

THE
COUNCIL OF STATE DEBATES

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

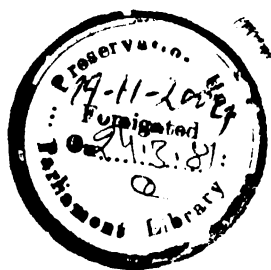
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FOURTH SESSION

OF THE

SECOND COUNCIL OF STATE, 1928



CALCUTTA : GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
CENTRAL PUBLICATION BRANCH

1928

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COUNCIL OF STATE.

Thursday, 23rd February, 1928.

The Council met in the Council Chamber of the Council House at Eleven of the Clock, the Honourable the President in the Chair.

GENERAL DISCUSSION OF THE RAILWAY BUDGET.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : The Council will proceed to the general discussion of Part I of the Budget.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. C. DESIKA CHARI (Burma : General) : Sir, the Railway Budget seems to be on the whole satisfactory, but I would like to add a few observations and show how we want greater improvement in the Railway Administration. First, Sir, I should like to refer to the reduction in rates and fares. I find the poor peasant, who generally does not travel beyond fifty miles on an average, is kept out of any benefit, and in that respect the reduction in rates and fares is not satisfactory as it does not help forward the peasant and the poorest man in the country. Then we find, Sir, that in Burma we do not get any reduction of fares on the Burma Railways, and that is another regrettable thing. I wish to add that we in Burma are always neglected, and so far as I can see we do not get any share out of the provision for amenities in the shape of improvements in the types of lower class carriages which are intended to be provided, for which a sum of Rs. 2½ crores have been provided. Sir, the Railway Administration claims to be fully alive to the responsibility for effecting and improving communications. But I shall demur to it so long as the principle of connecting provincial capitals with each other in India are not kept fully in view. This principle has been forgotten altogether so far as Burma is concerned. Burma is practically isolated from the continent of India though it is politically a part of it, and I do not find that the Government of India in the Railway Department are anxious to have this much desired railway connection. They are inclined to relegate this very important question to the background indefinitely. I hope and trust that with the completion of the Saigong Bridge the real obstacle to rail connection between India and Burma disappears, and the Government will take in hand earnestly and put forward a programme of railway construction connecting India with Burma. There are no engineering difficulties, and, as I have already pointed out on a former occasion in a Resolution of mine, it is practically easy and level country, providing easy gradients for the connection between Burma and India. It is only a distance of 242 miles, perhaps less than many of those feeder lines which are being constructed all over India, and when you take into consideration the fact that the construction of a line for 242 miles would serve the very great purpose of linking up Burma with India and greatly increase the intercourse, social as well as political, of the people of Burma with the people of India, you will see how desirable it is. Sir, that is another regrettable feature of the Railway Budget.

Then I come to the Indianization of the superior services on the Railways; Sir, I find that the Railway Department is inclined to take too much credit in this respect for Indianization. In the first place, I do not see any earnest

[Mr. P. C. Desika Chari.]

attempt made to train people in the mechanical and engineering departments so as to do away with extra-territorial recruitment altogether. Nothing has been done in that direction, and I would suggest to the Honourable Member in charge of Railways that a central college of railway engineering might be started to impart the necessary training to our men in mechanical engineering, and it is high time that India should be self-contained in this matter and should not look to foreign agencies for this. There is one other aspect of this question which I want to emphasize. It is all very well to go on with Indianization, but what about Burma? I do not find any Burmanization, or for that matter Indianization of the railway services in Burma. If Indianization is to go ahead, we want to have Burmanization also in Burma so that the people of Burma may not be kept out of these services. I cannot refrain from remarking that the Government of India have turned a deaf ear to the question of appointing Indians to the Railway Board. Am I to understand that the Government of India does not find a single Indian suitable for appointment to the Railway Board? I know they have put forward some excuse or other so far to delay the Indianization of the Railway Board, but I ask, is it fair, is it just, to argue just for the sake of giving some excuse and say that it is not possible at this time to Indianize the Railway Board? This Council will not rest content unless you are in earnest in Indianizing the Railway Board or at least appointing one Member to start with.

Then I come to the question of capital outlay for workshops. Sir, in this connection I do not know how the workshop reorganization is going on. I would suggest now, as I did on a former occasion, that if you want to remodel your workshops, it is high time that you should remodel them in such a way as to turn out all the locomotives and all the types which you require for your Railways. You must not depend upon foreign agencies for that purpose. I think if proper experts are employed, who have a knowledge of the working of such workshops in England and other countries, it is quite possible to manufacture all the locomotives for all the Railways. In this connection I would refer to the policy of the Government as regards the manufacture and purchase of wagons. Sir, I find that Government in a communiqué, dated the 1st of March 1918, announced their policy of purchasing all wagons and underframes in India, provided the wagons are available at rates not higher than the rates payable for the importation of these wagons and provided the workmanship is satisfactory. I believe, Sir, acting on this announcement and on the strength of it and of the promise distinctly held out, several workshops were brought into existence and wagons and underframes of the necessary type have been brought out. I find that later on, after the Act to protect the Steel industry, the Government felt absolved from this liability and withdrew the communiqué which they had issued on the 1st of March 1918. This was in June 1924. What I say is this. If you are really interested in encouraging industries for the manufacture of wagons and underframes in India, really this step on the part of the Government of India requires great condemnation. You can, if you please, get out of your obligation, but there is the moral obligation in having induced these people on that distinct promise to start workshops and to produce wagons and underframes. Now, I do not know what the Government propose when they say that new standards of wagons are being proceeded with and new designs are being considered. Am I to understand, Sir, that the Government want to manufacture in their own workshops all these wagons and underframes? If the existing non-government workshops can produce those wagons and underframes on those designs, is it not the duty of the Government of India to place orders with those companies in India and ask

them to produce wagons and underframes on those designs ? Sir, it is really an injustice and Government, who have been responsible for giving an impetus to this industry, are likely to compete and wipe out of existence this industry, because it is well known that but for Government patronage this industry cannot thrive in India.

Sir, I now come to the convention relating to the separation of Railway finance from General finances. Sir, the reserves have come up to more than the expectation formed at the time of entering into this arrangement. As a result of it the Railway Department have been very fortunate in securing this convention and particularly choosing a time when they could give as little contribution to the general revenues as possible. Sir, the actual working of the Railway Administration after the convention was entered into shows that the Railway Department have been very generous to itself and they have not been generous to the general tax-payer. I expect that no time will be lost in revising this convention and making the Railways give a greater relief to the general tax-payer by contributing a greater share of the profits to the general revenues.

There is one other matter which I wish to refer to and that is, the taking over of the management of the Burma Railways to State control. Sir, I am gratified that after all you have made up your mind to put an end to this unprogressive Railway Company in Burma, and I hope and trust that with the taking over of this line the people will get all the benefits of a progressive administration and the difficulties in the way of the Indo-Burma Railway connection will gradually disappear. Before I sit down I would make an appeal on behalf of all the people of Burma to see that no time is lost in giving an Indo-Burma Railway connection. I do not want to repeat myself, but the subject is so important and people there are so insistent that the Government should not try to put off the railway connection but should make an earnest effort in making a start straightaway. With these words, I conclude my remarks.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR NALININATH, SETT (West Bengal : Non-Muhammadan) : Sir, although the Railway Budget may be satisfactory from the official point of view, it is not so from the people's point of view. The amount provided for the provision of amenities for lower class passengers with a view to improving the conditions of their travel is not sufficient. The conditions under which third class passengers and even intermediate class passengers have to travel are deplorable. At present they are huddled together like so many bags of merchandise into the compartments, sometimes without even seating accommodation. Their latrine arrangements are bad and often without a sufficient supply of water. The booking arrangements are extremely inadequate in some large stations. The purchasers of tickets have got to wrestle for more than half an hour before they find an opportunity of approaching the ticket sellers who generally open their windows for the sale of tickets a few minutes before the arrival of the train, and it is frequently seen in stations that the passengers have to rush with their luggage to the train after its arrival at the station owing to the delay in obtaining tickets. This is the ordinary state of things and when there is a *mela* or any unusual rush during any festival the difficulties and inconveniences of these third class passengers are simply indescribable. They have to wait in the station yard or outside on the road as they are not allowed to stay in the shed for a very long time to secure accommodation in the train, sometimes for more than a day. I have seen train after train passing through the station without any accommodation for more passengers and those that are waiting at the station being held back. The waiting halls in many important stations are inadequate. I say from personal knowledge that the waiting accommodation for third class passengers at important stations like Madhupur on the East Indian Railway is inadequate and where there is

[Rai Bahadur Nalininath Sett.]

no waiting room for intermediate class passengers. I have seen hundreds of passengers standing on the down platform in the hot sun of such an important station as Benares Cantonment as there is no shed over it or any seat on that platform. The inconveniences felt by passengers, specially females, in some very important stations where at times pilgrims by thousands alight are very great. I mean stations such as Jasidi and Baidyanathdham on the East Indian Railway which have very low platforms. I could multiply instances but it is not the time to give a list of such inconveniences although many such specific cases have been brought to the notice of the Railway Administration by Honourable Members by means of interpellations. I can only indicate at the present moment the lines on which improvements should at once be started and for which money should be more liberally provided. But before I leave the subject I should draw the attention of the Honourable Members of this House to the fact that while they travel in first class compartments or in saloons, their servants have to suffer great inconvenience for want of any latrine arrangement in their compartment. They find it very difficult and risky for fear of being left behind to use the latrines in the stations as the fast trains stop for a sufficiently long time at very few stations.

Sir, I regret to learn that the electrification of suburban lines near Calcutta cannot be taken up during the next financial year as the investigation is not yet complete. I would have been satisfied if a beginning could be made during the coming financial year. The question is no doubt a complicated one as the question of a station in the centre of Calcutta and an additional Railway bridge over the Hoogli River at Howrah are probably intermingled with this matter. The Railway administration are inquiring into those questions during the last several years, and it is time that they should now come to some definite conclusions. It is not a matter that concerns only the Railway and the travelling public, but it is of vital importance and consequence to the local bodies, such as the Calcutta Improvement Trust and the Municipal Corporation of Calcutta. The programme of the Calcutta Improvement Trust will have to be held up in the absence of a final decision of the Railway Board in this matter. The improvement of the area known as Barrabazar, for the purpose of opening out which area the Calcutta Improvement Trust was created, hangs on the questions as to whether there will be a central railway station in Calcutta and what sort of bridge will be constructed at Howrah. I therefore urge on the Honourable the Chief Commissioner for Railways the extreme urgency of deciding the question either way.

Sir, coming to the question of Indianisation of the railway service, I find that in year 1926-27 in the Engineering branch of officers of gazetted rank on State-managed Railways the number of vacancies actually filled up was 46, of which 31 were Europeans, 10 Hindus and 5 Muhammadans. Now-a-days there is no dearth of candidates with sufficient European Engineering qualifications among Indians. Similarly, in the same year 1926-27, in other departments there were 19 vacancies to be filled up and out of that 11 Europeans, 5 Hindus, 2 Anglo-Indians and 1 of the other class were appointed. I take these figures from the Administration Report on Railways for the year 1926-27 at page 67. It will thus be seen, Sir, that Indianisation is almost a myth although the Honourable Member-in-charge of Railways appeared to make truth out of it in his speech introducing the Railway Budget in the other House.

Sir, on the question of reduction of goods rates I appreciate the benefit to the poor for the reduction of freight on kerosene oil as it has to be used by

the poorest of the poor in all parts of the country and the reduction of freight on manure and oil cakes, but I cannot approve of the reduction of freight on horses and motor cars which are more or less a luxury for the rich. The reduction of fare for the 3rd class passengers is not enough having regard to the want of accommodation and amenities from which they have to suffer while travelling long distances. I urge also the necessity of increasing the free allowance of luggage for third class passengers as at present the free allowance is too small.

Lastly, I must strongly protest against the persistent refusal to appoint any Indian in the Railway Board and thereby flouting the strong demand of the Indian public even when opportunity presented itself recently.

Before I close, Sir, I cannot but refer to the large number of accidents that happened on the Indian Railways lately. It appears that there have been more accidents recently than hitherto. I hope some indications will be forthcoming from the Honourable the Chief Commissioner of Railways as to what steps have been taken to prevent accidents being frequent in future.

THE HONOURABLE COLONEL NAWAB SIR UMAR HAYAT KHAN (Punjab : Nominated Non-Official) : Sir, on the whole the Budget is satisfactory and I congratulate the authorities on it. Having said this, I would now like to make some other observations.

Last year my Honourable and gallant friend Nawab Muhammad Akbar Khan put before the Railway Board that it was absolutely necessary to connect the Frontier Province with the Punjab by connecting Dera Ismail Khan with Dera Ghazi Khan. I am sure the authorities know what an amount of trouble we have had at the time of the Murree expedition as there was no railway bridge on the Indus and there was a great difficulty in conveying men and ammunition required. Dera Ghazi Khan is cut off from all the Railways and it will be a great boon if that remote corner of the Punjab was brought into touch with the rest of the country.

I will now come to a part of my own district. A line from Bhera to Shahpur was surveyed some 30 years ago or very nearly about that time. Since then, nothing whatsoever has been done except that an officer was sent to see whether that line if opened would prove profitable. His report, as far as I know, was to the effect that that part of the district had been left by a good many inhabitants : hence there was less agriculture there and the lands were practically lying waste. This officer, instead of making his inquiries from the local authorities, sent that report. He was simply hoodwinked by some interested persons who were against the project. The fact of the matter is that during the last 30 years this particular part of the country has been more irrigated than before and is paying more revenue to the Government and the place is more prosperous than ever before. What happened was that the officer went to Bhera, which is a terminus, and as some of the people of Bhera did not like that the tract should make any progress at their expense by extension of the railway because if that were done they would lose their livelihood, they misled him. Some objections were also raised by a few persons through whose gardens the railway line was likely to pass and they joined in the chorus with the others. So, the matter was shelved again. There is no other way to the Frontier except through Lala Musa and Shahpur District, if the present communication from Attock and Pindi and Jhelum were cut off by blowing off the Attock Bridge or otherwise. I must acknowledge with thanks that a railway line has already been constructed from Chinot to Khushab, and what is required to be done is to construct this short line, which will open out that

[Colonel Sir Umar Hayat Khan]

particular part of the country. If there was no route from Lala Musa to Khushab, then one would have to go all the way round which is very inconvenient especially if there is some trouble on the Frontier. I do hope therefore that once more an attempt will be made in this direction and I have no doubt the result of the inquiry will show beyond doubt that the report made by the authority concerned last time was wrong.

Now, Sir, the Railway authorities know full well that there is a big competition between the railways and the buses, and what is the cause of it? The cause is that when a man wants to go to another place, the bus will come to his house and take him practically to the very place he wants to go to. If he wanted to go by railway, he will have to pay his fare to the railway station, then wait at the station till the train came. When he reaches his destination, then he will also have to engage a tonga or some other conveyance to reach his house. But in the case of the bus, if he pays the money to the driver or the owner, they see to his comforts. On the other hand, the man who travels by railway pays his money to the station master and then he is left in the hands of the guard and the travelling ticket collector who have absolutely no sympathy with him. All these ticket collectors are told—and I do not think any one will deny this statement—that anyone who brings in more money from those who are travelling without tickets, will be promoted. In one way that is a good thing. But how is he to find out the passengers who are travelling without tickets? Sir, to find out one man in ten who is without a ticket, he goes to everybody and worries them. After worrying all these men, he finds out one or two men who are without tickets and of course he catches them. I am not criticising this but only want to make some suggestions as to how to avoid it. I would like to suggest that the whole scrutiny should be at the very door from which the passengers pass and when passengers with their tickets get in, they should not be worried any more. I travel, I think, more than very many people and the difficulty I have invariably felt is that all sorts of riff raff are seen on the station. There are some with boxes begging alms and there are others with broken limbs. In short, the railway station is a place where beggars seem to thrive. And as they can get in without tickets, I think others also can get in. The whole matter should be looked into with a view to keeping these people out and to ensure that nobody without a ticket gets in. Then, Sir, as to the arrangements, for transport outside the station, I think in certain places it would be better if buses or other motor vehicles run by the Railway Department were kept awaiting trains to take passengers to their destinations, say to some central point in the city. If this were done I think it would be in the interests of the railway and I hope that the authorities are already considering the provision of such facilities where possible. Then, Sir, mention has already been made about the inconvenience caused in regard to the accommodation of the servants. On some railways the servants' compartment is connected to the first class compartment through a door. I think that is an admirable arrangement, for it enables a servant to come in whenever he is required. I do not think there would be much difficulty in thus connecting the servants' compartments on all carriages with the first and second class compartments. Sometimes first class passengers have to carry arms for their own safety, possibly against attack from their enemies in certain parts of the country, and they cannot go to sleep for fear of their arms being stolen unless they can have servants in to watch to prevent theft or other mischief. I therefore think that when a first class passenger is alone it should be allowable for him to have his servant in to guard his kit and equipment.

Turning to Indianization, I said the other day on the Resolution about unemployment that more Indians should be appointed on the Railways. But when taking this course I suggested, as we always have to suggest on such occasions, that they should be appointed on the basis of the numerical strength of the communities, e.g. Muhammadans, Sikhs and other communities. As things are at present only one class predominates, and I hope that in the course of Indianization that position will be put right.

There is one other small matter. There used at one time to be a trade in hawks, which when caught were brought to the market. But the charges are now levied so high that this trade has been altogether stopped because it costs more to bring the birds to market than the price at which it is possible to sell them. I therefore hope that some concession will be made in this matter so that this old sport of India may be carried on. After all the railways are our railways and the authorities are our friends and they should see not only to the business interests but also to the pleasures of the people who are paying such a lot of money to the Railways. (*An Honourable Member* : "What about dogs.") There is trouble also about dogs and I put it before the authorities. They will not take more than three dogs at a time, and if a man wants to take 40 dogs from one place to another he is put to great inconvenience. We have to start sending them two weeks ahead. (*Another Honourable Member* : "and what about horses"). In regard to the transport of horses we are very thankful for the reduction in the charges now made.

Finally, I should like to say that the criticisms I have made are not meant in the nature of an attack but are suggestions put forward, and I hope they will be considered as such and that something will be done to improve the position in regard to those points.

THE HONOURABLE SIR MANECKJI DADABHOY (Central Provinces : Nominated Non-official) : Sir, the soundness of the policy of separation of railway finances from the general finances has been more than justified by the statements which have been made in the two Houses with such precision and lucidity by Sir George Rainy and Sir Austen Hadow. The last three years may be regarded in the matter of the railway administration as years of prosperity, and when one comes to reflect that these last three years have been years of trade depression and general dislocation in commercial business all over India, one feels satisfaction in the thought that even in these hard times the separation of the finances has contributed to the general prosperity of the country. Unexpectedly good earnings during the last few weeks of the year 1926-27, combined with a large saving in the working expenses, as pointed out by Sir Austen Hadow, have contributed to a saving balance and have added a crore and a half of rupees to the reserve fund. Last year the earnings were consistently higher on a uniform scale and it is noteworthy that all descriptions of traffic have contributed to this result. It has also been pointed out that there has been a substantial increase in passenger traffic and the general result on the whole has been so advantageous as to lead to the strengthening of the railway reserves. In these circumstances the policy which has been adopted by the railway administration in the matter of giving relief is one which I daresay will be accepted in this Council as a commendable one. The popular demand has to a certain extent been satisfied. The relief now accorded is in response to the popular demand with reference to which Honourable Members in this Council and in the other House have been agitating for the last two or three years. I am glad to notice that the principal relief has been granted to

[Sir Maneckji Dadabhoy.]

third class passengers. The claims of the third class passengers are pre-eminently above those of anybody else and are of a paramount character. I am only sorry to note that this reduction has been confined at present to the three big Railways, though I am glad to note that negotiations are pending with the Company-managed Railways. I trust that at an early date the Company-managed Railways will see the wisdom and propriety of extending similar consideration to passengers travelling on their Railways. Again, the abolition of the distinction in intermediate and third class fares between mail and ordinary trains will commend itself to the travelling public. This was an arbitrary distinction which did not add much to the railway finances, and I consider that the relief which it will give will be certainly appreciated. I note and note with satisfaction that this has been done, but I would appeal to my Honourable friend, Sir George Rainy, that he should not overlook, when the proper time comes, the claims of the first and second class passengers also. There is no doubt that during the last few years the fares of first and second class passengers have been very considerably increased—and they were increased because the railways were not in a position to earn large sums of money, and they were increased in sympathy with all the rates and fares which were increased during the last few years. It must not be forgotten that travelling has an educational value, and it will help the railway administrations in many ways if the travelling arrangements for first and second class passengers be so arranged as to give all facilities with a minimum of sacrifice that the railways may have to make. I am also pleased to note that in this Budget the Government have attached importance to the policy of reducing parcels and luggage rates. They stand at present higher than at the end of the war, and a considerable reduction is in my opinion essential and necessary. It has been pointed out also by Sir Austen Hadow that reductions in rates on oilseeds, manures, petrol and *jaggree* are being made, and it will be admitted by this Council that they are reductions in the right direction. But I would suggest that a reduction should be made in the freights on cotton and textile goods also. I must point out that Government in pursuance of the recommendation of the Tariff Board, in order to give relief to the textile industry, which is in a very critical position at present, abolished the duty on mill stores and machinery and I consider that that policy cannot be wholly accomplished without also some measure of relief in the matter of transport of bales of cotton as well as manufactured fabrics. My friend, the Honourable Sir George Rainy, is fully aware of the fact that industries in port towns are in a far more advantageous position than industries located in the mufassil and upcountry places, because, while the former can despatch their goods at very cheap rates by boats, the mufassil industries stand at a disadvantage in having to pay heavy freights for the transportation of their goods, with the result that they are often times not in a position to compete with industries which are situated nearer the ports. I would also request my Honourable friend, Sir George Rainy, to bear in mind that in making reductions in freights on certain classes of goods there should also be some discrimination. Thus in the case of seeds, oilcakes and all sorts of provisions and foodstuffs and all necessities of life transported from one area to another, the reduction should be substantial because the central revenues will not thereby be prejudiced and the people will have the benefit of such reductions; while by way of discrimination I think higher rates should be imposed on oilseeds and other stuffs which are exported to European markets, because it is obvious that in the one case there is ample justification for the reduction which does not exist in the case of exports which are intended for foreign markets.

I am glad to notice that the policy of expanding and developing Railways finds favour with the present Administration as it has been in the past, and I shall be very pleased to see a network of railways all over the country and as much money as could possibly be spared expended on the expansion and the development of railways in this country. It adds to the general prosperity of the country, it gives us the means of transportation. In case of famine it gives unfortunate and stricken parts of the country speedy relief and, in a general way, it contributes to the advancement of the people of the country. I hope also that an early opportunity will be taken by the railway administrations in revising the terms of the convention of 1924. I am glad to see in the speech made by my Honourable friend, Sir George Rainy, in another place that an expectation has been held out. It will be admitted on all hands, and I am sure my Honourable friend, Sir George Rainy, will be candid enough to admit, that there is a great deal to be gained by an examination of the whole question again. It is true only three or four years have passed since the separation of the railway finances from the general finances, but during this time events have happened and circumstances have appeared which merit an immediate examination of the whole subject, and I am confident that if that examination is made at an early date, it will be beneficial to the country and to the Railway Administration. That investigation might be made either by a Committee appointed by the Railway Board from their own people who have got the necessary knowledge and technical information on the subject, or a Committee might be appointed including Members of both Houses, and I am sure the benefit of such an immediate investigation will be very considerable.

There is one other matter to which I should like to draw the attention of the Railway Administration. I am referring to the unification of the gauge in the country. During the early part of the last decade our financial position and the financial deficits have prevented us from taking up such a bold step involving a large capital expenditure for the unification of the gauge in the country. I know there are diverse opinions on the subject. But our railway policy is fast expanding. We have been told that this year 421 miles have been added to our railway lines.

We are promised 800 miles of further extension next year and the total mileage in India has already extended to over 40,000 miles. Of these 40,000 miles, we have been informed that only 28,000 miles are State-owned, line which are owned by Companies and District Boards are 6,000 miles and by Indian States 5,000 miles. The bulk of our mileage, and I may also say, the bulk of the broad gauge mileage, is constituted in this 28,000 miles. Unification will not enlarge the scope of our activities, but it will be of great service. It may be all right in times of peace to have such different and broken gauges; but in times of war it is quite different. In time of trouble, in time of war, unification of gauge is extremely serviceable. It can transport food from one area to another distant area very quickly and without interruption. It can transport regiments and soldiers from one place to another without any considerable difficulty and with the minimum of time. It would effect saving of time. It would add in many ways to the general prosperity of the country. I know the difficulties are numerous. There is a large number of mileage, metre gauge and other gauge mileage in the country and the work cannot be carried out in a year or two or three. Probably a large measure of our reserves would be swallowed up by a policy of this nature, but I would ask my friend, Sir George Rainy, to consider the question and to formulate a policy which will spread over a certain number of years to effect the transformation from smaller gauges to the broad gauge. It might be done in 10 years; it might be

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done in 20 years or it might be done in 30 years ; but before our mileage increases to any large extent, it will be better to take the work in hand, because at the rate at which we are going on in another 10 years, we may probably add 20,000 miles to our Railways, and it might become more difficult then to introduce this change. The earlier it will be the better and it will save money. On the other hand the cost will not be prohibitive as the present permanent ways will only have to be expanded and the bridges probably strengthened. After all the cost will not be so formidable as one contemplates.

Sir, these are the general remarks which I have offered to this Council. Before I sit down, I wish to associate myself whole-heartedly with the tribute which my friend Sir George Rainy has paid to Sir Charles Innes and Sir Clement Hindley. He has rightly referred to the immense debt of gratitude which India owes to both of them for the work they have done for the Railways. I feel honestly that the work these two great men have done for India was of no small character. They were enthusiastic in the matter of railway programme and railway administration, and I am very pleased that this deserving tribute has been paid to these two officers, one of whom will not be again with us at all, and the other who would be absent from the country for some time.

THE HONOURABLE MR. W. A. GRAY (Burma Chamber of Commerce) : Sir, I should like to congratulate Sir Austen Hadow on the introduction of the most unsatisfactory Budget, unsatisfactory I mean from the point of view of discussion, because I really find there is nothing in it to complain about. Judging by some of the remarks which we have heard to-day, I rather think that other members of the House have had difficulty in finding any *serious* grounds of complaint. When we heard that advantage had been taken of the prosperous condition in which the Railways find themselves to reduce third class fares, I was in hopes that I might find some cause for complaint, because I consider that reduction of goods rates confers a greater benefit on a greater number of the population than a mere reduction in third class fares. But when the announcement of the reduction in third class fares was followed by an announcement of the reduction of goods rates, even this ground of complaint was removed. Therefore, Sir, I have very little to say, except to add my voice to Mr. Chari's in pleading the cause of Burma. The Honourable Mr. Chari has stressed the importance of the Indo-Burma connection, but I consider that the internal communications of Burma are no less important. My friend, Mr. Chari, has characterised the present administration of the Burma Railways as unprogressive. I feel that I cannot agree with him in that respect. Our railway system is progressing, but I agree that it is not progressing rapidly enough. The railway development of Burma compared with that of the rest of India has a very brief history, and a mere glance at the map at the end of the Explanatory Memorandum will show how Burma is served with railways compared with the rest of India ; and therefore, Sir, I hope that when the railway administration is taken over by Government at the end of this year, they will bear this in mind and will continue to develop the extension of the railways in Burma no less rapidly than is the case at present and in fact will increase the rate of extension.

THE HONOURABLE NAWAB SIR MUHAMMAD MUZAMMIL-ULLAH KHAN (United Provinces West : Muhammadan) : Sir, I did not want to speak on this Budget, because no copy was sent to me and I have no papers in front here and none at home either. But when the facilities are asked—and I hope by the generosity of the Department they will be given—I shall also

come forward with asking small facilities for my Department, that is the Education Department. Being Vice-Chancellor of the Muslim University I would humbly submit on behalf of the whole educational institutions and the students that some facilities may be given to the students at the beginning of the session and at the termination of the session (long vacation), say for example half fares or something of the kind, because education now-a-days and always is the backbone of the advancement of the country ; and by giving a little concession to students and to people who are taking up the learned professions, I think the Department would not lose, but will gain the sympathy of the educational world. As the Chairman of a District Board, I submit another thing that if the Railway Board will take the District Boards into their confidence and may do something to encourage the system of making narrow gauge or light railways on the roads, it will be very beneficial. Now-a-days

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there is a great service of lorries on the roads of the District Boards and they are only a nuisance both to the public and to the roads. These lorries are prospering because the railway train is not available everywhere and at every time and there are not good connections of trains with the result that in the long run the Railway Department will be the sufferer. From my local experience I would like to submit a case to the Council. The East Indian Railway passes through Aligarh and the passengers who wish to travel by the Bombay, Baroda and Central India Railway get down at Hathras Junction. I do not know whether it is due to the disorganisation or the hostility or jealousy between the two railway lines that there are absolutely no connections between the trains of the two lines, with the result that all the traffic between Aligarh and Etah and Kasganj is taken now-a-days by lorries to Secundera Rao. This is a loss to the railway company as well as to the District Board because the road is torn very badly. I think it may be possible to have a conference between the Chairmen of the District Boards and the Railway Board with a view to find out if we can help the Railway Board by advancing some money or making some arrangement for the light railways on our *patriis*. No land will be required for the purpose because we have got our roads and on one side of them there might be laid out light railways. Such light railways will be very beneficial not only to the district but also to the Railway Department. With these remarks, Sir, I conclude my speech. I am not in a position either to congratulate the Honourable Member in charge of Railways or to complain against him because I have got no Budget at my disposal.

THE HONOURABLE MR. V. RAMADAS PANTULU (Madras : Non-Muhammadan) : Sir, the first thing that struck me on turning over the pages of the Report of the Railway Board was the output of the Resolutions and questions indicating the large volume of interest shown in this House in Railway affairs. When however I analysed a little bit I found that the two main combatants in the field were my Honourable friend Dr. Rama Rau and my Honourable friend Sir Geoffrey Corbett. The other thing that I found was that almost on every occasion my friend the champion of the Railway Board has come out successful and the people's champion, my friend Dr. Rama Rau, was only second best. Almost all the Resolutions moved were negatived and almost all the questions put received very unsatisfactory answers. I am however told that Sir Geoffrey Corbett is not so bad in action as he is in debates. There is one very grave complaint which I have to make against my friend Sir Geoffrey and the members of the Railway Board. I had the honour to serve on the Central Advisory Committee for Railways for the last two years, and I must confess to a feeling of great dissatisfaction regarding the activities of that body. I expected that I would have some opportunities of bringing forward some proposals for the consideration of the Railway Board even in an

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advisory capacity but there was little scope for it. If you turn to page 3 of the Railway Board's Report you will find that our activities have been summed up in three lines and they are not of an important character. In fact, if I call them trivial, I will not be wrong. On matters connected with the facilities for transport, the reduction of rates and the like which are dealt with in the Budget, the Central Advisory Committee would have liked to offer some advice to the Railway Board. I do not think that the Railway Board would have found that advice altogether valueless if it tried its hand at it. Anyhow, I hope that there will be more activity on the part of the Central Advisory Committee in the future years to come, and that some use will be made of that body and it will not be treated as a merely nominal Committee. With regard to the Local Advisory Committees, the Railway Board's Report merely gives a bare enumeration of the subjects that were dealt with by these bodies. We are not given even an indication as to how those subjects were disposed of, or in what way the Railway Administration dealt with the decisions of those bodies. Therefore, I plead for a fuller exposition of the activities of those bodies also in the next year's Railway Administration Report.

Then, coming to the Budget itself, in the other place yesterday a very interesting point was raised in the debate, and I expected to hear something in reply to that point from the Honourable Member in charge of Railways. But apparently our House had more attraction for the Members of the Legislative Assembly than their own House which was adjourned for want of a quorum and Sir George Rainy got no chance to reply. Anyhow, I would mention the point and if he considers it worth his while to answer he may do so. Both Sir Austen Hadow, who presented the Budget to this House, and Sir George Rainy who presented it to the Assembly, congratulated the Railway Administration on the continued increased prosperity of the Railways by saying that there were larger and progressive earnings by railways. It was pointed out in another place that the increase in the earnings was partly due to the increase in the mileage, of which there is a substantial addition every year and to other adventitious circumstances which I need not mention. As a matter of fact, if you refer to the earnings per mile, there is a considerable drop in the gross earnings per mile and also the net receipts per mile in the year 1927-28 in comparison with those of 1924-25. That point was raised and I do not venture to express my opinion on it because I do not feel confident that I am fully equipped with information on that point. I shall however wait to see if Sir George Rainy can throw any light on the question.

With regard to the facilities that are given by the Budget I am supposed not to say anything in favour of the Government or to congratulate it. It can advertise its good points well enough. I shall content myself only by advertising to a few defects. To some extent it is true that the reduction in the freights on manures, oil cakes, *jaggri*, grains, pulses and seeds is a step in the right direction to help the agriculturists, but I do not think the reductions made are such as to confer any very substantial benefits on the agriculturists. Sir, I have gone through the Explanatory Memorandum carefully and can say that while the reductions are partially beneficial, they are really not beneficial to the extent of satisfying the just claim of the agriculturists. I fully associate myself with the Honourable Sir Maneckji Dadabhoy, and I am glad to find myself at least once in agreement with him, that the policy of preventing the export of such useful articles as manures and oil cake ought to be pursued by the Railway administration in conjunction with the Finance Department of the Government, and freight should be regulated so as to discourage their export out of India to foreign countries. The Local Government of my province was

the first to raise this question in a very prominent manner and the Madras Agricultural Department fought very strenuously against the policy of exporting manures and oil cake to foreign countries to the detriment of the agriculturist in India. I drew the attention of the Honourable the Leader of the House, who is in charge of the Department of Education, Health and Lands, in another connection in the last Session to this subject and he promised to consider the matter. Therefore, the Railway Administration ought to help the Finance Department of the Government of India in putting an effective check on the export of these vitalising manures and oil cakes. At the same time, they ought to make their transport in the country very cheap in order to reduce their cost to the agriculturist. That will be the right policy.

I have also to put in a word or two on behalf of the co-operative organisations which are engaged in the purchase and sale of agricultural produce. From a study of co-operative literature of other countries I have found that various Governments have given facilities, in regard to transport and other matters, to encourage co-operative societies in the purchase and sale of agricultural produce. Their chief aim is to eliminate the profits of the middleman and to bring the producer into direct contact with the internal consumer. Such societies would be a great boon to this country and if they are encouraged will amply repay the nation. I therefore put in a special plea that, whenever the question of transport rates is considered, some special facilities should be secured to co-operative organizations which deal with the purchase and sale of produce.

There is next the matter of the reduction of third and intermediate class fares. In this I have nothing to rejoice at, as my province is not benefited by these reductions at all. We have no State Railways there. The two chief Railways in my province are the Madras and Southern Mahratta and the South Indian. Both of them are Company-managed. There is a promise in the budget speech of negotiations in the matter of reduction of fares with Company-managed lines and of something being done in the future, but at present there is no definite promise of a reduction. The rates on the South Indian Railway are really very high, and I hope that the promise contained in the budget speech will be fulfilled in some way and that something will be done to reduce rates on the South Indian and also on the Madras and Southern Mahratta Railways. It is said that we are paying more for travel than we were paying in 1924-25, and, if so, there is a very good case for reduction, which I hope will be considered. There is one other point in regard to the reduction of fares and that is, that short-distance passengers are not benefited. Most of the poor people and agriculturists only travel very short distances, so that a reduction of rates for distances over 50 miles does not benefit the bulk of the population. From the pink books which were supplied to me the other day I find that a considerable proportion of the passengers travel under 50 miles, in fact the bulk of them do so; so that the concession is of no use to the bulk of the people. If it is at all possible I would request that the concession may be extended to apply for distances under 50 miles as well. It means a saving of 2 as. on each ticket for 50 miles. Another standing complaint has been with regard to the comforts of third class and intermediate class passengers. I do not find very much advance being made in that direction, and I doubt if serious attention has been given to the matter. I hope that in years to come the lot of the third class and intermediate class passengers will be substantially improved so as to make travel comfortable. After all the bulk of the travellers are third class and intermediate class passengers; the first and second class passengers are few in number, and they can in any case afford to secure their comfort while the poor people cannot. My friends opposite always plead that they are the trustees of the poor people of this

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country. Whether they are or not—a matter in regard to which I have serious quarrel with them—let them try to prove their case by improving the lot of the poor people who travel over the Railways.

Then, Sir, there is the question of Indianization, which is a hardy annual. It has been said—I do not know with what truth, because I have not had time to go through the figures—that there is no appreciable reduction in the number of the highly paid European staff and of foreign agency in the superior services, but that there has been a multiplication of jobs in lower ranks in order to show an increase in the proportion of Indians employed in the Railways. It has been said that what has been done is not really Indianization, but of the creation of a few more appointments in order to satisfy the clamour for Indianization without in any way diminishing the cost or number of the European personnel. Therefore, in order to make the Railways really national and give increasing opportunities for Indians to serve, there ought to be a real policy of Indianization, a change in the angle of vision and a change in the spirit in which that policy is pursued, and not merely this statistical fulfilment by adding a few more appointments to the existing Indian cadres. Of course the matter will be more fully discussed when the railway demands come up in the other House. In this House we are always more polite and do not do more than indicate our views. The real fight, however, will be fought out in another place, and I hope the Government will try to satisfy the people that they have really fulfilled their promise. I know that the promise to put an Indian on the Railway Board has not been fulfilled.

The Nawab Sahib referred to one very interesting question, that of affording facilities to students. I myself intended to say something in that direction, with the addition that similar facilities should be extended to demonstration parties sent out by co-operative and other adult educational organizations to teach the agriculturists improved methods of farming and the like. A Committee on co-operation recently sat in Madras, on which I had the honour to serve, and that Committee made valuable recommendations with regard to the sending out of parties for undertaking rural reconstruction work by educating the agriculturists with the aid of demonstrations, cinema shows, and other up-to-date propagandist methods. A large number of such parties have got to be sent out into the country from time to time, and if the Railway Board can see its way of giving facilities for their transport and concessions in rates for these groups of men travelling with useful apparatus on this very important nation-building work, it would be of great advantage and a lasting benefit. This would not cost the Railways a great deal but would be greatly appreciated by rural India.

I have not much more to say on the Budget. I would once more request the Railway Administration to make the Central Advisory Council a really useful body. The only Standing Committee among those on which I had the honour to serve, which has been given any opportunity of doing some work, is the Standing Emigration Committee of which my Honourable friend Sir Muhammad Habibullah is the President. I am really grateful to him for the facilities he gave me and other members of that Committee by the readiness with which he was prepared to consider our views and to act upon our suggestions as far as practicable. I hope a similar policy will be followed in regard to the Central Advisory Council for Railways.

THE HONOURABLE MAJOR NAWAB MAHOMED AKBAR KHAN (North-West Frontier Province : Nominated Non-official) : Sir, it is indeed a good time to congratulate my Honourable friends, Sir George Rainy and Sir Austen Hadow on the success that is apparent from the Railway Budget for 1928-29.

I presume it will be much to the gratification of the House and the Railway Department as well to see that the Railway Budget is in a constant prosperous condition since its separation from the General Budget. In spite of the reductions in freight and fares for the last two years, there is seen to be a reserve of over 11 crores of rupees until the year 1927-28 and it is expected to be enhanced by $3\frac{1}{2}$ crores during the year 1928-29 after meeting an anticipated loss of $1\frac{1}{2}$ crores on strategic lines and contributing about $5\frac{1}{2}$ crores to the general revenues.

There was a great demand for further reductions in freight and fares of the Railways and it is a matter of great pleasure to see that these have been granted in the budget estimates for 1928-29. There will be a general appreciation of the reduction of $\frac{1}{2}$ a pie per mile on journeys of over 50 miles in respect of the third class fare, but I do not think that the majority of the population of the North-West Frontier Province would be in a position to take much advantage of this reduction because of their seldom travelling over the stipulated distance of 50 miles. All the railway lines within the North-West Frontier Province, taken separately, do not exceed the distance of 50 miles with only one or two exceptions, and consequently the majority of the Frontier people never chance to travel by rail over the stipulated distance. The reduction of $\frac{1}{2}$ a pie per mile in case of journeys extending over 50 miles, therefore, is of no avail to them, and in view of this it will be more in the fitness of things that the restriction of 50 miles journey may be done away with so far as my Province is concerned. It will surely help a good deal to popularise the Railways in that part of the country.

Nearly 38 new railway projects are under survey and construction on the North-Western Railway, of which there are only two projects of the Khyber and Charsadda-Mardan-Swabi railways that concern the North-West Frontier Province. Of these, the former is under construction, while the latter is to be only surveyed during 1928-29. This state of affairs clearly shows that the progress of Railways in that Province is not much adhered to, although in my speech dated 20th February 1926 with regard to the Railway Budget for 1926-27, I had referred to the importance of railways from Mardan to Charsadda and Swabi in view of their keenly-felt necessity by the inhabitants of the said localities. The line to Swabi can be extended up to Haripur station on Taxila-Havelian branch through Pehure by constructing a bridge over the Indus, while the Taxila-Havelian branch line can be extended up to Ghari-Habibullah. Again the railway line from Nowshera to Durgai ought to be extended to Chakdara, either from Durgai Railway station through Malakand or from Parkho-Dehri to Thana, terminating at Chakdara. The Swat valley is very fertile and I do not see why there should be no railway extending to it. No doubt, there will be a little difficulty in constructing the railway there but it will be surely a paying one. Apart from this I suggested the construction of a railway line from Peshawar to Kohat through the Durra, connecting it with Bannu, Tonk and Fort Sandeman, covering a distance of approximately 100 miles. This project will greatly facilitate travelling between Tonk and Quetta, as there is already a railway between Quetta and Hindu-bagh. Moreover, the railway line between Kila-Saifullah and Fort Sandeman can be extended to Pizzo. Again there ought to be a bridge at Mari-Indus-Kalabagh as it will prove the means of an easy access into the North-West Frontier Province from the Punjab, failing which the bridge to cross the Swabi-Haripur line is very imperative as the Indus river is very narrow at that place and the desired bridge can be constructed without any difficulty. Another project should be commenced from Ghazi-Ghat across the Indus, extending to Dera Ghazi Khan and onwards to Fort Munro, to Loralai and Harnai. All these projects are urgently called for, as their construction apart from their promoting peace,

[Nawab Mahomed Akbar Khan.]

tranquillity and civilisation is of great importance from the strategic point of view and the military considerations.

Much inconvenience is experienced by the passengers on account of some changes in the railway timings. For instance, the Calcutta Mail does not proceed beyond Rawalpindi for the last 6 months or so, and consequently the third class and intermediate class passengers for journeys less than 100 miles are put to great trouble since they are not carried by the Bombay Mail. They have to commence their travelling by passenger trains only and in case of their intending to catch the Calcutta Mail at Rawalpindi, they have to wait for full 3 hours or more after alighting from the train that starts from Peshawar at 11 o'clock at night and reaches Rawalpindi at 7 in the morning. The Bombay Mail is the only through-train to Peshawar, but there is no connection with it at Nowshera for the Mardan passengers. It reaches Nowshera at nearly 8 P.M. and consequently the passengers for Mardan have to wait there for the whole night in order to catch the next train starting at 4-30 in the morning. The absence of a train for Mardan after 5-30 P.M. entails a good deal of trouble for the passengers travelling by the Bombay Mail, and this can easily be avoided by starting another train at 8-30 P.M. from Nowshera Junction, reaching Mardan at 9-30 P.M. and returning to Nowshera at 11 P.M. to meet the train leaving Peshawar at the same time. These timings used to be in force previously, but it is not understood why the railway authorities have not thought it fit to continue them now-a-days. As their discontinuance is causing a good deal of trouble to the passengers, may I ask the Honourable the Chief Commissioner for Railways for his kind consideration in the matter?

The line between Tank and Dera Ismail Khan should be turned into a metre gauge instead of the existing one. A connection of railway should be provided between Thal and Parachinar, which is a good sanitarium and by having a railway line up to it, there will be no difficulty for the movements of the troops in case of necessity.

Then, Sir, I should like to bring to your notice one other point, and that is that in respect of the reduction in rates and fares nothing has been done for a long time about the passengers' baggage. That scheme has remained for the last thirty years the same. In my opinion favourable concessions for passengers' baggage should be substituted for the present rates. For a first class passenger it is 1½ maunds, and I would suggest for the consideration of the Railway Board that that should be increased to two maunds. The present scale of baggage allowed to the second class passenger is 30 seers, and I would like that to be made into one maund. The intermediate class passenger carries 20 seers, and that should be increased to 30 seers or at least a maund. The third class passenger has got 15 seers. Well that could be easily increased to 20 seers. These concessions would be greatly appreciated by the passengers travelling.

There is one point more which I should like to bring up before I resume my seat and that is about the platforms. On the Frontier there are no raised platforms on the Nowshera-Durgai branch and great trouble is experienced by the passengers. I would like to add one more thing, that covered sheds should be introduced on these stations, because when it rains—and on the Frontier it continues to rain for three or four days—passengers are put to much inconvenience on account of there being no sheds on some of these stations. One thing more, and that is, the arrangements for light and drinking water could be improved. I do not say that they are unsatisfactory, but there is room for improvement, and the sooner they are taken up, the better it will be. With these remarks, I resume my seat

THE HONOURABLE SIR ARTHUR FROOM (Bombay Chamber of Commerce): Sir, with my friend the Honourable Mr. Gray, I feel somewhat at a disadvantage in entering into this discussion of the Railway Budget, because like him I feel that there is very little to complain of, but let me assure my friend the Honourable Sir George Rainy that in mentioning this it is not with the suggestion that we wish to complain of the Railways. But I can tell him that in my experience anyone who has the good fortune or misfortune to be connected with a large concern, which has as its business the transportation of passengers and goods, generally stands to be the target of many complaints and very little praise. Now, Sir, there is one point I would like to refer to in this Railway Budget and which hitherto has not been mentioned by any of the previous speakers, and that is Sir George Rainy's reference to the Railway Reserve Fund. That, Sir, I consider to be of the greatest importance in the administration of Railways in India, and I do congratulate the Railway Board in having managed to build up their Reserve Fund to the figure of something like 16 crores. Sir George Rainy very wisely points out that we cannot reasonably hope for a continuance year after year of good monsoons, and it must be a great satisfaction to him, and to the Railway Board generally, to feel that if we do experience bad monsoons this year or next—I very sincerely hope that we shall not, but if we do—the finances of the Railways of India will provide for such a calamity inasmuch as their liabilities to the Central Revenues can be met. Another point which has caught my attention in Sir George Rainy's speech in the other place is his reference to railway workshops and to the great state of efficiency into which they have been brought. I congratulate him very sincerely on this. I have had to do with workshops and I know quite well that unless you watch them closely, like a cat does a mouse, the money that you spend on your repairs is very often wasted, or — perhaps I should put it— you spend much more money than is necessary and that your expenditure mounts up in labour and overhead charges to the extent that it should not. It is a matter for congratulation that as regards the locomotives, as pointed out by Sir George Rainy, the number of times they have been to the shops has been reduced from 105 to 64 days and that the number in regard to passenger carriages has been similarly reduced. I only just want to warn you that possibly you can show these reductions at the expense of efficiency. You can carry these figures, or the desire to show good reports like this, to too great an extent. In fact in my personal experience I have travelled in carriages which well might have gone into the workshops more often than they actually do. Another point about the railway workshops is this. I have been told, whether correctly or not, that there is a tendency on the Railways to embark on the enterprise of building their own wagons in their shops. Well, I should like to add a word of warning and say "Don't". The workshops should be reserved for repairs, the running repairs, of the railway locomotives and of the rolling stock generally. I have added this word of warning against Railways entering into building their wagons and competing with commercial enterprise,—let me mention here that the workshops which I am connected with do not cater for outside work; so I am not directly interested—as it has been the experience in this country that articles manufactured in Government shops or in quasi-Government shops are more expensive than articles bought from commercial firms.

THE HONOURABLE MR. G. A. NATESAN (Madras: Nominated Non-official): Not always.

THE HONOURABLE SIR ARTHUR FROOM: I shall be very glad if the Honourable Member behind me will give the exceptions.

[Sir Arthur Froom.]

My Honourable and gallant friend Sir Umar Hayat Khan referred to the competition and to the increase of motor buses in this country. His reference, Sir, was of peculiar interest to me, because I recently have been touring the country with the Roads Committee, and during our tour we did find a tremendous increase in the little buses which run about the country. We asked the various witnesses who came before us the reason for this increase. They said that the villagers prefer to travel in them than to go by train. Of course we asked why and Colonel Sir Umar Hayat Khan has given the answer. In some districts we were told that the Railways are feeling very severely the competition of these buses over short distances. In fact they are feeling it so severely that one gentleman before us told us that the ticket collectors and the men who sell tickets at the railway stations are almost becoming civil and polite. Well, I am glad, Sir, that the Railway Board and Sir George Rainy have taken a long view of this matter and that, although there may be competition with the Railways by these motor buses,—and I do not see why there should not be; I do not see why, if a man finds it more convenient to take a bus, he should be forced to go by railway,—they realise that the development of motor transport in this country as a whole will be beneficial not only to the country but also to the Railways in the long run. With this view they have acceded to the general desire expressed in this country for a reduction in the railway freight on petrol. Before I refer further to the reduction of the freight on petrol, I should also like to congratulate the Railway Board on the other reductions. I fully agree and sympathise with their idea of reducing the third class fares, and I associate myself with the remarks that fell from the Honourable Member sitting behind me that anything which can be done to ameliorate the conditions on which third class passengers in this country travel should be done.

As regards petrol, the reduction, which is based on mileage, at first sight appealed to me but when I went on reading the statement, I hesitated. On the one hand, the Railway Board has announced the reduction with the implication that we ought to be very pleased to get it, but immediately goes on to point out that it will only cost the country two lakhs, and I began to wonder what the reduction was worth. It would be rather interesting to know what is the total freight received on petrol and what proportion this 2 lakhs bears to that total? Looking at it from any point of view, a reduction which amounts in one year throughout the whole of India to 2 lakhs of rupees only, does not seem to me to be a reduction worth talking about at all.

There is another matter possibly regarded by some as a minor one to which I also would like to refer since it has already been mentioned by my friend Nawab Sir Umar Hayat Khan. I agree with what he says about beggars on the railway stations; they are a source of great inconvenience. We are all very sorry for these beggars but they cause inconvenience to all classes of passengers. I am not talking of first class passengers only but of third class passengers also. I remember just recently when I left Howrah that as I walked on the platform, and my wife was with me, we had beggars with diseased arms, leprosy faces, open sores, crowding round us. I mentioned this to a prominent man in Calcutta at the time and he agreed that it was a disgrace. The matter has been brought to the notice of the Agent of the Railway but he seemed to do nothing. I do not suggest that the Railway Board should issue executive orders to all the Railways, but I do think that they ought to draw the attention of the Agents, who should pass executive orders to remove what is a great inconvenience and perhaps a danger to all passengers.

THE HONOURABLE MR. V. RAMADAS PANTULU : Do these beggars purchase platform tickets ?

THE HONOURABLE SIR ARTHUR FROMM : I should think not ; but they get on the platforms all the same. I can say this from my own experience.

My Honourable friend Sir Maneckji Dadabhoy has referred to Sir George Rainy's generous reference to Sir Charles Innes and Sir Clement Hindley. I will not refer again to Sir Charles Innes because we all know the great work he did for the Railway Administration when he was in the Government of India. But I should like to refer to Sir Clement Hindley for I remember having expressed my regret while making a few remarks on the Budget last year that that was probably going to be the last Railway Budget he would present to the Central Legislature. I am glad to see, however, that that is not so. I feel sure that all the Members of this Council will associate themselves with me in an expression of great satisfaction in that we will have Sir Clement Hindley on the Railway Board for at least two if not more years.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS (Punjab : Non-Muhammadan) : Sir, I beg to congratulate the Honourable Sir George Rainy and Sir Austen Hadow on their presenting us in the beginning of their terms of office with what I call a prosperous Railway Budget. I also congratulate the Railway Board on their appointing an Indian as their officiating Secretary, and I hope that this policy will lead to more important appointments being thrown open to Indians in the Railway Board. I also welcome the reduction in fares and freights, but in this connection I want to represent that from the figures placed before us we find that the average distance travelled by a third class passenger is 33 miles, and so I would request that in case any reduction really worth the name and of great convenience to the third class passenger is made, it ought to apply up to the distance of 25 miles instead of 50. In case the reduction is brought down to 25 miles, the poor third class passengers will be really benefited. I am sorry to find that no reduction has been made in the freight on coal. Coal, as we all know, is a basic thing for the development of all industries, and as the development of industries is of prime importance to India, it is a matter for regret to find that in coal freights no reduction has been made. I trust that in the present year of a surplus Budget Government will consider even now to reduce the freight on coal for long distances, at least if not for all distances. Considerable reduction in freight on seeds for agricultural and sowing purposes was made in parcel rates. I wish, Sir, that freights on seeds for sowing purposes should be patronised to a further extent and that concession rates in the case of goods should also be allowed. At present certificates are presented to the North-Western Railway on behalf of the Department of Agriculture from my province certifying that a certain quantity of a certain seed is required by a certain agriculturist and on that certificate at present quarter parcel rates are levied. I wish that half the present goods rates be levied on consignments of seeds when they are so certified.

In the present Budget so far as I can find, only 6 lakhs have been provided for raised platforms. Raised platforms are now becoming a great necessity with the increase of passenger traffic on all Railways. Even on double lines, most of the stations have got rail level platforms, and it is a matter of great difficulty, particularly for ladies with children, to get down from and get up into the carriages. I therefore request that raised platforms should be provided at almost every important railway station. In course of time every station must get a raised platform and a good shelter to protect the passengers who may be waiting for trains on those stations against rain and heat.

[Lala Ram Saran Das.]

In the Punjab the heat is very excessive and there is a very large number of stations which have absolutely no shelter for the passengers and they have to sit under the trees. But, as you know, Sir, the shelter provided by the trees is too meagre to cover all the passengers.

It is a matter of pleasure to find that the Government has purchased the Burma Railways. I hope, Sir, when the time comes and when the present term of the Bengal and North-Western Railway expires, the Government will take over that line. Sir, the complaints on the Bengal and North-Western Railway continue to pour in and I am told that on that Railway—and although I have only once travelled on it I can vouch for it—the conditions are miserable. The coaching stock needs a great deal of attention and the facilities for passengers on that Railway are at the minimum as compared with other Railways. I hope the Railway Board will bring some pressure to bear on the management of that Railway to induce them to attend more to the reasonable demands, conveniences and facilities of passengers.

Another point which I want to lay before the Railway Board is the provision of electric fans in intermediate class and third class waiting sheds. Wherever there is current available now, these fans may be provided. They will prove a great boon to the passengers who have to wait in the sheds for hours. It is also a greatly felt necessity that fans should be provided in intermediate and third class carriages, particularly the compartments reserved for ladies. I urge this last particularly because ladies generally travel with children and they should be protected from the extremes of the climate. In the winter I would suggest that a few heaters be put in the carriages and in the summer a few fans. I do not think the cost of this would be very great, because on all passenger trains there is only one carriage for ladies and on certain trains there is only one compartment. If the Railway Board were to extend their liberal hands towards meeting this pressing need of the infants and children I think the people would appreciate it very much. I, Sir, endorse the compliments which have been paid to Sir Charles Innes and Sir Clement Hindley, and I hope the Railways will develop and prosper equally under the administration of Sir George Rainy and Sir Austen Hadow. Sir, as far as Indianization in Railways is concerned, it is a pity that on the North-Western Railway particularly the progress in the senior traffic subordinate services at least has been negligible. I moved a Resolution in regard to the increase of traffic transportation inspectors a few years ago in this House, which was adopted with certain amendments. And after these years what do we find has been done on the North-Western Railway? As far as I have been able to gather, there are 39 transportation inspectors on that Railway, of which three only are Indians. At the time I moved my Resolution there were two Indians, so that no improvement whatsoever has been made in this direction. I should like my friend Sir Austen Hadow to throw some light on this matter and why it is that the North-Western Railway has not improved in this respect. I might, Sir, mention further that as far as my information goes, there is not really a single Indian traffic transportation officer on the North-Western Railway. The two men who are shown as such are now officiating in some other appointments, and the third is a Head clerk; so in reality there is not a single Indian traffic transportation inspector acting actually in that capacity. On the East Indian Railway, as far as the traffic (movement) inspectors are concerned, I find that there are 31 such inspectors, of which again only two are Indians and that too on the late Oudh and Rohilkhand Section. Sir, I have been bringing this matter again and again into this Council because as far as the senior subordinate services of the Railways are concerned, except in the traffic and

mechanical departments, there is no real grievance. But in those two departments the progress of Indianization has been *nil*. On the East Indian Railway however even in departments in which other Railways have more Indians employed we find a different state of affairs. In the grade of permanent way inspectors there are 64 posts on a salary of Rs. 400 and over, not one of which is occupied by an Indian. I can give the details if you like. There are 11 appointments in the grade of Rs. 525 to Rs. 600 in which there is no Indian. There are 52 appointments on Rs. 325 to Rs. 500, in which there is no Indian. There are 21 appointments in the grade of Rs. 165 to 375 of which 5 are filled by Indians. I would therefore draw the attention of the Railway Board to this matter. On all the other lines, particularly on the North-Western and the old Oudh and Rohilkhand, there is no grievance in the matter of Indian permanent way inspectors. Again on the East Indian Railway, there are 18 posts of signal inspectors carrying a salary of Rs. 400 to 675, of which not one is occupied by an Indian. In the conservancy and sanitary service on that Railway also there are 5 posts carrying a salary of Rs. 160 to 300, and no post is held by an Indian. Then if you take the mechanical line on the East Indian Railway, we find that among the workshop foremen drawing a salary from Rs. 500 to Rs. 800 there are 27 posts, none of which is occupied by an

Indian. Of assistant workshop foremen there are 29 posts, and 1 P.M. Indians *nil*. Among trial inspectors Indians are *nil*. Of boiler inspectors Indians are *nil*. Out of 287 drivers (mechanics) drawing a pay of Rs. 250 and upwards we only find three Indians. There are 44 other appointments of foremen carrying a pay of Rs. 250 to Rs. 650, and we find no Indian occupying any of these posts. As regards ordinary mechanics drawing salaries from Rs. 300 upwards we find that there is not a single Indian. Among station masters, Sir, drawing salaries above Rs. 250 we find that there are very few Indians.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: I am really sorry to remind the Honourable Member that he is speaking at greater length than any other Honourable Member of this Council, and I would suggest whether the wearisome details which he is reading to the Council might not be better put into a written statement and handed to the Railway Board.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS: Sir, I will not go into minor details, and as suggested by you I shall hand over the statement which I wanted to read to the Honourable the Chief Commissioner for Railways. Sir, as regards the services in February 1926, when the discussion on the Railway Budget was going on, I brought to the notice of the Railway Board one fact and I said :

"I understand that there are rumours that those literate apprentices who were recruited some four years ago into shops and were likely to finish their courses for the fifth year term and were likely to qualify soon will not be provided with any permanent posts."

To this, Sir, the Chief Commissioner of Railways replied :

"The Honourable Rai Bahadur asked for my particular sympathy in regard to certain literate apprentices in the North-Western Railway workshops who were appointed and received their training before the present arrangements with the MacLagan College were made. I have no knowledge of the rumour that these young men will not get appointments. But I do not believe that they are going to be thrown out in the streets. I have no reason to believe that after they have completed their training satisfactorily, there will be any difficulty in finding places for them."

From this I understood, Sir, that all those students who did qualify and who were well reported on by their officers would be given a permanent job after the completion of their apprenticeship training. In the agreement entered into with them by the Railway it was clearly agreed to that in case they are well

[Lala Ram Saran Das.]

reported on they will be confirmed in their appointments. I am sorry, Sir, that this has not been done. Many of those students who did qualify themselves and who were well-reported on by their officers have not been found jobs. I shall give the details to the Honourable the Chief Commissioner as the time at my disposal is short. But I would submit, Sir, that any pledge or any sort of a pledge that is once given by Government ought to be honoured. One word more regarding apprenticeships from the MacLagan College, Lahore. I brought in a Resolution to that effect some time back, and I was allowed to believe that the training so far given at that College was not up to the mark and that the products of the College would not do as far as recruitment for railway purposes was concerned. At that time I repeated that as the Punjab Government had put in over a million of rupees and was bearing a recurring expenditure of over a lakh of rupees annually I thought it was proper and I begged the Railway Board as the Punjab Government was willing to alter the scheme and the curriculum of the College to the satisfaction of the Railway Board to reconsider their decision. I now hope the Honourable Sir George Rainy or the Honourable Sir Austen Hadow will inform this House whether or not they are now satisfied with the present arrangements in and the curriculum for the MacLagan Engineering College, and whether Government is prepared to give any sort of patronage to the products of that college.

One word more, Sir, and I have done, and that is that I endorse what my Honourable friend, Mr. Ramadas Pantulu said regarding the Central Railway Advisory Council. As far as Local Railway Advisory Committees are concerned it will be of great practical use if a summary of the proceedings of the various Railway Advisory Committees be placed before both the Houses of the Central Legislature with a note as to which of the recommendations of these Committees have been accepted and what proposals have been rejected and on what grounds. I think, Sir, this would give a chance for exchange of opinions on very important subjects in both these Houses.

One word more, Sir, and I have done, and that is as regards the question of employment on a larger scale of matriculates in mechanical branch (driving)... .

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: I would ask the Honourable Member to be very very brief on his "last word". When I asked the Council to proceed to the discussion I refrained from reminding the Council of the power vested in the Chair to fix a time-limit for speeches; and I am glad to say that until the Honourable Member rose to his feet, no Honourable Member in this House took advantage of the indulgence of the Chair in that respect.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS: Very well, Sir, I bring my remarks to a close.

THE HONOURABLE SRIJUT LOKENATH MUKHERJEE (West Bengal: Non-Muhammadan): Sir, the Budget which we are discussing to-day is one which has various aspects of some importance. I do not propose to spend a long time in preliminary remarks, but will go on at once to the two speeches of the Honourable the Chief Commissioner for Railways and that of the Honourable the Commerce Member which he delivered in the other place.

On going through the speeches very minutely, I could not find any real cause of jubilation that pervaded the speeches of my Honourable friends in introducing the Railway Budget here and in the other place. I could, however, congratulate Sir Austen Hadow and Sir George Rainy on their facility in window-dressing, for after all, all these Budgets, as far as my experience goes, have invariably an unreality about them which oppresses one.

Sir, the popular demand for putting in an Indian in the Railway Board has not been paid any heed to. The same bureaucratic obstinacy pervades through every step of the Railway administration of India. The Budget is prepared for having a grasp of the real state of affairs. But so far as Indian Railway administration is concerned, the expenditure side is always shown far in excess than is really required to meet them and, as such for the last few years, we find that the revised estimate always shows a saving over the figures budgeted for the year. It has been truly said that 'the under-estimating of income and over-estimating of expenditure has almost become an article of faith with Railway Agents, and the Railway Board simply blindly embodies them in the budget estimates'.

It conclusively proves that in the Budget the figures are kept up inflated on the expenditure side. This is surely one of the reasons, Sir, for which we demand that a majority of the members on the Railway Board should be Indians.

Sir, this under-estimating of income and over-estimating of expenditure is not without further consequence, it is not so harmless as one may be at the first instance apt to believe.

Sir, by going through the whole speech I could not find any definite statement as to what further facilities have been provided for the lower class passengers who are the real profit-accruing sources of the different Railway administrations. Congestion in lower class compartments remains as it was previously. The number of additional coaches that are being budgeted for is far short of the requirements of those passengers. The Explanatory Memorandum on page 32 shows that only 138 lower class coaches in terms of four wheelers are going to be added throughout the whole broad gauge lines all over India. Including the additions to the metre gauge lines, the figure comes to about 438 coaches. But on pages 34, 35 of the same Memorandum we find that the lines proposed to be opened during the year 1928-29 is about 885 miles. If the whole of the mileage is opened for traffic then practically there are no additions to the numbers of coaches for relieving the distress of lower class passengers from great congestion.

Then, Sir, what arrangements have up till now been made for sleeping arrangements for lower class passengers when travelling long distances? Our Railway lords—when they travel over the Railways they travel in saloons quite cosy and comfortable as if in their own homes—can never imagine the plight of lower class passengers travelling long distances and passing consecutive sleepless nights by simply sitting in a congested compartment or even standing somehow therein. I ask why no arrangements have been made for providing them with some sort of sleeping accommodation? A few years back we used to hear that Railway administrations were trying to meet this popular demand, but now-a-days the budget speeches of Railway Members never touch those points. The only reference we find in the whole of the printed budget speech of 12 pages by the 'Honourable Sir George Rainy about amenities of third class passengers is in a few lines, and which reads as follows :

"I ought, however, to mention that the provision made for amenities for third class passengers, including the additions to, and improvements in lower class carriages, amounts to nearly Rs. 2½ crores. This is a very important branch of our railway work and I can testify that it receives close and constant attention from the Railway Board."

Then, Sir, even there when we go into the details of the allotment of 2½ crores, we find the same kind of bluff and bolster as is usual with the bureaucracy in other branches of administration.

[Srijut Lokenath Mukherjee.]

Sir, on page 29 of the Explanatory Memorandum amongst the amenities of third class passengers we find items like water supply to passengers and Indian refreshment rooms. May I ask my Honourable friend whether the arrangement of water supply as also the provision of Indian refreshment rooms are meant for third class passengers only, or is it that it is only the third class passengers who feel thirst and the pangs of hunger. Sir, I for myself, who travel in upper classes have never crossed the threshold of your restaurant cars and station refreshment rooms, not only because I have prejudice in taking my meals there but also because I have the conviction that in the kitchens thereof cleanliness is very seldom observed. Sir, I have, for both these reasons, generally to go to these Indian refreshment rooms. Sir, when facilities of water supply are provided, do the Railway Board seriously wish us to believe that higher class passengers are denied or precluded from the advantages of this supply even if they require it? Now, Sir, I come to item No. 6 which provides six and odd lakhs for raised platforms. It is beyond my comprehension how the raised platforms in stations can be meant to give comfort solely to lower class passengers. Sir, are we to believe that the higher class passengers are precluded from using the station platforms and are prevented from using them? Is it not a fact that the passengers who travel in lower classes are accustomed to various kinds of hardships and that they can do without raised platforms if in return they are assured of a reduction of lower class fares and that it is the minority who travel in the upper classes that really and actually require raised platforms? Then why do you include such common items under the heading of amenities for third class passengers? Why this sort of bluff to the public? Sir, this is nothing but hoodwinking pure and simple. Then, Sir, year after year we find the items of additions to and betterments of lower class carriages. May I ask the Honourable Member in charge as to what betterments have been carried out in lower class carriages? Sir, the latrines provided in a third class compartment are quite inadequate. A compartment which has got seating accommodation for as many as 20 or more passengers is provided with only one latrine and of 3 square feet in area; whereas in an upper class compartment for five passengers the latrine is nearly four times as big, not to speak of some, which are provided with two latrines, one orthodox and the other unorthodox. Then, Sir, no regard is paid to the sanitary arrangements in those latrines. May I ask in all seriousness what sanitary arrangements have been provided for in them? In this connection I am reminded of another point which, though last, should not be taken as of least importance. Sir, I mean the want of any sort of latrine proper in the servants' compartments attached to the higher class coaches. It is simply preposterous on the part of the Railway administration not to take into consideration this absolutely necessary improvement in the servants' compartments. I do hope and trust that Government will pay serious consideration to this point and will do something to remove the great difficulties of this class of passengers from the want of latrines.

Sir, in item No. 7 on page 35 of the Memorandum there is provided 181 and odd lakhs for additions and betterments. I would suggest that henceforward the money to be spent on betterments to third class coaches should be shown separately and not with additions and further, a clear indication should henceforward be given as to what betterments have been carried out annually in lower class carriages. The whole thing seems to be deliberately put in such a way as to make us purblind of the real issues.

Then I come to the question of the quarters for the staff. At the outset I ask my Honourable friend as to whether it is not a fact that railway quarters

are classed as European and Indian. If so, are the quarters classed European all occupied by true born Europeans or are they occupied by Anglo-Indians as well? If the latter are also eligible to occupy them, may I ask on what grounds? Is it or is it not a fact that for the purposes of appointment in the Railways, Anglo-Indians are classed as Indians? So if a statutory Indian is entitled to occupy such a quarter why on earth will an Indian be refused the benefit and right of living in a better quarter, provided he pays the same rent? Sir, what objection is there to class all the quarters as orthodox and unorthodox as has been done here in New Delhi by the Government of India. Then, Sir, I come to the question of Indian Staff Quarters. Sir, to my mind the plans of these quarters were laid out when the Railways were first opened in India. The ways and means of living of the Indians have undergone a considerable change. The Railways, we are told, are yielding high profits as well. But the plans of the quarters for the Indian staff have never undergone any change. To the Railway Board and Railway administrations in India it is sacrosanct to provide better accommodation for their Indian staff. I would appeal to my Honourable friend the Member in charge to inspect any one of these quarters personally, and then he will be in a position to understand that these quarters are worse than the garages or stables attached to the bungalows of high Railway officials.

Before bringing my remarks to a close, I would remind my Honourable friend the Member-in-charge once more about the much needed project of the Santragachi-Bistupur chord about which I put certain interpellations in this House last year. There is a vast tract of area in two very important subdivisions of Bengal which is practically without any railway facilities. At the present moment when Railway administrations are spending nearly 25 crores of rupees a year on capital programme, I do not see any reason why an important and much needed project like this should not receive due and proper consideration.

With these few general observations I bring my remarks to a close.

THE HONOURABLE MR. KUMAR SANKAR RAY CHAUDHURY (East Bengal : Non-Muhammadan) : Sir, coming from East Bengal and not being an expert in railway matters, I must confine my remarks to a few observations on the Eastern Bengal Railway. This line, though running through a highly populated and intensely cultivated area, is not, I am told, a profitable concern. In the budget estimates compared to all other Railways it displays a curious phenomenon, namely, that in this line alone "the receipts from third class passenger traffic show a considerable increase practically equal in amount to that from goods traffic", even though it "was aided by a heavy carry over of the previous season's jute traffic to the first few months of the current year." This shows that this line is not able to capture the carrying trade of the locality which is being mostly monopolised by the steamer companies. The lower provinces of Bengal being situated at the estuary of two big rivers is essentially a deltaic province intersected by many rivers. So much of the goods traffic in East Bengal is being carried on along the rivers and so long and until the Eastern Bengal Railway authorities carry on the conjoint railway and steamer service, they will not be able to capture the goods traffic so as to make the concern a profitable one; for after all in no country in the world, so far as I am aware, has the railway system been successfully able to compete with water-borne traffic in cheapness of transport. Moreover, the small rivers of Bengal through a process of silting up at their conjunction with the big rivers are gradually becoming stagnant and unhealthy breeding grounds for malaria and other infectious diseases. And if the Government take upon themselves

[Mr. Kumar Sankar Ray Chaudhury].

the task of carrying the traffic of goods through the water courses, they will not only serve the people by supplying a mode of cheap transport but be able to keep the natural water courses of the country free and open and thereby be able to eradicate diseases from the province. This will also make the Eastern Bengal Railway system a profitable one so as to reduce the burden of taxation upon the people in the shape of high freights and passenger fares, for perhaps the operating ratio of this line is the highest of all railway systems in India and does not show any tendency to fall in the same proportion as in other systems. Even the Assam Bengal Railway, which runs through wild jungles and mountainous regions, shows a lower ratio than the Eastern Bengal Railway. The result is that rates of fares on this line cannot be lowered while that is done on other lines, although it is much higher here than elsewhere; nor can raised and shaded platforms or waiting rooms be constructed in important stations like Goalundo, Faridpur and other places. Bridges and rails could not be repaired for a long time and very considerable sums have to be allotted this year for these purposes and the Indian staff of employees on the line are underpaid. I am informed—I do not know how far I am correct—that in former times the Eastern Bengal Railway authorities used to have a conjoint steamer service along with the Railway in some places. May I ask the railway authorities why and when this system was abolished?

Coming now to the case of the Aricha-Dacca Railway, I find from the Explanatory Memorandum that, although the first survey of the line was carried out as long ago as 1877-79, the Government have not yet been able to make up their mind one way or the other, and the people of the locality who have been pressing for the construction of the line ever since that time are being fed up with the hope that this line will be taken up in the near future by drawing red lines on the map, but no one knows when it will be done and whether it will be a broad gauge or a metre gauge. The people of Pabna, the only district town of Bengal which is not yet served by any railway, are also long waiting for the construction of a railway from Issurdi to Sadhuganj *via* Pabna. The district board and the municipality of Pabna and various other public bodies have sent repeated representations undertaking to guarantee the railway, private concerns expressed their willingness to construct the railway if sanction was obtained. The Local Government has approved of the scheme, yet the construction of the line is being postponed from year to year. Apart from the local importance of these two lines, they will, if constructed, also serve the purpose of connecting Calcutta and Western India by the shortest possible routes with Assam and with Burma in future. It has been my duty to press for the construction of these two lines ever since I came to the Assembly and the Council of State as the representative of East and North Bengal, and I shall continue to do so long as they are not taken up and I am here.

THE HONOURABLE SIR GEORGE RAINY (Member for Commerce and Railways): Mr. President, I shall deal with what has been said by the various speakers to-day so far as I can, but I think they will understand that it is not possible for me to deal in detail with anything like all that has been said. As it is usual in these discussions, Honourable Members bring to the notice of the House the subjects in which they take the greatest interest. But when these subjects are chiefly of a local nature, unless one has previous notice, it is practically impossible to reply in detail. Some of them, indeed, strike me as matters that might suitably have formed the subject of a question, and then it would have been possible to give the information in full.

The first speaker, the Honourable Mr. Chari, began by striking a note which was also struck by a large number of subsequent speakers, namely, that the reduction we are making in the case of third class fares, as it does not affect journeys of less than 50 miles, would not be of any particular benefit to a very large number of third class passengers. Now, I frankly admit that that is so; it is indeed obvious. I hope that before a great many years have passed, we shall be able to deal also with these shorter journeys, but the position we were in this year was this. There was a certain amount of money available for reductions in rates and fares, and we had to consider what was the most we could do with the sum available. Whatever be the figures about the average length of a journey by a third class passenger, it is going to cost us one and a quarter crores to make the reduction we are actually making. That is about $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. of the total gross traffic receipts of the State Railways concerned, and therefore the relief given is substantial. I do not complain of what was said by any Honourable Member on this point, but it would be incorrect to suggest that this is an entirely negligible concession and will not be of substantial benefit to a large number of the poorer classes of passengers.

My Honourable friend Mr. Chari passed on to the grievances of Burma, and I have only one or two remarks to make about that. He complained that Burma was always neglected and apparently he considered it was particularly neglected in this Budget. I think that is hardly an appropriate complaint about a budget which includes a provision of 4 crores for the purchase of the Burma Railways from the Company. He also said there was no reduction of rates and fares on the Burma Railways included in the Budget. I would point out to him that there was a definite statement in the speech I made in another place that we proposed to discuss with the Company-managed Railways the question of reductions; and I would point out further that in the course of about $7\frac{1}{2}$ months from now the Burma Railways will come under the control of the State, and it will then be possible for us to take action on our own responsibility exactly as we do on any other State Railway. I do not propose to dwell upon the question of the Burma-India connection, because that was the subject of a Resolution in this House in the Rains Session at Simla, and when the matter was discussed then my Honourable friend Sir Geoffrey Corbett explained the view that Government took on the question. Mr. Chari also referred to the question of Indianization, and said that as Indianization was necessary in India so Burmanization was necessary in Burma. That is a matter I think we shall have to consider when we take over the Burma Railways. In other branches of Government service the special position of Burma in matters of that kind has had to be taken into account, and I have no doubt we shall have to look into it when we take over the Burma Railways. Apart from the question of third class fares, a good deal has been said during the course of the discussion about overcrowding in trains—which of course affects the third class passenger most—and the lack of amenities of various kinds for them and the desirability of taking steps to put these things right. Now, here again it is really impossible to take them up one after the other and attempt to deal with them. But I will say this, I frankly recognize that there is a great deal that ought to be done to improve matters in these respects for the third class passengers, and I hope that we shall be able to deal with the question systematically. One of the difficulties we must inevitably be faced with is that it will not be possible for financial reasons to do all the things we would like to do at the same time. Therefore, it may be necessary to take up each improvement separately and find out how much it is likely to cost and then to consider which ought to be given precedence and which ought to be postponed. I attach a good deal of importance to this question, and it is a matter

[Sir George Rainy.]

which might suitably be referred to the Central Advisory Council for Railways. My Honourable friend Mr. Ramadas Pantulu referred to the fact that the meetings of that body have not been very frequent during the last year or two. I frankly admit that that is so. But there has been no mystery about it. It has partly been due to the fact that there has been a new Railway Member responsible for the Department who has taken a little time to familiarise himself with all the various questions that come before him, and who, before calling a meeting of the Central Advisory Council, wished to clear up his own ideas as to the way in which things ought to proceed. Apart from that, it is a fact that during the past year we have not undertaken any considerable innovations; and there has been no new departures initiated such as would naturally be referred to the Central Advisory Council.

Before passing on to one or two other matters I think I might refer very briefly to what was said—I think by Srijet Lokenath Mukherjee—as regards the references in my speech and in the Explanatory Memorandum of the Railway Board about amenities for third class passengers. His line of criticism was apparently this, that it was not fair to take into account as amenities for third class passengers anything which by any possibility could be used by any other class of passengers. One instance was the improvements in water supply, and he argued that since there was nothing to prevent first and second class or intermediate class passengers from making use of the water, it was not fair to say that an improved water supply was an amenity of the third class passenger. I am afraid I am altogether unable to agree with him. It seems to me that considering how enormously preponderant in number the third class passengers are, at least 90 per cent. of the people who take advantage of the improved water supply will be third class passengers; and I think in these circumstances we can fairly claim that that is an improvement in the amenities of third class passengers. And as for raised platforms, if it is indeed the case that raised platforms are not needed at all by third class passengers and are for the benefit exclusively of the first and second class passengers, that seems to me to knock the bottom out of the case for raised platforms altogether. Personally, however, I cannot take that view of raised platforms.

My Honourable friend Sir Maneckji Dadabhoy referred amongst other things to that very difficult and important problem, the unification of the gauge of railways throughout India. That is a matter that comes up periodically. It was mentioned, for instance, by the Acworth Committee, and from time to time the suggestion is made that we ought to tackle that gigantic problem. I am not yet convinced that we have not better things to do at present, and better objects on which to spend our money, because I am very much afraid that if we seriously set to work to unify the gauges we might find that we were unable for 10 or 15 years to make any additions to the mileage of our system because all our money would be devoted to the heavy expenditure necessary to convert the metre gauge lines to the broad gauge. It seems to me that we have still plenty to do in the way of developing the existing lines and making extensions that are likely to be of real service to the country. I think they ought to have precedence for the time being, and that the time has not yet come for treating the unification of the gauges as an object of primary importance. That is my own view on the subject. But I quite recognize the importance of the question, and although I cannot promise that we are likely to take it up at present, it is a matter which may in the course of two or three years be again presenting itself.

My Honourable friend, Mr. Ramadas Pantulu, made what appears to me a pleasant and novel suggestion that I should take the opportunity to-day

to reply in the Council of State to the speeches that were made yesterday in the Legislative Assembly. I do not know, Sir, whether you would approve of this innovation in Parliamentary procedure, but it does not commend itself to me as in all respects a good one, because, on the one hand, the House here would not have heard the speeches to which I should be replying, and my critics in the other House would not have the privilege of listening to my reply. I did, however, trace in the Honourable Member's speech one or two echoes of what was said yesterday in another place. In particular when my Honourable friend spoke of the earnings in the year 1927-28 being less than those of the year 1924-25, I seemed there to catch an echo of a speech from the corresponding Benches in the Assembly. (*The Honourable Mr. V. Ramadas Pantulu* : "That is so".) I am, however, bound to say that I failed yesterday in the Assembly, and I have failed again to-day to understand what inference precisely I was asked to draw from the fact, if it be a fact, that the earnings of 1927-28 were less than those of 1924-25. The House has got to remember that the rates and fares in force in the current year are not the same as those that were in force in 1924-25. Reductions are always being made by the Agents from time to time for it is not a matter in which the Railway Board or the Government of India retain all the control in their own hands ; a great many reductions, each of them perhaps not very large in themselves, but considerable in the aggregate, are made by the Agents.

THE HONOURABLE MR. V. RAMADAS PANTULU : It is said that we are not substantially paying less for travelling in the year 1927-28 than in 1924-25. The criticism of a fall in average earnings per mile is based on the assumption that we are not paying substantially less on account of rates and freights now than in 1924-25. If that is so, the criticism still stands. But if, as you say, we are paying appreciably less, I understand your explanation.

THE HONOURABLE SIR GEORGE RAINY : I have not the least hesitation in saying that there have been reductions in rates and fares between 1924-25 and 1927-28. Some of them have been specially mentioned in this place, or in another place, and others again have been made by the Agents on their own responsibility.

I am greatly indebted to the Honourable Sir Arthur Froom for what he said on several points that came up, and particularly about the matter of the Railway Reserve Fund because from his experience he is in a position to give us very valuable advice on these questions. I can assure him that what he said about the railway workshops will be considered carefully, especially his warning that it would not do to be satisfied because we are cutting down the time taken for repairs very heavily if we turn out our rolling stock imperfectly repaired. At the same time I would say this that, so long as we have my friend, Mr. Wrench, at headquarters to advise us on these matters, I shall have every confidence that he will not lead us astray.

Reference was made by one or two speakers to the question of the purchase of wagons and wagon building. I do not want to dilate on that at all to-day, because I hope that by Saturday we shall be in a position to publish the Tariff Board's Report on the wagon-building industry with the orders of the Government of India on it, and until it is published, it is not so easy for me to deal with the question. I am afraid it will be impossible for me to follow my Honourable friend, Lala Ram Saran Das, through the classification of the various classes of employees where he thought that Indianization was necessary and ought to have taken place but had not yet taken place, but I would

[Sir George Rainy.]

like on a general point to remind him of this that it is not so very long, it is only about 2½ years, since we took over the East Indian Railway from the East Indian Railway Company, and it is impossible in that short period of time to produce a complete change in the system under which certain appointments were filled. We have to do justice to the people who are already in the service, and it must be a matter of time before any policy of Indianization can produce any very marked effect. And apart from that I am under the impression that my Honourable friend confused two different things. One is Indianization, and the other is not Indianization at all because it is merely a question of a large number of appointments being held by the members of one particular Indian community, namely, the Anglo-Indian community. That is a point which ought to be kept separate and not lumped up under the general head of Indianization.

I do not think, Mr. President, that I can usefully add very much more to-day. I have listened with great interest to the discussion, and I hope that Honourable Members about whose remarks and suggestions I have not been able to say anything to-day, will understand that we will look into them and see whether there is anything that can be done to meet their wishes. In some cases I think it will not be possible to do more than this,—to draw the attention of the Agent to the matter and leave it to him to decide what the best course will be. But I value this opportunity of hearing what Honourable Members of this Council have to say about our Railways, and their suggestions will not be overlooked. Finally, Sir, I would like to thank Honourable Members for the kindly tone of their allusions to myself, and if my Honourable friend, Sir Austen Hadow, will allow me to reply on his behalf, to thank them for the kindness of their allusions to him also.

ELECTION OF A PANEL FOR THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON EMIGRATION.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : In connection with the election of a panel for the Standing Committee on Emigration the following nominations were received up to the hour of twelve this morning :

1. The Honourable Sir Phiroze Sethna,
2. The Honourable Nawab Sir Umar Hayat Khan,
3. The Honourable Sardar Shivdev Singh Oberoi,
4. The Honourable Mr. G. A. Natesan,
5. The Honourable Mr. P. C. Desika Chari,
6. The Honourable Rai Nalininath Sett Bahadur.

I declare these six Honourable Members to be duly elected to the panel. But as the minimum number of Members required to form the panel is eight, there are still two vacancies, and to fill these two vacancies nominations will be received by the Secretary up to the hour of eleven o'clock on Monday morning, the 27th.

STATEMENT OF BUSINESS.

THE HONOURABLE KHAN BAHADUR SIR MUHAMMAD HABIBULLAH (Leader of the House) : Sir, the next meeting of the Council will be held on Monday, the 27th February, for non-official business. Thereafter the House will meet on Wednesday, the 29th. On the 29th, as Honourable Members are already aware, the General Budget will be presented. As no business has been ballotted for, there will be no meeting on the 1st March, which day was allotted as a non-official day.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : I might remind Honourable Members again that the meeting on the 29th, to which the Honourable the Leader of the House has referred, will not take place at the ordinary hour of 11 o'clock in the morning ; it will be in the afternoon.

The Council then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Monday, the 27th February, 1928.