock and repair their vessels. Otherwise they can not collect all these engineers."

2.43 Secretary informed the Committee that the Hindustan Ship Yard as also the Garden Reach were not willing to take up this work. The matter was discussed with Mazagon docks who also declined to take up this work.

2.44 When the Committee expressed doubt about the capacity of CTWTC to carry out this job, Secretary stated that "My feeling is that CTWTC would be able to do this. It will improve. It was in a bad shape."

2.45 When asked if he could direct Madras Port Trust to take up this work, Secretary stated "you cannot order the port to operate outside their area." He stated that Dry Dock would only be ready by 1983. The Ministry wanted to put some organisation incharge of this job by about June, 1982.

2.46 The Committee enquired whether Secretary would be able to say by what time all the ships which were lying idle in Andaman at present for want of repairs would be put into operation. The Secretary stated, "I will not be able to because I do know the condition of each ship. If you so desire I can depute an expert who will give a report on the condition of each boat, when it will be ready and all that."

2.47 The Committee are pained to note that in Andaman and Nicobar Islands where already there is acute shortage of vessels, even the vessels already available are not being maintained in serviceable condition. Out of 33 vessels of different categories, only 20 were reported to be in operation in February 1982 and the remaining 13 were grounded for repairs of various types. One vessel was out of operation for five years, two for two years and two others for nearly a year. The Administration has pleaded its inability to carry out repairs promptly due to non-availability of requisite materials and shortage of manpower and workshop facilities. It has admitted that though the ideal situation would be not to have more than 2-3 vessels out for repairs at a time, it would not be possible to adopt this norm in the near future due to lack of workshop facilities at Port Blair. The Chief Commissioner had also been frank enough to admit in evidence that organisationally both on the operative side and on the maintenance and repair side the Administration was extremely weak. Secretary (Shipping & Transport) was apprised of the situation in December 1980 when he visited Port Blair. He is stated to have advised the A&N Administration to tie up the maintenance service with Madras Port Trust but nothing appears to have been done so far. The Committee find that a dry dock is coming up at Port Blair but they wonder whether in the absence of an organisation and skilled manpower and non-availability of materials, this dry dock when ready in 1982 would be able to make any dent into this problem. The Committee find that this matter has been studied by Srinivasan Committee which has already made a report on this subject. The Committee strongly urge that this matter should receive the urgent attention of the Ministry and it should help the A&N Administration to build up a proper organisation for maintenance of ships.

(S. No. 23)

2.48 The immediate problem before the A&N Islands Administration is the repair of 13 vessels which are at present lying out of operation. The Administration, it is stated, has been recently permitted by the Government of India to have major items of work

like plating etc. done through Central Inland Water Transport Corporation (CIWTC) and one vessel M.V. Yamuna has already been handed over to them for plating work.

2.49 Secretary, Shipping and Transport, informed the Committee in evidence that neither Hindustan Shipyard nor Garden Reach nor Mazagon Docks were willing to take up the repair work on the ships lying idle at Port Blair. When the Committee expressed doubt about the capacity of CIWTC to carry out this job, the Secretary stated that "My feeling is that CIWTC would be able to do this. It will improve. It was in a bad shape". The Committee feel that the Ministry should explore the possibility of involving even persuading, Madras Port Trust or some other ship-repairing organisation in the area to take up repair work on the ships of A&N Administration.

(S. No. 24)

2.50 The Committee were surprised to learn in evidence that Secretary (Shipping and Transport) was completely unaware of the fact that SS CHOLUNGA, a ship meant for inter-island traffic, had been out of operation since August 1981. The Committee cannot but express their unhappiness at the lack of communication between A&N Administration and the Ministry of Shipping and Transport in regard to state of serviceability of ships. Needless to say that A&N Islands being a Union Territory, shipping and all other problems related to shipping so far as this territory is concerned, are ultimately the responsibility of the Ministry of Shipping and Transport of the Government of India and this Ministry should discharge responsibility fully, without any further delay.

(S. No. 25)

2.51 The Committee would like the Ministry to commission immediately, a survey of the ships lying idle at Port Blair and submit a report to the Committee on the condition of each ship and the time it will take to be ready for service again.

(S. No. 26)

(C) Machines lying out of use

2.52 During their on the spot study visit to Port Blair, (January 1982) the Committee came to know that a number of machines procured for use at Port Blair were installed a few years ago but had not been put to use.

2.53 The Ministry explained the position as follows (February 1982):

"It is a fact that the machines, details of which are given below, were procured from the Hindustan Machine Tools a few years ago but have not been put to use so far:—

Sl. No.	Particulars of machine	Cost of machine	When received	When installed
1	Hydraulic Grinding Machine HMT type G13V/1618.		Records not available	
2	Vertical Milling Machine HMT EM 3V.	Rs. 1,17,508.00	4/74	End of '74
3	Universal Milling Machine HMT EM 3U.	Rs. 1,17,507.00	4/74	End of '74
4	Lathe L 45' . . .	Rs. 4,81,905.14	In 1977	In 2/78
5	Lathe NH-22 . . .	Rs. 1,45,454.00	In 1977	In 7/78

2.54 Purpose of procurement of the new machines was to replace the old ones which had been installed before 1947.

2.55 The Committee wanted to know as to why they had not been put to use. The Ministry stated that records are not available in Harbour Master's office to show the circumstances in which the machines could not be put to use. The records, however, show that in 1977 a Service Engineer from the HMT Ltd., visited the Marine Dockyard in connection with the commissioning of heavy duty Lathe L-45 and he suggested among other things that the Hydraulic Grinding Machines, Vertical Milling Machine and Universal Milling Machine could not be commissioned unless certain accessories required for their functioning are procured. Enquiry was accordingly made from the H.M.T., Calcutta in connection with supply of the essential accessories on 27-1-1978. Subsequently, although the firm was prepared to supply the goods, a dispute arose between the Asst. Engineer, Andaman P.W.D. Sub-Division, Calcutta, an Officer of the Andaman P.W.D. Admn. acting as an interim consignee and the firm about the place at which the delivery of the stores was to be taken. The matter had been under correspondence between the firm and the Asstt. Engineer, Calcutta till September, 1980. Then the supply order was cancelled as the firm failed to execute the same. Fresh supply order is being placed by the Marine Department on H.M.T., Calcutta.

2.56 As regards the Lathe Machines, the matter had been under correspondence between APWD and the Marine Department in

connection with providing of internal wiring for the supply of electricity to the machine since 1980. The work has since been completed and the two Lathe machines have been put into operation.

2.57 As regards the Grinding and Milling Machines, these can be commissioned only after the essential accessories are procured for which a fresh supply order is being placed.

2.58 The Ministry added that "this matter came to the notice of the Secretary of the Administration in charge of Shipping during his inspection of the Dockyard in March 1981." It was pointed out by the then Marine Engineer that difficulty was in the Electricity Department not giving the electric connection for operation of these machine for want of internal wirings. The estimate for internal wirings was approved and expenditure sanction issued by the Administration in the end of March 1981, and the Departmental officers were orally asked to vigorously pursue with APWD and Electricity Department."

2.59 The Ministry further stated that "as is evident, there has been considerable amount of lack of co-ordination amongst the various departments of the Administration. This aspect is being looked into by the Chief Commissioner and if necessary, action will be taken against the concerned officers."

During evidence the Chief Commissioner stated:—

"I must frankly admit that this is a very bad case. There is definitely a lapse here and this had come to the notice of our Shipping Secretary only in a very limited way."

2.60 He added that the Shipping Secretary (Andaman and Nicobar Administration) had inspected the workshop in 1981. He was only told that some of the lathes had not been commissioned because the wiring had not been done by the PWD. The Shipping Secretary (Administration) issued immediate instructions. Wiring was done and the two lathes have since been commissioned but it had now come to light that the grinding and milling machines could not be commissioned because some accessories were not available. The Chief Commissioner informed the Committee that he had ordered an enquiry by his judicial Secretary whose report was expected by 7th March, 1982. He assured the Committee that after the responsibility in the matter was fixed, proper action would be taken against the officer concerned.

2.61 Non-utilization of five machines each worth more than Rs. one lakh procured long back for use at Port Blair is a sad story.

Two machines have been lying idle since 1974 and two in 1978; about one machine no records are available. That three of the machines should have been idle since the very beginning for want of certain accessories and two for want of electric wiring not only shows how incompetent and irresponsible the indenting, engineering and using officers have been but also testifies to the failure of senior officers to have detected these lapses for such a long time. This has not only resulted in criminal waste of investment on these machines but must have also adversely affected the working of the engineering operations at the Port. The Committee cannot too strongly condemn the failure of the hierarchy of officers of various levels as revealed in this case.

2.62 The Committee note that after they had brought this matter to the Administration's notice, an enquiry was ordered into the matter. The Chief Commissioner, Andaman and Nicobar Administration who admitted this to be a very bad case and definitely a lapse, assured the Committee in evidence that after the enquiry report was received and responsibility fixed, action would be taken against the officers concerned. The Committee would like to be apprised of the results of the enquiry and action taken in the matter.

(Sl. No. 27)

2.63 The Committee would also urge the Ministry of Shipping and Transport to take adequate measures to ensure against the recurrence of such lapses in the future.

(Sl. No. 28)

CHAPTER III

ORGANISATION AT PORT BAIR

A. Organisational set up

3.1 During on the spot visit to Port Blair and during discussions the following representation was made to the Committee:—

- (i) Port Blair is at present departmentally managed by Andaman and Nicobar Islands Administration. It lacks a professional organisation and a commercial approach. Unless a suitable port organisation is established to organise and control the port operations, efficiency cannot be brought about.
- (ii) That Srinivasan Committee had already made an exhaustive report on these aspects and a port organisation (not necessarily Port Trust) which is manned by professional experts and not as a Department is needed at this port immediately.

3.2 The Ministry stated that at present, the Marine and Shipping Department in the Union Territory of Andamans and Nicobar Islands is headed by a Harbour Master, who is assisted by an Assistant Harbour Master, Pilot, Marine Engineer, Assistant Marine Engineer, Accounts Officer and Labour Welfare Officer.

3.3 The workload of the Marine and Shipping Department has increased considerably due to the implementation of various development schemes.

34. Administration of the Union Territory of Andaman and Nicobar Islands had been pursuing the question of setting up of a separate Port Authority for Port Blair and other ports of the Islands with a view to ensuring that the Port activities and shipping activities from and to the Islands are streamlined and are run in smooth and efficient manner.

3.5 This question of a suitable port organisation was discussed in the meeting held in the room of Secretary, Shipping and Transport on 9-4-1981 wherein the need for development of Port Blair

was recognised. Relevant extract from the minutes of the above meeting is given below:—

"Transport Secretary mentioned that it may perhaps be necessary to declare the port of Port Blair as a Major port for its proper long term development. At present A&D Administration is operating the Port departmentally without much expertise financial delegation or administrative powers; there is no pilotage or night navigation facilities and proper handling equipment. There is no tug. JS to PM wondered if it might not be better to place the port under an Administrator with adequate delegated powers under the overall control CC. The Chief Commissioner, however, felt that it might be easier to execute development works, appoint appropriate personnel, etc. if Port Blair is declared a major port under the Ministry of Shipping and Transport. While the need for develop Port Blair port was recognised it was considered that the question of the best administrative pattern for doing so would need further careful examination".

3.6 Subsequently the question of setting up of a port Authority at Port Blair was considered by the sub-Committee of Home Minister's Advisory Committee for Andaman and Nicobar Islands held on 6-5-1981 at New Delhi. The decision taken at this meeting was that while there was no need to declare Port Blair as a Major Port and set up a Port Trust, the proposal to appoint a separate Administrator with sufficient authority should be examined. Relevant extract from the summary record of the discussions of the above meeting are given below:—

"Initiating the discussion on the proposal to set up a Port Trust for Port Blair, Additional Secretary, MHA explained that with the setting up of such an Organisation the wage structure of the personnel would have to be upgraded which would consequently increase all the port charges etc. Joint Secretary, Shipping added that at a major port, the wages were controlled by the Dock Labour Board. He felt that conditions at present were not favourable for declaring Port Blair at a major port, for large scale industrialisation of the hinterland was a desired con-comitant to the Setting up of a major port and the eco-system and the infrastructure in the islands were not such as to be suitable for setting up big industrial complexes. Port Blair was basically a minor port where facilities were poor, suitable

manpower was not forthcoming and there was no stores back up. To qualify as a major port and for a Port Trust certain conditions have to be fulfilled. In the circumstances, Jt. Secretary Shipping suggested that they would examine whether an administrator under Government of India could be appointed as was done in Tuticorin/Mangalore".

3.7 On the question of adequacy of management organisation, the A&N Administration has stated in a note to the Committee as follows (Jan. 1982):—

"The main problem which the Administration faces is not paucity of funds but lack of a viable Organisational structure in both the Shipping Sector and Ports and Harbour Sector. It has been the firm view of the Administration that if we are to be able to function effectively, it is absolutely imperative that we have a Shipping Corporation formed for these islands which will enable us to run our fleet of vessels in an efficient manner. It is also mentioned that a port Organisation be established on the same pattern as is in existence today in all the important mainland ports. We have proposed the establishment of a Port Trust with all its additional facilities, which alone will ensure the running of an efficient port establishment.

3.8 We have projected in our Sixth Five Year Plan 1980—85 the establishment of these two new organisations. This issue has been repeatedly taken up by us with the higher authorities and was in the recent past discussed in the meeting held by Secretary Ministry of Shipping and Transport (Shri Mohinder Singh) on 26-12-1980 at Port Blair and subsequently, in the meeting chaired by Minister of State for Home Affairs in New Delhi on 6-5-1981.

3.9 We once again emphasize that unless such viable organisations are established in this territory it will not be possible for this Administration to ensure efficient shipping and port services".

3.10 During evidence (Feb. 1982) the Secretary, Shipping and Transport stated in this connection that "about the structure of the Board also, when I visited in December 1980, I felt that the time has come to do something with regard to port administration. They do not have the powers of financial delegation and the whole thing is too departmental. At my initiative an Officer was deputed from the Ministry to make a study as to what kind of structure and organisation we should have. And the Report has been received. And we sent it to the Administration for their comments which

have just been received. Now we have to take a decision in consultation with the Ministry of Home Affairs."

He added that:—

"Some structure must be evolved—not on the pattern of the major ports but some way in between which will have delegation but not the autonomy and other things of major ports."

Srinivasan, Ex-Chairman, Visakhapatnam Port and Adviser (Fort Operations Indian Ports Association was entrusted with the work of enquiring into the structural changes in the Administrative set up for Port Blair.

3.11 Broadly, the recommendations made by Shri Srinivasan are as follows:—

- (i) After taking into account several factors, such as the volume of traffic (handled and proposed to be handled during the next five years, the size ships to be handled, deepwater facilities to be provided and the financial viability), Shri Srinivasan has come to the conclusion that the set-up should be more or less on the pattern of the minor ports organisation in the maritime States of the country. In other words, he has not recommended constitution of a Port Trust nor the establishment of a Major Port under the Ministry of Shipping and Transport (as a Department of the Government of India).
- (ii) The revised set-up for the Port Organisation be placed under the State Port Officer and Harbour Master with 12 senior officers under him looking after the marine department, engineering department and accounts and administration department;
- (iii) The Head of the Port Organisation should be a Marine Officer. He has not recommended an engineer or a general administrator to head the port for a long time to come;
- (iv) The port dues/pilotage and berth charges be increased to improve the financial viability of the port;
- (v) Stevedoring on board the private vessels should be undertaken by the Andaman Labour Force;
- (vi) Proper documentation procedure should be established for clearing import cargo and for shipment;

- (vii) Landing and shipping fee charges be increased to improve the port finances;
- (viii) Demurrage charges which are very low, should be increased considerably;
- (ix) Ferry charges and freight rates for interisland traffic should also be increased;
- (x) Security arrangements are inadequate. These should be improved by creating additional posts in the Police Establishment.

B. Availability of Qualified Personnel

3.12 The Committee find that the Administration was unable to get senior technical and supervisory officers in the existing departmental scales of pay. This matter came up for discussion during the meeting held by Secretary, Ministry of Shipping and Transport with the Chief Commissioner and Officers of the Andaman and Nicobar Administration in December, 1980. One problem was that the Administration was unable to get senior technical and supervisory officers in the existing departmental scales of pay. The posts of Assistant Harbour Master, Pilot and qualified Masters of several vessels were lying vacant. The Administration it was stated, had made all efforts to get these posts filled, both by taking officers on deputation from various organisations, including the Navy and also by direct recruitment through UPSC without any success. It was pointed out in the said meeting that the administration was unable to ply 'M.V. Triveni' because qualified staff was not available and Mercantile Marine Department had not permitted the Administration to operate this vessel with ISV Crew and wanted to have this manned by qualified Master and Crews under Merchant Shipping Act before permission to operate the vessel in high seas was given. Secretary (Shipping) had assured that he would persuade the shipping corporation of India to provide qualified staff for these vessels or get orders issued regarding dispensation by D.G. (Shipping).

3.13 It is seen from the notes furnished to the Committee subsequent to their on-the-spot study that the Shipping Corporation of India has not been able to spare the services of any officers so far although the requirements had been duly projected to them.

3.14 It has been stated in a note furnished by the Andaman and Nicobar Administration that the main reason for non-availability

of technical personnel to operate ships is that the emoluments payable to them under the Andaman and Nicobar Administration are much low as compared to the emoluments being paid to them by Shipping Companies.

3.15 The Committee have been informed that the question of revision of pay scales of the Afloat Section of Marine Department as per with those working in the vessels owned by the Shipping Corporation of India was examined in detail on an earlier occasion in April, 1980. It was then considered that pay and allowances and other benefits which the Masters|Engineers|Officers and other crew members of the vessels owned by the Shipping Corporation of India were getting, were admissible to them under the Article of Agreement. It was, therefore, considered that it would not be possible to grant these scales of pay to the employees (crew members) working in the Afloat Section of the Marine Department as their conditions of services are different in as much as they are governed by the FRs and SRs and were employed on regular basis and got all the benefits of pension etc. These benefits were not admissible to the employees of the Shipping Companies.

3.16 The A&N Administration has summed up the following points for consideration:—

- (i) In the event of taking personnel on deputation for manning of the vessels of the Marine Department, the existing scales of pay sanctioned for these posts will have to be revised.
- (ii) In case Shipping Corporation of India agrees to provide their personnel on deputation for all the posts for manning of these vessels, there will be a problem of retrenchment of a large number of employees of the Afloat Section. Almost all the persons working in Afloat Section are regular employees.
- (iii) There is likely-hood of repercussion in the Forest, Fisheries and Police Departments etc. of this Administration, where similar categories of employees are working.
- (iv) If it is decided to give the revised scale of pay to the existing employees, the question as to whether all of them will be in possession of the requisite qualifications to get such higher scales of pay under the MS Act and ISV Act, would also arise.

(v) The existing employees are governed by FRs and SRs and are employed on regular basis and are entitled for pension etc. In case these employees are given the scales of pay of Shipping Companies, they will have to be brought under the Article of agreement. This will amount to change in their service conditions. This requires detailed study.

3.17 In view of the problems enumerated above, the Administration proposes the following short term and long term solutions. The short term solutions proposed by the Administration are as follows:—

- (1) In view of the complication which is likely to arise in view of the aforesaid points, Ministry may request DG Shipping to give us total dispensation for all the vessels which are to be operated by the Administration. The bigger vessel like the my 'Onge' type vessel and the other bigger vessels which the Administration is now acquiring, will have to be exclusively manned by the SCI on behalf of the Administration.
- (2) In order to ensure effective supervision, it is essential that the organisation as recommended by the Administration after going through Shri Srinivasan's report on establishment of Port Organisation in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, should immediately be sanctioned.
- (3) The senior supervisory posts which have been sanctioned and which are lying vacant today are Asstt. Harbour Master, Marine Engineer, Pilot and Masters for various vessels. We have approached the Navy and other Port Organisation and also UPSC for filling up these posts. The Ministry of Home Affairs and Ministry of Shipping may kindly use their good offices with the above organisations and try to get suitable persons posted immediately against these vacancies.

3.18 The long term solution in view of the various complications mentioned would be to establish either a Shipping Corporation for Andaman and Nicobar Administration or a Coastal Shipping Corporation for this territory.

C. Financial Powers

3.19 It was represented to the Committee during their visit to the Islands that the local administration lacks financial powers.

They have also inadequate powers to make appointments. In fact almost all proposals for creation of posts have to be referred to the Government of India at Delhi.

3.20 The Ministry of Shipping & Transport has stated that presently, Andaman & Nicobar Administration is required to approach DGS&D for purchase of all major items. Chief Commissioner's powers for such purchases are limited to Rs. 1.00 lakh for non-rate-contract items. For items which are on rate-contract, Chief Commissioner has no discretion to place orders except on the rate-contract firms, except in case of emergencies. This question was raised when the Transport Secretary (Shri Mohinder Singh) visited the Territory in December, 1980. As a result, necessary permission to the Andaman and Nicobar Administration for purchase of spare parts through Madras Port Trust has been given. This will enable the Administration to procure spare parts within a period of 3-4 months.

3.21 As far as creation of posts is concerned, the Ministry has stated that before the issue of economy order in May, 1977 and imposition of the ban on creation of posts by the Ministry of Finance, the Chief Commissioner was empowered to create posts which have been approved in the Plan Schemes. According to A & N Administration, in December 1980 the Chief Commissioner was delegated powers to create Class I posts carrying a scale of pay the maximum of which does not exceed Rs. 2,000/- . However, in view of the economy orders and in view of ban on creation of posts, no posts (including Group 'D' posts) can be created by the Chief Commissioner without the approval of the concerned Ministry. In addition, there is also a ban on filling up of posts which are lying vacant for more than one year. The Administration faces considerable difficulty in getting technical and other well qualified people for filling up senior posts.

D. Air Travel Concessions for Officers

3.22 During the visit of the Committee to the Islands it was represented that the rules of air travel for officers are wholly unrelated to the situation in Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Officers deputed to attend to jobs at mainland are stuck up there for 15 days or even more because they are not entitled to travel by air. Their detention at mainland for such a long period not only affects port operations in their absence but also causes unnecessary inconvenience to officers and financial loss to the Exchequer as they have to be paid TA/DA at the mainland for no work. Air travel rules

for officers posted in Andaman and Nicobar Islands have got to be liberalised and powers vested with the Chief Commissioner to permit air travel on merit of each case.

3.23 The Minister has stated in this connection that before the issue of economy orders in September 1977, the Chief Commissioner was authorised to permit non-entitled officers having a pay of Rs. 500/- and above to travel by air between Calcutta and Port Blair in case of duty journeys. However, later this power was withdrawn and all the cases of air travel by non-entitled officers whose pay is below Rs. 1,800/- were to be sent to Government of India for permission. Recently, the Ministry of Home Affairs have issued orders on 4 January, 1982 permitting air travel between Calcutta and Port Blair in respect of first grade officers, those drawing a pay of Rs. 1000/- and above, to travel by air on urgent duty and in public interest.

3.24 Port of Port Blair is at present run departmentally by the A & N Administration. The question of a suitable port organisation has been under discussion for quite some time. While the A&N Administration prefers to have an organisation on the lines of the Port Trust as obtaining at the important mainland ports, the thinking in the Government of India has been that there is no need to declare Port Blair as a major port and set up a Port Trust there. Secretary (Shipping and Transport) finds the Port Blair administration "too departmental" and is of the opinion that some sort of a structure not on the pattern of major ports but somehow in between with appropriate delegation of powers but not the autonomy would be desirable for this port. The Srinivasan Committee which was set up to enquire into the structural changes in the administrative set up for Port Blair has come to the conclusion that the set up should be more or less on the pattern of the minor ports organisation in the maritime states of the country. It has not recommended constitution of a Port Trust nor the establishment of a major port.

3.25 The Committee have gone into the matter. They are of the opinion that the Port Blair set- up should not be a departmental set-up under the direct bureaucratic control of A&N Administration as at present. It should better be managed by a professionally manned public sector body which should be given the necessary powers and autonomy within a clearly demarcated sphere to run the port on commercial lines and be accountable for its performance to the A&N Administration under whose overall administrative control it should be placed. (S. No. 29)

3.26 The Committee are also of the view that for efficient running of shipping Services either the Shipping Corporation of India or a similar public sector unit under the jurisdiction of A&N Administration should be assigned the responsibility of operating Shipping Services between the mainland and Port Blair as also inter-island Services. In fact one public sector unit can manage both port and shipping services in Andaman & Nicobar Islands (S. No. 30).

3.27 The A&N Administration is unable to get senior technical and supervisory officers to man its shipping and port operations. Efforts to get suitable personnel on deputation or through UPSC have failed. Efforts to get qualified staff from the Shipping Corporation of India to man the Administration's vessels have also not borne any fruit so far. The main reason for non-availability of technical personnel for the ships and port services is stated to be the low wages allowed under the departmental scales of pay as compared to the emoluments paid by the shipping companies. As it is, A&N Administration should be finding it difficult to attract skilled manpower from the mainland. The Committee feel that it will be still more difficult to attract qualified personnel to man shipping and port operations at departmental scales of pay, which are very low, when higher emoluments are available to them in shipping companies and even at ports on the mainland. If anything, there is a strong case to offer incentive wages for work at the A&N Islands if qualified personnel has to be attracted from the mainland. The Committee would strongly recommend that the Ministry and A&N Administration should take a pragmatic view and offer at least the same, if not higher, scales of pay and perks as offered by shipping companies and major ports on the mainland. Vacillation in this regard would only further delay the availability of qualified personnel with consequential effect on shipping and port operations. There is, therefore, need to take an urgent and realistic decision in this regard. (S. No. 31)

3.28 At present the A&N Administration lacks financial and administrative powers so much so that no posts, not even Group 'D' posts, can be created by it without the approval of the concerned Ministry at the Centre. The Committee are unable to appreciate how the Government of India expects the Administration of so far-off a territory as Andaman & Nicobar Islands to run the administrative set up efficiently with such little power in financial and administrative matters. The Committee feel that A&N Administration should be given adequate powers of appointments and materials procurement without which it is difficult to run shipping and port services efficiently. (S. No. 32)

3.20. The Committee note that in January 1982 the Government of India has issued orders permitting air travel between Calcutta and Port Blair to first grade officers drawing a pay of Rs. 1000/- and above on urgent duty and in public interest. This is a welcome decision and was overdue in the interest of efficient discharge of duties by Administration Officers. (S. No. 33)

NEW DELHI;

April 26, 1982

Vaisakha 6, 1904 (Saka)

S. B. P. PATTABHI RAMARAO,

Chairman,
Estimates Committee.

APPENDIX I
Statement showing Vessels out of operation with reasons
(Ref. P. 46)

Sl. No.	Name of vessel	Date of Non-Op.	Time for repairs	Remarks
1	2	3	4	5
1	SS Cholunga	Aug. 81		Work will be arranged by SCI Ltd.
2	MV Tarmugli	June, 1981	8 months	Steel plate and oxygengas were not available with Marine Dept. Effort had been made to take on loan from ANVY/APWD/CIWTC and simultaneously action for procurement of the same from the mainland was also taken. With the steel plates since procured the work relating to replacement of hull plates has been carried out. The repair of the vessel is expected to be completed by the 1st week of Feb., 1982.
3	MV Yamuna	June, 1980	About one year	Steel plates and oxygen gas was not available. Plating work has been entrusted to CIVTC Port Blair.
4	MV Gomati	Dec., 1981	Two months	Due to shortage of man-power as maximum workers were engaged on the work of MV Tarmugli.
5	MV Ganga	May, 1980	about one Year.	(1) work could not be taken in hand for want of MS Plates and oxygen gas. (2) Procurement of main engine is in progress. (3) Plate work is being entrusted to CIWTC, Port Blair.
6	MV Jaladhar	May, 1981	6 mon-1 w.e.f. from 12-1-1982	Deck plate has been changed. Ship side & hull plate being changed by the Marine Dockyard w.e.f. 12-1-1982.
7	MV Moti	No., 1981	About two months	(1) New crank shaft is not available as this is an imported engine. Broken crank is being repaired in the Marine Shop and Fitting Shop.
8	PM Priva	Nvo., 1981	One month	Work is in progress by the Marine Dept.
9	M.D. I.	August, 1981	Three months	Work is in progress. For new clutch demand, placed on CIWTC- Calcutta. Expected to be received shortly.
10	New Fishing Boat.	July, 1981	10 days (awaiting spare parts).	Demand placed on CIWTC, Calcutta.
11	ML Smriti	1977	20 days.	Spare parts not available as it is an imported engine. Therefore, action for procurement of Indian made gear box is in progress.
12	MV Kondul	Dec. ,1981	15 days.	
13	MV Narmada	8-1-82	About 1½ months.	Being untroubleder Marine Deptt.

APPENDIX II

Summary of Recommendations|Observations

(Vide Introduction)

Sl. No.	Para No.	Recommendation/Observation
1	2	3
1	1.10	The berthing capacity at the two wharves of Haddo and Chatham at Port Blair is insufficient. The length of the Chatham wharf is, also reported to be insufficient. Its length is being extended to enable it to berth simultaneously one log carrier and one cargo vessel. The Committee hope that the work will be completed by December, 1982 as scheduled.
2	1.11	A scheme for construction of one more wharf at Hope Town which will facilitate handling of one more passenger-cum-cargo ship from the main land has been under consideration since September, 1980. It was expected to be sanctioned by February, 1982. The Committee are not happy at the long time taken in finalising of this scheme by the Ministry. They would urge the Ministry that as assured by Secretary (Shipping and Transport) in evidence the project should be completed and commissioned within two years.
3	1.12	The Committee find that even though there is no siltage at Chatham berth of Port Blair, the draft there has admittedly been reduced due to spillage of cargo during unloading operations. Even if it was spillage of cargo and not the siltation, which had reduced draft, the Port authorities should have cleared the spillage without delay and not let it lie there indefinitely. The Committee hope that the spillage must have been removed by now and such problems will not remain unduly unattended in future.

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4 1.19 The Committee are unable to appreciate the argument advanced by the Ministry that Rangat Jetty is not defective but it is the Rangat Bay which has certain limitations in that it is exposed to open sea and subject to swells even in moderate weather. If, as admitted by Ministry, there are difficulties in berthing a vessel due to non-availability of sufficient sheltered harbour basin in the area, "even in slightly rough weather", obviously either the design of the jetty is defective or the designers failed to take into account all the essential features of the site selected for jetty while preparing the design. In either case, it is a serious matter which the Committee would like to be enquired into by an independent expert body and the outcome reported to the Committee within six months.

5 1.20 The Committee are informed that it is now proposed to create a sheltered harbour basin by providing a breakwater of 700 m. at an estimated cost of Rs. 75 lakhs. This is proposed to be taken up in 1983-84 during the Sixth Plan. As provision for only Rs. 30 lakhs has been made in the Sixth Plan, it is likely to spill over to Seventh Plan period.

The Committee feel that it would not be prudent to delay the construction of breakwater any longer. The Committee would urge the Ministry to give this project high priority and ensure that the construction of the breakwater at Rangat Jetty is taken up at the earliest and completed in the shortest possible time so as to make this jetty serviceable throughout the year.

6 1.47 The Andaman and Nicobar Administration has confirmed that, excepting short-landing certificate, no other certificate regarding damage to

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or shortage of cargo in transit is issued at present in respect of private cargo. The Committee would like that the system of issuing survey certificates and verifying claims should be started immediately, if not already done, and port users' complaints attended to promptly.

7 1.48 The reason for damage to cargo in transit is stated to be improper and haphazard stacking of cargo at the port of loading. Heavy parcels are reportedly heaped over fragile articles and vegetables. The Committee welcome the suggestion that the cargo loading should be supervised at Calcutta, Vishakhapatnam and Madras either by Administration's own officials or through agencies to be nominated by it in order to ensure that the consignments are loaded carefully and placed in proper order to avoid any damage in transit. The A & N Administration has, it is seen, already approached the Government for creation of posts to implement this suggestion. The Committee would like a decision in this matter to be taken soon and officers or agencies placed in position to supervise the loading.

8 1.49 The Committee would like that the complaints received from port users against the cargo handling operations of the Shipping Corporation of India should be brought to the notice of the Ministry of Shipping and Transport to enable the latter to take such corrective action as it may deem proper. The A & N Administration should also play a more active role in conjunction with officers of Shipping Corporation of India to remedy the defects in loading and thus prevent damage to cargo in transit.

9 1.50 Space for warehousing of cargo is stated to be sufficient at Port Blair for the present. To meet

additional requirements two more transit sheds are under construction. There are, however, delays in removal of cargo by consignees from the port premises and godowns. In the absence of any godown charge and negligible demurrage rate the consignees are obviously under no compulsion to remove their cargo from the port premises promptly. A proposal for upward revision of demurrage rate is stated to be under consideration of Government. The Committee would like the Ministry to consider levying godown charge and raising demurrage rate appropriately to discourage the tendency on the part of consignees to use port premises as their private godowns.

10 1.51 Delays in clearance of cargo are also attributable to delay in receipt of Bills of lading by consignees from the Shipping Corporation of India, receipt of unmarked items and consignees not taking delivery of cargo meant for other stations for want of inter-island communications. Two of the three problems, *viz.*, late receipt of Bills of Lading and unmarked items can be tackled by the A & N Administration with the co-operation of the Shipping Corporation of India. The Committee hope that the Administration will pursue these matters with the Shipping Corporation of India and find practical solutions.

11 1.52 It should be the duty of A & N Administration and port officials to ensure that after the goods are unloaded at Port Blair, they are stored and stacked at the wharves or in the warehouses and godowns of the port in a systematic manner so that there is no difficulty in removing the consignments. This would also go a long way in avoiding delays in clearance.

12 1.59 In the face of Port Users' complaints and the statement made by Regional Director, Shipping

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Corporation of India at a meeting held in December 1978, it is difficult to accept the statement made by the Andaman & Nicobar Administration that there were no cases of pilferage at Port Blair. Lack of formal complaints from traders on this account does not necessarily mean lack of pilferage. The Committee would like the Andaman & Nicobar Administration to shed the sense of complacence which it seems to have developed in this regard and tighten security measures at the port to prevent pilferage.

13 1.67 There are two categories of labour at Port Blair. Andaman Labour Force works on the docks and shore godown staff works on the shore. Inadequacy of the labour strength and low productivity due to lack of unified control and co-ordination have been brought to the Committee's notice. The Ministry has admitted imbalance between the two sets of labour. The Srinivasan panel has recommended the integration of the two labour forces and increase in the strength of the total labour force from 360 to about 500. The Report is stated to be under active consideration of the Administration. The Committee are also of the view that integration of the two labour forces will improve the efficiency of loading and unloading operations. They would like an early decision to be taken on the recommendations of the Srinivasan panel.

14 1.71 The Committee hope that the Consultative forum to hear the port users' problems and find solutions thereto by collective discussions must have been set up by now as promised by the Andaman & Nicobar Administration. They would like that this forum should meet at regular intervals and the decisions taken at its meeting should be followed up.

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15	2.26	Strong representations were made to the Committee that the present shipping capacity between mainland and Port Blair and for inter-island traffic was grossly inadequate. In the Committee's opinion the adequacy of the capacity should be judged with reference to the peak periods. Judging it with reference to lean periods, as the Ministry and A & N Islands Administration seem to be doing, will be irrelevant and unrealistic. Now that the Ministry has acknowledged the need to augment capacity to meet the rush during vacation period and tourist season, it should not lose time to provide extra capacity to cope with the traffic, if necessary, by requisitioning extra ships on a temporary basis as a stop-gap arrangement, pending procurement of new ships on permanent basis.
16	2.27	Even though the Ministry has claimed that the cargo carrying capacity between mainland and Port Blair was adequate, it appeared from the complaints received by the Committee that Shipping Corporation of India vessels had at times refused to take cargo, even essential commodity like foodgrains. The Ministry stated that this was due to the fact that the cargo was not kept ready when the ships arrived. The Ministry conceded, there was need for improving the administrative system to avoid such incidents. The Committee would like the Ministry to look into the matter and take remedial measures to ensure better cargo management, and more efficient loading operations.
17	2.28	The Committee wish that the Ministry and all other authorities charged with the responsibility of procuring a ship in replacement of M.V. Andamans should pursue this matter with a sense of urgency and procure a suitable ship and commission it without delay.

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18	2.29	According to the Ministry, TSS Nancowry—a ship plying between mainland and Andamans sector—is still in a good condition and can run for another 4-5 years if it is put through survey and some money is spent on its essential spares. While this should be done as early as possible, the Committee would advise the Ministry to take a decision on the replacement for this ship now and initiate action in that direction so that a new ship is actually available after 4-5 years when TSS Nancowry even after necessary repairs is considered due for retirement from service.
19	2.30	The Committee are informed that the perspective plan of capacities and requirements has been prepared by the Andaman & Nicobar Islands Administration till the year 2000 A.D. and it is reviewed periodically. While the general survey appears to have been done, as stated above, the Committee are concerned to note that the Ministry or the Andaman & Nicobar Islands Administration has not made any scientific survey of the requirements and capacity during peak periods when the Islanders visit the mainland or when the tourist season rush starts. In view of the fact that there has been a phenomenal increase in traffic between the mainland and Port Blair since 1980-81, the Committee would like that a fresh and detailed survey of the traffic demand with special reference to peak periods should be made expeditiously so that the administration and the Ministry have a sound basis to plan for the future.
20	2.31	The Committee would recommend that the passenger and cargo capacity available and planned should then be renewed in the light of the fresh survey and the capacity planned and augmented to cope with the demand in peak periods. In the Committee's opinion, the capacity available should always be slightly ahead of the

demand to ward off any inconvenience to the tourists or the Islanders in the event of sudden spurt in traffic.

21 2.32 The Committee would also like to suggest that whenever there is excessive rush in any season on any account and the existing shipping services cannot cope with the demand, the Ministry and the Andamans & Nicobar Islands Administration should not hesitate to provide special service to clear the rush.

22 2.33 The Committee find that out of three bigger vessels used for inter-island traffic, one generally remained inoperative and only two remain in service. The Chief Commissioner, A & N Islands Administration, admitted that there was a shortage of vessels for inter-island traffic. Two new vessels are stated to have been ordered. One was expected to be delivered in March, 1982 and the other in November, 1982. With the arrival of these two ships and acquisition of three 'Triveni' type boats by the middle of 1983, the position is expected to improve considerably. Why these measures to augment the shipping capacity for inter-island traffic were not taken well before the shortage has occurred, has not been explained by the Ministry or the A & N Administration. This, the Committee feel, shows lack of advance planning. The Committee cannot over emphasise the need for keeping the capacity available slightly ahead of actual demand and initiating action to augment capacity well in advance.

23 2.47 The Committee are pained to note that in Andaman and Nicobar Islands where already there is acute shortage of vessels, even the vessels already available are not being maintained in serviceable condition. The Administration has pleaded its inability to carry out repairs promptly due to non-availability of requisite materials

and shortage of manpower and workshop facilities. The Committee find that a dry dock is coming up at Port Blair but they wonder whether in the absence of an organisation and skilled manpower and non-availability of materials, this dry dock when ready in 1983 would be able to make any dent into this problem. The Committee find that this matter has been studied by Srinivasan Committee which has already made a report on this subject. The Committee strongly urge that this matter should receive the urgent attention of the Ministry and it should help the A & N Administration to build up a proper organisation for maintenance of ships.

24 2.48 The immediate problem before the A & N Islands Administration is the repair of 13 vessels which are at present lying out of operation. The Committee feel that the Ministry should explore the possibility of involving, even persuading, Madras Port Trust or some other ship-repairing organisation in the area to take up repair work on the ships of A & N Administration.

25 2.50 The Committee were surprised to learn in evidence that Secretary (Shipping and Transport) was completely unaware of the fact that SS CHOLUNGA, a ship meant for inter-island traffic, had been out of operation since August 1981. The Committee cannot but express their unhappiness at the lack of communication between A & N Administration and the Ministry of Shipping and Transport in regard to the state of serviceability of ships. Needless to say that A & N Islands being a Union Territory, shipping and all other problems related to shipping so far as this territory is concerned, are ultimately the responsibility of the Ministry of Shipping and

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Transport of the Government of India and this Ministry should discharge responsibility fully, without any further delay.

26 2.51 The Committee would like the Ministry to commission immediately, a survey of the ships lying idle at Port Blair and submit a report to the Committee on the condition of each ship and the time it will take to be ready for service again.

27 2.61 & 2.62 Non-utilisation of five machines each worth more than Rs. one lakh procured long back for use at Port Blair is a sad story. The Committee cannot too strongly condemn the failure of the hierarchy of officers at various levels as revealed in this case. The Committee would like to be apprised of the results of the enquiry and action taken in the matter.

28 2.63 The Committee would also urge the Ministry of Shipping and Transport to take adequate measures to ensure against the recurrence of such lapses in the future.

29 3.24 & 3.25 Port of Port Blair is at present run departmentally by the A & N Administration. The question of a suitable port organisation has been under discussion for quite some time.

The Committee have gone into the matter. They are of the opinion that the Port Blair set-up should not be a departmental set-up under the direct bureaucratic control of A & N Administration as at present. It should better be managed by a professionally manned public sector body which should be given the necessary powers and autonomy within a clearly demarcated sphere to

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run the port on commercial lines and be accountable for its performance to the A & N Administration under whose overall administrative control it should be placed.

30 3.26 The Committee are also of the view that for efficient running of shipping services either the Shipping Corporation of India or a similar public sector unit under the jurisdiction of A & N Administration should be assigned the responsibility of operating shipping services between the mainland and Port Blair as also inter-island services. In fact one public sector unit can manage both port and shipping services in Andaman & Nicobar Islands.

31. 3.27 The A & N Administration is unable to get senior technical and supervisory officers to man its shipping and port operations. Efforts to get suitable personnel on deputation or through UPSC have failed. Efforts to get qualified staff from the Shipping Corporation of India to man the Administration's vessels have also not borne any fruit so far. The main reason for non-availability of technical personnel for the ships and port services is stated to be the low wages allowed under the departmental scales of pay as compared to the emoluments paid by the shipping companies. If anything, there is a strong case to offer incentive wages for work at the A & N Islands if qualified personnel has to be attracted from the mainland. The Committee would strongly recommend that the Ministry and A & N Administration should take a pragmatic view and offer at least the same, if not higher, scales of pay and perks as offered by shipping companies and major ports on the mainland. Vacillation in this regard would only further delay the availability of qualified personnel with consequential effect on shipping and port operations. There is, therefore, need to take an urgent and realistic decision in this regard.

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32	3.28	At present the A & N Administration lacks financial and administrative powers so much so that no posts, not even Group 'D' posts, can be created by it without the approval of the concerned Ministry at the Centre. The Committee are unable to appreciate how the Government of India expects the Administration of so far-off a territory as Andaman & Nicobar Islands to run the administrative set up efficiently with such little power in financial and administrative matters. The Committee feel that A & N Administration should be given adequate powers of appointments and materials procurement without which it is difficult to run shipping and port services efficiently.
33	3.29	The Committee note that in January, 1982 the Government of India has issued orders permitting air travel between Calcutta and Port Blair to first grade officers drawing a pay of Rs. 1000/- and above on urgent duty and in public interest. This is a welcome decision and was overdue in the interest of efficient discharge of duties by Administrative Officers.