

Wednesday
30th November, 1949

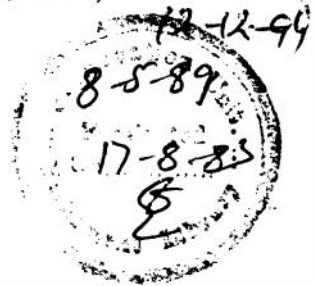
THE
CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY OF INDIA
(LEGISLATIVE) DEBATES

(PART I—QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS)

OFFICIAL REPORT

VOLUME IV, 1949

(28th November to 24th December, 1949)



SIXTH SESSION
OF THE
CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY OF INDIA
(LEGISLATIVE)

1949

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CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY OF INDIA (LEGISLATIVE) DEBATES

(PART I—QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS)

Wednesday, 30th November, 1949

The Assembly met in the Assembly Chamber of the Council House at a Quarter to Eleven of the Clock, Mr. Speaker (The Honourable Mr. G. V. Mavalankar) in the Chair.

STARRED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

(a) ORAL ANSWERS

FOOD DELEGATIONS

*100. **Shri B. K. Sidhva:** (a) Will the Honourable Minister of Food be pleased to state the number of delegations that went to foreign countries during the period from 1st January, 1949 to date for the purchase of food grains and for other matters relating to agriculture?

(b) What are the names of such delegations and the places they visited and what is the cost incurred by Government on each delegation?

(c) Was any order placed through any private firms or were all transactions executed on Government-to-Government basis? •

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulatram: (a) and (b). No delegation was sent to foreign countries during the period from 1st January 1949 to 31st October, 1949 for the purchase of food grains. Fifteen delegations of which thirteen were single member delegations were however, sent in connection with food and agriculture matters. Two statements showing the names of such delegations, places visited, cost incurred and the purpose of the visit are laid on the Table of the House. (See Appendix V, annexure No. 1.)

(c) In view of the above question does not arise.

Shri B. K. Sidhva: May I know how many Food Conferences were held during this period in Delhi, both Ministers and officials?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulatram: I thought the question related to delegations sent abroad. I will not be able to give the exact number of the Conferences held; it may be two or three.

Shri B. K. Sidhva: Is a Conference being held yesterday and today in Delhi, and may I know if the Provincial Governments welcome such Conferences, and what is the cost of such Conferences?

Mr. Speaker: I am afraid the Honourable Member is going beyond the scope of the question. The question is restricted to foreign delegations.

Shri B. K. Sidhva: He has not mentioned the cost of those delegations.

Mr. Speaker: I think it is included in the statement.

Shri B. K. Sidhva: May I know the cost of the delegation?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulatram: The total cost was about Rs. 2,500 per delegation sent by the Agriculture Ministry. If you will refer to the statement, you will find the information. We have given the cost of each

delegation and on an average it works out to Rs. 2,500 per delegation. The total for agricultural delegations is about Rs. 38,000. Most of them were singleman delegations and were sent to nearby Asian countries, some to Karachi, some to Bangkok, some to Singapore and some to Australia. The cost of the delegation sent by the Food Ministry is also small and is shown in the statement.

Shri B. K. Sidhva: May I know the quantity of food grains purchased by Government during the current year?

Shri L. Krishnaswami Bharathi: How does that arise out of this question?

Shri B. K. Sidhva: The question is about purchase of food grains.

The Honourable Shri Jajramdas Doulatram: No delegation was sent at all for the purchase of food grains. If I may explain, one delegation was sent to Iraq. The purpose was to arrange for shipping freight and inspection arrangements. As a result of spending only Rs. 6,418 we have made a saving of Rs. 6 lakhs on shipping freight, because our representative succeeded in reducing freight by 50 per cent. He was also able to reduce the inspection charges by 25 per cent., which has meant further saving of half a lakh. He was also able to advise, being on the spot by process of discussion that barley was being offered at £5 more than the real market rate there and we did not enter into that transaction. Each delegation has saved us lakhs of rupees. If you want, I can give details.

Shri Mahavir Tyagi: Then send some more delegations.

Shri B. K. Sidhva: May I know whether the purchase of these food grains is arranged through private agency or directly by Government?

The Honourable Shri Jajramdas Doulatram: It is on Government-to-Government account, not by private agency.

Shri H. V. Kamath: Does the statement include the deal about Brazil barley made by our late Ambassador to Turkey after an arduous journey from Ankara to London?

The Honourable Shri Jajramdas Doulatram: It is known that no delegation was sent from here and the deal did not come off at all.

Shri H. V. Kamath: Is it a fact that the deal saved Government about ₹50,000 as stated by the Prime Minister in the last Session?

Mr. Speaker: It may be the subject matter of a Question.

Pandit Mukut Bihari Lal Bhargava: Has the Government published any account of the achievements of these delegations?

The Honourable Shri Jajramdas Doulatram: I am prepared to give a summary of what has been done by each delegation.

Shri B. K. Sidhva: Is the quality taken into consideration while purchases are made or only the price?

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member is going into administrative details. Next question.

PRICES OF SUGAR

*101. **Shri B. K. Sidhva:** (a) Will the Honourable Minister of Agriculture be pleased to state the prices of sugar which prevailed in the following areas in April, July, August, September and October 1949:—Bombay, Delhi, Ahmedabad, Poona, Nagpur, Kanpur, Amritsar, Lucknow, Banaras, Agra, Calcutta, Madras, Simla, Jubbulpore, Hyderabad, Jodhpur and Patna?

(b) What are the causes of the present high prices of sugar and what is the current ex-factory controlled price per maund?

(c) Have Government taken any steps to check the high prices? If so, what are they?

(d) What is the amount of export pool money lying with the Sugar Syndicate?

(e) What were the prices of sugar prevailing in Brazil, Java and Mauritius c.i.f. Indian ports in the months of August, September and October 1949 and what were the prices of Indian sugar in the same months?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulatram: (a) A statement showing the prices of sugar during the months of April to October 1949 in places for which information is available is laid on the Table of the House. (See Appendix V, annexure No. 2.)

(b) The cause of the rise in prices of sugar was the speculative purchases by merchants due to the rumour that export of sugar to Pakistan and elsewhere may be allowed in substantial quantities and the publication by the Syndicate of the fact that a very large percentage of the year's production had already been sold out by the factories and the consequent feeling that there might be a shortage in the remaining months of the year, in view of increased demand.

The current ex-factory price is Rs. 28-8-0 for E-27 Grade sugar.

(c) Government took the following steps to make sugar available to people at reduced prices: (i) Stocks with the factories were frozen and allotted to Provinces and States for distribution, (ii) powers were delegated to Provincial Governments to license trade and take over stocks and distribute them through such agencies as might be fixed upon, (iii) forward trading in sugar was banned, and (iv) the Provincial and State Governments were asked to take all possible steps to maximise production in the ensuing season.

(d) It is understood that Rs. 10 lakhs have so far been collected by the Syndicate as export pool money.

(e) The prices of foreign sugar, so far as information is available, were as follows:

Brazil	October	Rs. 31/4/- per maund	local price there
Cuba	October	Rs. 16/15/5	(f.o.b.)
Java	August to October	Rs. 21/8/2	(ex-warehouse at Ports).
Mauritius	—	Prices not available.	

The price of sugar in India during August ranged between Rs. 36-2-0 and Rs. 42-8-0. In September-October the price of uncontrolled stocks had risen in some places to Rs. 60 a maund.

Shri B. K. Sidha: May I know the date on which orders were issued for freezing the stocks and on what dates they reached the provincial governments and when did they execute them?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulatram: I despatched personal telegrams round about 10 o'clock on 1st September containing instructions and they reached almost all the Ministers concerned early next morning or the same night.

Shri B. K. Sidha: When was the first order issued from the Secretariat?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulatram: On 2nd September.

Shri B. K. Sidha: On what date was the general information conveyed to the Press?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulatram: A note was issued I believe the same night to the Press.

Shri B. K. Sidhva: May I know whether, before the orders issued from the Secretariat here reached the Bihar Government, some 2000 bags were actually despatched to Bombay from Bihar and although the Honourable Minister's attention was drawn to this, he took no notice of it?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulatram: I have no recollection of it. I will certainly go into the matter.

Shri B. K. Sidhva: May I know if the merchants from Bombay went to the Honourable Minister in October and showed him the railway receipts and the dates on which they were despatched?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulatram: I have no recollection. I will go into the matter if given the reference.

Shri T. T. Krishnamachari: May I ask the Honourable Member if in the statement he has given regarding prices ruling at various places he has also indicated the places where no sugar is available?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulatram: I have given the prices for the places for which enquiry was made.

Shri Ajit Prasad Jain: Is it a fact that the freezing order applied only to stocks with sugar mills and not to stocks with dealers?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulatram: Yes, to factories. But the provincial governments were also authorised to deal with the stocks of the wholesale dealers if they wanted to.

Shri Ajit Prasad Jain: Is it a fact that no stocks of wholesalers were frozen and actually large stocks were left lying in the hands of traders?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulatram: That, I think, happened in many cases.

Pandit Hirday Nath Kunzru: What steps were taken by the Provincial Governments, immediately after issue of the freezing order, to find out what was the stock with the dealers? How many days did they take to find this out?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulatram: I would not be able to give in detail the steps taken by the Provincial Governments.

Pandit Hirday Nath Kunzru: Has not the Honourable Member gone into the serious complaint in regard to the time-lag between the issue of the freezing order and the examination of the stocks with the dealers?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulatram: That might have taken place.

Shri Ajit Prasad Jain: Is it a fact that for the first ten or fifteen days after the freezing order was issued, no arrangements for the distribution of sugar by dealers were made?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulatram: The position is that the Central Government issued instructions for the freezing of the stocks. The next step was to allocate the stocks to the provinces. It was not possible for the Central Government to allocate stocks to the provinces, unless they knew what stocks existed with each factory. The Provincial Governments were to be given authority to take certain quantities from certain factories. Therefore, the information had first to be obtained as to how much stock was available with each factory, so that the Provincial Governments may place their orders on these factories in terms of the allocation made to them.

Mr. Speaker: I think as the Government are going to allot a day for discussion of this subject, it is better that we do not take the time available to the other questions. Honourable Members will have an opportunity of putting all

sorts of questions and advancing arguments during the course of the debate on the day allotted to this subject. Had there not been allotment of a day for discussion, I would have proceeded further with this question.

An Honourable Member: Has the date been fixed?

Mr. Speaker: I understand it will be during the course of the session; the date has not yet been fixed.

Pandit Hriday Nath Kunzru: It is astonishing that in view of the serious complaints with regard to the shortage of sugar, Government should not possess even this simple information about this matter.

Mr. Speaker: That will be a matter for comment when the subject comes up for discussion. Today I am concerned with the question and in the interest of other questions being put through and answered in the House, I think we need not take any more time over this.

Shri R. K. Sidhva: My point is that the subject matter of this question is so very important that we want to elicit as much information as possible so that we may be prepared to refute the arguments advanced by Government when the discussion takes place.

Mr. Speaker: That information can be obtained by having a talk with the Minister. We need not debar other questions coming up for answer in the House.

The Honourable Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: Sir, Government is desirous that the House should be in ample possession of as much information as we have and before the discussion takes place in the House, we will circulate a full note on the subject.]

THE AIR INDIA INTERNATIONAL

*102. **Shri R. K. Sidhva:** (a) Will the Honourable Minister of Communications be pleased to state what controlling interest Government have in the Air India International?

(b) What has been the loss or profit since Government entered into partnership with the company?

(c) Who represents the Government on the Board of Directors?

(d) What are the overhead charges and other expenditure of the said company?

(e) How many passengers have been carried by the said service ever since its inception upto date and what is the carrying capacity of planes normally employed by the company?

(f) What is the income of the company on account of passenger fares, freight and carriage of Government mails?

(g) Is it a fact that Government have issued instructions that all Government officials and Government sponsored deputations proceeding to foreign countries should make use of this line?

(h) If so, has there been any breach by any officials or non-officials by travelling in a liner other than the Air India International although accommodation in the latter was available?

Shri Khurshed Lal (Deputy Minister of Communications): (a) Government of India hold 49 per cent. of the share capital of Air India International Limited with the option to acquire at any time an additional 2 per cent. Of the six Directors of the Company, three are nominated by Government, including the

Special Government Director who has power to reserve for Government's approval any project costing Rs. 10,00,000 or more; the Chairman is nominated by the Air India Limited subject to approval of the Government.

(b) The total loss, as reported by the Company, for the period 8th March to 31st December, 1948 is Rs. 53,93,363 made up as follows:

	Rs.
(i) Initial depreciation under the Income Tax Act.	23,97,962
(ii) Normal depreciation.	13,01,349
(iii) Initial expenses on training of staff.	12,70,184
(iv) Operating loss (Nett)	4,23,868
	53,93,363

Out of this loss the Government has paid the Company Rs. 19,79,254, subject to Government audit, to cover the operating loss and the normal depreciation and one fifth of the initial expenses which are spread over five years. The question of payment of the initial depreciation is under consideration.

(c) The Special Government Director, Shri T. P. Bhalla, Director General of Civil Aviation, the other two Directors nominated by Government are Shri R. Narayanaswami, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Finance and Shri M. A. Srinivasan.

(d) Excluding capital cost amounting to Rs. 1,22,02,651, and the depreciation and initial expenses already specified in answer to part (b), the recurring cost, 8th March to 31st December, 1948, was Rs. 53,25,139 which, in the absence of any precise definition of overheads, is grouped as follows:

	Rs.
(i) Office expenses, interest, employees welfare insurance and fees of the Management, Directors and Auditors.	9,72,370
(ii) Salaries and wages.	18,98,815
(iii) Operational expenses, including fuel, oil, engineering, maintenance and traffic costs.	24,53,954.

(e) Number of passengers carried from 8th June 1948 (date of commencement of scheduled operations) upto 31st August 19497,338.

Capacity offered during the period ... 8,760 seats

Capacity of Constellation aircraft ... 40 seats.

(f) Revenue earned during the period 8th June 1948 to 31st August 1949:

(i) Passenger fares	Rs. 98,27,000
(ii) Freight and excess baggage	Rs. 12,96,000
(iii) Mails	Rs. 24,96,000

Rs. 1,36,29,000

(g) Instructions have been issued to the effect that all Government officials and Government sponsored delegations visiting western countries at Government expense should make use of the services of Air India International as far as possible.

(h) There have been some cases in which Government servants did not or could not avail of the Air India International Service and have travelled by other airlines. Such instances have however become rare.

Shri B. K. Sidhva: Sir, may I know whether the staff of the Air India International is quite separate from the Air India?

Shri Khurshed Lal: No, in some cases the Air India staff works for Air India International and they are paid for that on the same basis.

Shri B. K. Sidhva: What is the highest salary that is paid to Air India International officers and how many officers are employed by that airline?

Shri Khurshed Lal: I am afraid I could not give that information.

Shri B. K. Sidhva: Are Government satisfied that the overhead charges of the Air India International are moderate, and that they are not extravagant?

Shri Khurshed Lal: Government are examining the entire accounts sent by the Company and they are being audited.

Shri T. T. Krishnamachari: Is the Government in possession of any information in regard to the possible losses or profits that will arise out of the operation of this company during the current year?

Shri Khurshed Lal: I am not in a position to make a forecast of the profits or losses in the current year. It is obvious that in the first year of operations, the losses would be greater than they would be in the subsequent years.

Shri T. T. Krishnamachari: I am merely asking whether Government is keeping in touch with the Directorate of the Company and asking them to submit periodical reports, in view of the fact that the losses in the first year happen to be about 30 per cent. of the capital assets of the company.

Shri Khurshed Lal: We have got our officers on the directorate and we are keeping in touch with the affairs of the company.

Shri T. T. Krishnamachari: May I ask, Sir, if the Honourable the Finance Minister will enlighten this House whether he has any control over this matter which entails such a heavy loss to the tax-payer?

The Honourable Dr. John Matthai: There is a representative of the Ministry of Finance on the Board of Directors, but since the payments which become due to the company in respect of its losses are payments which have been stipulated as a matter of agreement, there is a limit to which we can exercise any kind of restriction. But as far as the normal operations of the company and the expenses are concerned, they are under the constant scrutiny of the representatives of the Ministry of Finance.

Shri T. T. Krishnamachari: Will the Honourable Minister call for a quarterly report on the balance sheet of this Company in view of the enormous risk that the taxpayer is undertaking in this concern?

The Honourable Dr. John Matthai: Since a representative of the Finance Ministry is on the Board, at every meeting the representative of the Ministry is in a position to acquaint himself with the financial affairs of the company and I am therefore in constant touch with the matter through him.

Prof. N. G. Banga: May I know who, out of the three representatives of the Government on the Board, represents the Finance Ministry? Is it Mr. Srinivasan?

Shri Khurshed Lal: Mr. R. Narayanaswami who is Joint Secretary, Ministry of Finance.

Sjt. Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri: May I ask the Honourable Minister to read out once again the answer for part (b) of the question which I did not follow?

Shri Khurshed Lal: Yes, Sir. The total loss, as reported by the Company, for the period 8th March to 31st December, 1948, is Rs. 53,93,363 made up as follows:

	Rs.
(i) Initial depreciation under the Income Tax Act	23,97,962
(ii) Normal depreciation	13,01,349
(iii) Initial expenses on training of staff	12,70,184
(iv) Operating loss (Nett)	4,23,868
TOTAL	53,93,363

Out of this loss the Government has paid the Company Rs. 19,79,254, subject to Government audit, to cover the operating loss and the normal depreciation and one fifth of the initial expenses which are spread over five years. The question of payment of the initial depreciation is under consideration.

Sjt. Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri: May I know whether the contribution of Rs. 19 lakhs to cover the operating loss of the company is over and above the subsidy which is granted for carrying the mails?

Shri Khurshed Lal: I do not know of any subsidy granted. They are paid for the mails which they carry. Perhaps my honourable friend is confusing the Air India International with Air India.

Sjt. Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri: A certain sum is paid for carrying mails. Is this in addition to what is so paid?

Shri Khurshed Lal: The amount that is paid for carrying mails is in accordance with the load carried under International rules.

Sjt. Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri: May I know what is overhead charges paid for? Are they different from the freight charges for mails?

Shri Khurshed Lal: As stated in answer to part (d), it is very difficult to give a definition of overhead charges. I have given the details. If the Honourable Member wants I shall repeat it.

Sjt. Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri: Does the Deputy Minister accept the position that in India the air lines which operate do not charge more than 2½ annas per mile?

Shri Khurshed Lal: I could not follow the question.

Mr. Speaker: We will proceed to the next question.

Shri Mahavir Tyagi: May I know the percentage of this loss to the capital invested?

Shri Khurshed Lal: I could not follow the question.

Shri Mahavir Tyagi: What is the total capital invested in the company and what percentage does this loss hold in relation to it?

Shri Khurshed Lal: The capital invested is about 2 crores. The Government share is 49 per cent. or Rs. 98 lakhs.

Shri S. V. Krishnamoorthy Rao: May I know if the audit is done by the Auditor General to the Government of India or by private auditors?

Shri Khurshed Lal: The company auditor audits the accounts, not the Auditor General of the Government of India.

Shri Mahavir Tyagi: In view of the heavy responsibility which the Government of India have undertaken, will the Government see that the audit is done by the Auditor General of India?

Mr. Speaker: Order, order.

Shri Ajit Prasad Jain: May I know whether a loss of 25 per cent. of the capital is not excessive when compared with similar losses incurred by other companies. during the first year?

Shri Khurshed Lal: I require notice of the question.

Shri R. K. Sidhva: May I know whether any concession has been given in the price of petrol to the Air India International?

Shri Khurshed Lal: No concession has been given in the price of petrol to this company especially.

Shri R. K. Sidhva: The Deputy Minister stated that the Government are considering the question of overhead charges. Are they actually considering or are they contemplating to consider?

Dr. B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya: May I know whether it is not the practice in joint stock companies not to look upon this loss as loss, but as capital outlay?

Shri Khurshed Lal: I do not think any company considers depreciation as capital outlay.

Shri Mahavir Tyagi: In view of the colossal loss the company is sustaining, may I know whether the Government are considering plans to avert this loss or to make suggestions to the company to wind up or modify its activities? Sir, may I know whether the Government have seriously made any suggestion to the company to avert this heavy loss?

Mr. Speaker: They are all suggestions.

The Honourable Shri Jawaharlal Nehru: In view of the loss incurred this matter requires careful consideration. But I think we are under a misapprehension about this loss business. There have been losses; but if we study any of the big air lines developing, we will grant that certain initial expenses will have to be met. They are heavy. But, on the whole, instead of stopping this, I am prepared to congratulate the company on the way they have conducted their business.

DUTCH PLANE CRASH IN BOMBAY

103. **Shri R. K. Sidhva:** Will the Honourable Minister of Communications be pleased to state:

(a) whether a communique has been issued by Government regarding the recent crash in Bombay of a plane belonging to the Dutch Airline;

(b) if not, what the reasons for the delay are;

(c) whether it is a fact that a committee was appointed by the Government of India and the Dutch Government to make a report on the incident; and

(d) if so, the extent to which the report has been finalised?

Shri Khurshed Lal (Deputy Minister of Communications): (a) No Sir, no communique has yet been issued on the results of the enquiry into the accident.

(b) to (d). A Committee was appointed by the Director General of Civil Aviation to investigate into the accident and to make a report and a group of officials and Technical Advisors of the Dutch Government were associated with the enquiry. A provisional Report has been prepared by the Committee and the Director General has invited comments from the Dutch Aviation authorities, since their representatives rendered assistance in the enquiry.

Shri R. K. Sidhva: May I ask whether the committee has made a report?

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member said that a Provisional report has been prepared by the Committee.

Shri B. K. Sidhva: May I know the recommendations made in the report?

Shri Khurshed Lal: As I said, we have sent the report to the Dutch Government who assisted us in the enquiry. We do not propose to publish the report without their suggestions.

Shri B. K. Sidhva: May I ask whether the Committee has suggested the cutting down of the Bavai hills and if so what the cost of it will be?

Shri Khurshed Lal: I am not prepared to give out the contents of the report.

Shri B. K. Sidhva: Is there any secrecy about it?

Mr. Speaker: He does not wish to disclose the contents of the report.

Shri B. K. Sidhva: Is it because it is confidential?

Mr. Speaker: There is no use making reference to a report which is in the hands of the experts.

Shri H. V. Kamath: In view of the fact that Santa Cruz is fast becoming or has become an International Airport, have the Government taken care to see that the aerodrome is equipped with the most modern appliances and devices?

Shri Khurshed Lal: All possible efforts consistent with our financial position have been made to equip this air port with the necessary equipment.

Shri H. V. Kamath: Is there any truth in the report that the K.L.M. Liner was warned off the runway, because it was under repair?

Shri Khurshed Lal: That is again entering into what happened at the time. It is going into the contents of the report.

Pandit Hirday Nath Kunru: How long after the accident was the Log Book at Santa Cruz taken possession of by Government?

Shri Khurshed Lal: I require notice of that.

Shri B. K. Sidhva: May I know whether, when the plane was flying over Santa Cruz aerodrome, any signal was given by the Santa Cruz aerodrome that the weather was not good and therefore the plane must direct to some other place?

Shri Khurshed Lal: All these are matters which are involved in that report.

Shri B. K. Sidhva: May I know what is the secrecy about all these things? After all, the public is interested in knowing the facts.

Mr. Speaker: It is not a matter of secrecy. It is a matter of courtesy to those who helped in that enquiry. It is not thought proper to give any publicity to what we think about it without consulting them. There seems to be nothing confidential or secret about it. Next question.]

RAILWAY BOARD

104. Shri B. K. Sidhva: Will the Honourable Minister of Railways be pleased to state:

(a) whether any change has been made in the constitution of the Railway Board after the attainment of Independence and if so, the particulars thereof;

(b) if not, whether Government intend to make any change now;

(c) if the answer to part (b) above be in the negative, the reasons therefor;

(d) how many references have been made to the Honourable Minister by the Railway Board since 15th August 1947; and . . .

(e) how many cases the Railway Board have disposed of after 15th August, 1947 with the powers vested in them, which are equivalent to the powers of the Minister, without consulting the Ministry?

The Honourable Shri N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar: (a) No. The Railway Board as constituted under the Indian Railway Board Act, 1905 (Act IV of 1905), was reconstituted into its present form in 1923, but it has not undergone any change in constitution since the attainment of Independence.

(b) Government have under examination the question of the character and composition of the authority which will control railway operation and policy from the Centre and as part of this examination the question of whether any, and what, changes are required in the Constitution and functioning of the Railway Board will be gone into.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) and (e). The Railway Board functions like any other Ministry of Government in that all questions involving policy and major administrative arrangements are submitted to me for orders. Cases which have any financial implications are examined by the Financial Commissioner who functions in respect of railway finance in the same way as the Finance Secretary does in relation to general finance. Thus, though the decisions are ordinarily those of the Railway Board, they are, particularly in important matters decisions of the Railway Ministry.

It is not possible to state the number of cases disposed of by the Railway Board without reference to me except that they must constitute the great bulk of the cases coming up for disposal. I might however mention for the information of the Honourable Member that the full Board not only takes my orders on all matters of importance but also meets me at least once a week when important issues are discussed; in addition, individual members of the Board and the Chief Commissioner meet me or the Minister of State whenever necessary to discuss important cases, or obtain our orders in writing on such cases.

Shri R. K. Sidhva: May I know whether there is any written constitution for the Railway Board?

The Honourable Shri N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar: The Constitution is contained in orders issued by Government.

Shri R. K. Sidhva: May I know whether, in view of the fact that the Railway Board are in charge of large sums of money, there are any rules or regulations showing what are the powers of the Railway Board?

Mr. Speaker: It is obvious.

Shri R. K. Sidhva: May I know what are the financial powers of the Railway Board, of the Chief Commissioner and the General Managers?

The Honourable Shri N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar: There is an Indian Railway Board Act under which powers are delegated by Government vesting in the Railway Board all the powers of the Central Government in regard to railway operation and finance. It is under that Act that powers are conferred on the Railway Board.

Shri R. K. Sidhva: May I know what is the maximum amount that the Railway Board can spend without reference to Government?

Mr. Speaker: If it is a matter that can be obtained from records, the Honourable Member can refer to the relevant records.

Shri R. K. Sidhva: Is it a fact that, while the Honourable Minister says there is a Constitution for the Railway Board, the Secretary says that there is nothing like a Constitution?

The Honourable Shri N. Gopalswami Ayyangar: This is not a correct representation of what the Secretary told Mr. Sidhva.

Shri R. K. Sidhva: It is not a question of his telling me. It is in writing.

Mr. Speaker: There must be some notification or publication on it.

Prof. N. G. Ranga: We would like to know whether such orders have been published at all, from which members can know the extent of the powers of the Railway Board.

The Honourable Shri N. Gopalswami Ayyangar: The Railway Board's powers can be found in publications which are published by the Railway Board, giving their financial powers, their powers in regard to staff and so on.

Shri M. Tirumala Rao: Are Government under any obligation, has any undertaking been given, to the present incumbents of the Railway Board that so long as they are in service their salaries, etc., will not be touched just as in the case of the Indian Civil Service?

The Honourable Shri N. Gopalswami Ayyangar: There are assurances given to them similar to those given to the Indian Civil Service personnel, and these assurances have got to be respected.

Shri T. T. Krishnamachari: May I ask the Honourable Minister if the reconstitution of the Railway Authority will be made the subject of an amending Act or if it is going to be done departmentally?

The Honourable Shri N. Gopalswami Ayyangar: That is being taken up along with the scheme for the integration of the railway systems in this country, and if legislation is required, it will be undertaken.

Shri T. T. Krishnamachari: If legislation is not required, may I know whether Government will take the House into its confidence before taking the final decision?

The Honourable Shri N. Gopalswami Ayyangar: Certainly.

Shri M. Tirumala Rao: Whatever the reasons for the undertaking given to the Indian Civil Service personnel in the interests of retaining their experience, was a similar undertaking necessary in the case of the Railway Board members?

Mr. Speaker: I am afraid the Honourable Member is trying to argue.

Shri Arun Chandra Guha: The Railway Board seems to enjoy something like autonomy and is somewhat independent of the Railway Ministry and, if so, is it not necessary to change the position?

The Honourable Shri N. Gopalswami Ayyangar: The Railway Board exercises powers which have been delegated to them under law by the Government. They are autonomous in the sense that, within the sphere of delegated authority, they can pass any orders they like.

Shrimati G. Durgabai: May I know what is the position and status of the Public Relations Officer in between the Railway Board and the Ministry of Railways, and also whether Government have any intention of having the Public Relations Officer directly under the Ministry of Railways in view of the fact that he is to have independence of action?

The Honourable Shri N. Gopalswami Ayyangar: We have Public Relations Officers both at the Centre and in connection with individual railway administrations. They work in close liaison with the Information and Broadcasting Ministry, so that publicity is done both in the interests of the railways and in co-ordination with such publicity as is done in respect of the Government as a whole.

Shri H. V. Kamath: Have the members of the Railway Board accepted any voluntary cut in their pay or is the compulsory savings scheme being applied in their case?

The Honourable Shri N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar: They have behaved in exactly the same way as the I.C.S. officers have done.

Pandit Harday Nath Kunzru: Is it a fact that the impression that the Railway Board is in many matters independent of the Government absolutely unfounded?

The Honourable Shri N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar: I think strictly speaking it should be described as unfounded because there is nothing which prevents the Minister from giving instructions in respect of any matter even if it is within the sphere of the Railway Board's delegated authority.

Shri B. K. Sidhva: Morally; not legally.

Mr. Frank Anthony: Is it not a fact that because in the past the Railway Board did not have sufficient powers of co-ordination and control that the different railway systems operated according to disparate standards with consequent loss of efficiency?

The Honourable Shri N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar: I think that would be an inaccurate description of the reasons for such want of co-ordination as the Honourable Member may have found.

Shri Arun Chandra Guha: The Honourable Minister stated in reply to my question that Government have delegated certain powers to the Railway Board. Following our Independence, do these powers now conflict with the powers of the Ministry and when the Government intend to make the Railway Board just as amenable to the discipline of the Ministry in line with other Departments?

The Honourable Shri N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar: Sir, even before we attained Independence, there was, not the Minister for Railways, but a Member for Railways in the old Executive Council; but now after Independence, I have already said that the Railway Board functions like any other Ministry of Government. It functions under the general supervision and control of the Minister in charge.

Shri B. K. Sidhva: The Honourable Minister stated that he is considering the revision of this Railway Board Constitution. May I know whether he will take the Finance Railway Committee into confidence and this House into confidence.

The Honourable Shri N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar: The Honourable Member knows that I do not keep anything away from the Railway Standing Finance Committee. If they want the information, it will be furnished.

Shri B. K. Sidhva: At least in the Railway Board matter, I think it was not taken into confidence, when I put a question . . .

Mr. Speaker: It is very wrong to base criticisms in that manner.

MANUFACTURING OF LOCOMOTIVES

†*105. **Shri B. K. Sidhva:** (a) Will the Honourable Minister of Railways be pleased to state whether it is a fact that the Finance Commissioner for Railways had been to London to negotiate for the purchase of machinery for manufacturing locomotives in India? If so, what is the result of his visit?

(b) When are locomotives likely to be manufactured in India and what is likely to be the total cost for installation of necessary factories?

† Answer to this question laid on the table, the questioner having exhausted his quota.

The Honourable Shri N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar: (a) No and, therefore, the second part of the question does not arise.

(b) It is presumed that the Honourable Member is referring to the production of locomotives in the new factories which are under construction. The first locomotives from the Locomotive Manufacturing Works, Chittaranjan, are likely to be completed during the last quarter of 1950.

The total cost of the project at Chittaranjan is expected to be about Rs. 14.75 crores.

D.T.S. STRIKE

***106. Dr. Mono Mohon Das:** Will the Honourable Minister of Transport be pleased to state:

(a) the loss incurred by the Delhi Transport Service due to the last strike by its employees;

(b) the number of employees discharged for striking work;

(c) the number of new appointments, both temporary and permanent, made during the strike; and

(d) the number of these new employees still in service?

The Honourable Shri K. Santhanam: (a) About Rs. 1,38,000.

(b) 1,227.

(c) 696, all temporary.

(d) 170.

Dr. Mono Mohon Das: May I know what were the grievances of these employees of the D.T.S. on which they had to take this extreme course?

The Honourable Shri K. Santhanam: So far as the actual grievances are concerned, there is another question to which I shall be giving detailed answers.

Sardar Bhopinder Singh Man: How many of these employees who were discharged for striking were re-absorbed?

The Honourable Shri K. Santhanam: All, except 141.

Sardar Bhopinder Singh Man: What were the reasons as to why these 141 were not employed again?

The Honourable Shri K. Santhanam: It was because there were no vacancies. We had to absorb them gradually and we have not been able to find place for these 141.

Sardar Bhopinder Singh Man: May I take it that these 141 people will be absorbed eventually?

The Honourable Shri K. Santhanam: Yes, Sir. We have given instructions that they should be given preference over other applicants whenever there are vacancies.

Shri R. K. Sidhva: The Honourable Minister stated that when the next question comes, he would like to give an answer. It may not reach; it is not possible, I do not know. Will he therefore give us the answer here?

Mr. Speaker: What is the next question?

Shri R. K. Sidhva: I do not know what is the number of the question he was referring. We will not reach that.

The Honourable Shri K. Santhanam: May I also point out that the actual complaints are not involved in this actual question. I can read the reply to question No. 130, if you so permit but it will only be taking up the time of other questions which come before this question.

Prof. Shibban Lal Saksena: Will the Honourable Minister lay before the House the report of the Committee of Inquiry appointed by the Minister which led to the dismissal of the General Manager.

The Honourable Shri K. Santhanam: Sir, there was no committee of inquiry appointed by the Ministry of Transport nor did it result in the dismissal of the Manager.

Prof. Shibban Lal Saksena: Has the General Manager been dismissed?

The Honourable Shri K. Santhanam: No, his term of service was over and someone else has been appointed.

Prof. Shibban Lal Saksena: May I know the cause of removal or the termination of his service.

The Honourable Shri K. Santhanam: I have already stated that he was not dismissed at all. He was only a temporary servant and his services were terminated in the usual course, and someone else appointed in his place.

Prof. Shibban Lal Saksena: Did the General Manager and another person make an inquiry into the affairs of the D.T.S. and was some action taken on the result?

The Honourable Shri K. Santhanam: On technical matters we asked certain persons to advise us and two persons were asked to advise on specific matters and they have given us some advice, but there was no formal committee of enquiry.

Prof. Shibban Lal Saksena: Will the report of these persons be placed before the House?

Mr. Speaker: Order, order.

Dr. Mono Mohon Das: May I know whether the workers of the D.T.S. have got a Union of their own, and if so, under the I.N.T.U.C.?

The Honourable Shri K. Santhanam: Not so far as I know.

Shri H. V. Samath: In spite of the fact, Sir, that the strike was not declared illegal by Government why was punitive action taken on such a large scale against the employees of the D.T.S.?

The Honourable Shri K. Santhanam: The strike was wholly uncalled for and it did cause a great deal of harm to the public, and therefore no one can get off with impunity.

Prof. Shibban Lal Saksena: Does the Honourable Minister say that any lawful strike will not be permitted because it caused inconvenience?

Mr. Speaker: This is a hypothetical argument.

WIND MILLS

*107. **Dr. Mono Mohon Das:** (a) Will the Honourable Minister of Agriculture be pleased to state whether Government have carried out any experiments regarding the use of wind mills as a source of power for irrigation or any other purpose?

(b) If so, what are the results of such experiments?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulatram: (a) Some experimental work has been carried out at the Poona Observatory on the utilisation of windpower for pumping water. •

(b) The results obtained at the Poona Observatory were not considered encouraging for the extended use of wind mills for crop irrigation requiring large quantities of water at specific periods of crop development. But an expert committee which examined the question has suggested that experiments may be carried out to investigate their suitability for large scale irrigation by installing wind mills at certain selected places in different parts of India, where the necessary velocity of the wind is maintained during a certain period of time and the Provincial and State Governments have been requested to prepare schemes for the purpose. Twelve places have been recommended for the experiment.

Dr. Mono Mohon Das: May know, Sir, whether these experiments that have been carried have given a promising result?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulatram: Not those that were carried out at the Poona Observatory.

Dr. Mono Mohon Das: May I know if the result of such experiments are promising?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulatram: These experiments are to be carried out now by the Provincial Governments at places selected.

Shri E. K. Sidhva: May I ask when we can get the report?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulatram: The experiment has not yet been started.

Prof. N. G. Ranga: What are these 12 places where these experiments are being conducted?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulatram: Allahabad, Ahmedabad, Rajkot, Bhuj, Pusa, Bombay, Poona, Belgaum, Melgaon, Coimbatore, Trichinopoly and Vizagapatam.

Dr. P. S. Deshmukh: Have Government explored the possibility of manufacturing wind mills in India?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulatram: I require notice of that question.

Shri Mahavir Tyagi: Is Allahabad reported to be windy enough to enable the Ministry to have its experiment with "Wind Mills"? Are these places selected on the basis of any observatory report?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulatram: Yes; they are selected on the basis of reports as to the velocity of wind in those places.

COLLAPSE OF HUTMENTS

*108. **Dr. Mono Mohon Das:** Will the Honourable Minister of Works, Mines and Power be pleased to state:

(a) the action taken against various officers whose defective supervision was found by the Enquiry Committee to be responsible for the collapse of a number of hutments in the Northern Extension Area (Pusa Road), New Delhi, after heavy rains in last July; and

(b) the action taken against the contractors who built those houses?

The Honourable Shri Satyanarayan Sinha (Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs): (a) Charges have been framed against the officers who were *prima facie* responsible for the defective supervision, and the disciplinary proceedings are in progress.

(b) All the damage, which on investigation was found to have been due to faulty construction, is being repaired at the expense of the contractors, who

were responsible for the work, except for the five seriously damaged houses, the site for rebuilding which is under consideration.

Dr. Mono Mohon Das: May I know whether any other hutments have collapsed after July last?

The Honourable Shri Satyanarayan Sinha: No.

Dr. V. Subramaniam: Has the Contractor been removed from the list of authorized contractors?

The Honourable Shri Satyanarayan Sinha: Most of these contractors were refugee contractors.

Dr. Mono Mohon Das: May I know, Sir, what is the average life of these hutments according to Government?

The Honourable Shri Satyanarayan Sinha: These were temporary houses.

Shri H. V. Kamath: Sir, is it fair to this House that the Minister concerned should be absent from the House when the business of the House should have top priority with him, and that the officiating Minister should be burdened with his duties?

Mr. Speaker: Order, order.

Shri Mahavir Tyagi: I do not want to embarrass the officiating Minister. May I know whether the members of this enquiry committee belonged to the same department?

The Honourable Shri Satyanarayan Sinha: Of course the Chief Engineer was a member of the Committee and there was also an officer of the Ministry of Health on the Committee.

Sardar Bhopinder Singh Man: What are the results of this enquiry instituted into this whole affair?

The Honourable Shri Satyanarayan Sinha: The report of the enquiry committee has been received and the Ministry is scrutinising it.

Sardar Bhopinder Singh Man: Is it a fact that after the collapse of these hutments the contract for the erection of further hutments has been given to the same contractor?

The Honourable Shri Satyanarayan Sinha: I require notice of that.

Pandit Hriday Nath Kunzru: What is the number of the hutments that had collapsed altogether?

The Honourable Shri Satyanarayan Sinha: Out of 2,452 houses constructed, 56 were damaged during the rains.

Shri Mahavir Tyagi: How much loss was involved to the Government on account of this?

The Honourable Shri Satyanarayan Sinha: Practically no loss, because most of the loss has been recovered from the contractors. The Government will have to bear a loss of Rs. 9,000 which will be met out of the maintenance charges.

SUBSIDIARY FOOD PRODUCTION COMMITTEE

*109. **Shri Satis Chandra Samanta:** Will the Honourable Minister of Food be pleased to state:

- (a) when the Subsidiary Food Production Committee was formed;
- (b) the names of the members on the Committee;
- (c) whether there is any non-official member in the Committee; and
- (d) how much progress the Committee has made so far?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulatram: (a) The 6th of May, 1949.

(b) The Committee consists of a Chairman (Minister for Food and Agriculture), a Vice-Chairman (Shri Shri Ram) and two members (Shri S. V. Ramamurti and the Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Food, *ex-officio*).

(c) There are two non-official members (i) Shri Shri Ram and (ii) Shri S. V. Ramamurti.

(d) A note detailing the progress made by the Committee up to the end of October, 1949, is laid on the Table of the House. (See Appendix V, annexure No. 8.)

Dr. Muno Mohan Das: How many special officers have been appointed by this Committee?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulatram: I do not think there are many officers but if the Honourable Member wants to know the exact number I shall be able to give it.

Shri B. K. Sridha: How much money has been set apart and how much has been spent towards this Subsidiary Food Production Committee?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulatram: Rs. 10 lakhs was set apart and we have so far spent about three lakhs.

Shri B. K. Sridha: How much addition has it meant to the food production of the country?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulatram: As the House knows this is a programme which has been started only recently. We are proceeding on two lines: first, to increase the production of subsidiary foods through a larger acreage under subsidiary foods in different parts of the country and secondly, introducing the flour of sweet potatoes and groundnuts in the rations issued. These things will take time. At present about 20,000 acres have been put under sweet potatoes and bananas. In the sphere of rationing we have issued out about 1,000 maunds of sweet potato flour and 1,000 maunds of groundnut flour. We are watching the public reaction to this and also as seeing how far we can maintain the flour in a healthy condition for human consumption.

Prof. N. G. Ranga: How much additional quantity of subsidiary food does this Committee expect to be able to place at the disposal of the Government during this year?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulatram: It is not possible to give any figure in this manner. As I said we are experimenting with the initial plans. We are trying to see how long we can keep the rationed sweet potato flour before it deteriorates, how long it can be kept in healthy condition when mixed with wheat flour. All these experiments would take some time. It is impossible to forecast what would be the quantity of flour which will be made available to the public.

Shrimati G. Durgabai: May I know whether any committee has been constituted to advise with regard to the matters connected with the reclamation of waste land and allied subjects, as indicated in the reply of the Honourable Minister to the point raised by my honourable friend Shrimati Renuka Ray during the budget debate? If so, what has been the work done by that committee?

Mr. Speaker: I do not think that this is the duty of the Subsidiary Food Production Committee. This question is not related to the present one.

Sardar Bhopinder Singh Man: These 20,000 acres which have been put under subsidiary foods, are they new land or they have been released from the land which has already been under cultivation with other food crops?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulstram: I would not be able to give you a reply straight off. These are foods which give a higher yield per acre. Even where a certain area is taken from rice or wheat the net yield of foodstuff by cultivation of subsidiary foods would be much larger.

Shri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar: What exceptional qualifications did these two non-official members possess either as scientists or as agriculturists or as businessmen dealing in food crops?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulstram: They are members because they were greatly interested in these matters and had certain knowledge of the subject.

Shri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar: Is it as consumers?

Shri Mahavir Tyagi: May I know whether the function of the committee is operational in encouragement of the cultivation of food crops or only scientific research?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulstram: The function of the Committee is to organise cultivation through the provincial governments.

Shri Mahavir Tyagi: Is there any agriculturist on this committee?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulstram: No agriculturist is needed because we have plenty of agricultural experts. These are people who will organise, not themselves cultivate.

Shri H. V. Kamath: Has this Subsidiary Food Production Committee resulted in the production of many subsidiary officers as well?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulstram: I do not think we have got more than two or three officers working under this Committee.

Shri P. T. Chacko: May I know if tuber cultivation is being experimented on and if so what is the result?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulstram: Sweet potatoes and tapioca are tubers. There has been no large scale experiment in regard to tapioca.

Dr. P. S. Deshmukh: Are the Government satisfied with the results obtained and the success achieved in spoiling the elementary basic foods?

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. It is a matter of opinion.

Shri E. K. Sidha: When this Committee was appointed was any plan made out as to what will be the actual extra food available?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulstram: It will depend on the results achieved. How can a paper plan tell you as to what will be the extent of cultivation and production?

Shri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar: Has the nutritive value of these subsidiary foods been made the subject of research?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulstram: It is well known that these are nutritious foods.

APPOINTMENT OF CATERING CONTRACTORS

*110. **Shri Satis Chandra Samanta:** Will the Honourable Minister of Railways be pleased to state:

(a) whether the recommendations of the Railway Advisory Board to appoint local professional men as catering contractors in small stations have been given effect to,

(b) if the answer to part (a) above be in the affirmative (i) in how many stations and (ii) on which Railways; and

(c) if the answer to part (a) above be in the negative, by what time Government propose to implement them?

The Honourable Shri K. Santhanam: (a) The recommendations are being given effect to.

(b) A statement giving the information desired is laid on the Table of the House. (See Appendix V, annexure No. 4.)

(c) Does not arise.

Shri Satis Chandra Samanta: Is it a fact that the D.G. Food, B.N. Railway invited tenders for catering tea, sweets, etc. in small stations on the B.N. Railway from Howrah to Puri by advertisements appearing in local English and Bengali newspapers on 5th February last?

The Honourable Shri K. Santhanam: It is obviously impossible for me to reply to a specific question like that without proper notice.

Shri Satis Chandra Samanta: Is it a fact that Ishardas Ballabdas were several times fined and warned and they still continue to be contractors?

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. It is a question relating to an individual contractor.

Shri Ajit Prasad Jain: On what date was the recommendation made by the Central Advisory Council?

The Honourable Shri K. Santhanam: The recommendation was made by the Central Advisory Council for Railways at their meeting held on the 5th February 1949.

Shri Ajit Prasad Jain: Is it a fact that the contractor who held a large contract over a large area still continues to hold it?

Mr. Speaker: That is the same question coming in a different form.

Shri Ajit Prasad Jain: I want to know whether that recommendation has been actually given effect to.

The Honourable Shri K. Santhanam: I am placing on the table a statement showing that 113 contracts have been given to local contractors in accordance with the recommendation of the Central Advisory Council.

Shri Mahavir Tyagi: Are these contractors allowed to have sub-contractors under them?

The Honourable Shri K. Santhanam: The terms of the contract prohibit the subletting of contracts.

Mr. Frank Anthony: Is it not a fact that the standard of catering and the quality of food are steadily deteriorating?

The Honourable Shri K. Santhanam: I do not think so. To the extent that the quality of the basic food stuffs have deteriorated to that extent the catering also has to deteriorate.

Mr. Speaker: The question hour is over.

(b) WRITTEN ANSWERS

CLASSIFICATION OF RAILWAY COMPARTMENTS

*111. **Shri H. V. Kamath:** Will the Honourable Minister of Railways be pleased to state:

(a) whether the new classification of compartments introduced on the Railways in January 1949 has been productive of greater income;

(b) if so, the income derived from passenger fares from January, 1949 up till 30th September 1949, and the receipt for the corresponding period during the years 1947 and 1948;

(c) whether it is a fact that the new classification has entailed considerable discomfort to railway passengers; and

(d) whether Government are considering any revision of the classification, and if so, on what lines?

The Honourable Shri N. Gopalswami Ayyangar: (a) The re-classification was in respect of the Upper classes only and this has not been productive of greater income.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Government have received complaints to this effect.

(d) A special class between Class II and Class I with amenities very nearly same as those provided for the old Second Class is being introduced from tomorrow. The fare for this class which is designated 'Class II Special' will, however, be 14 pies per mile instead of 16 pies per mile charged for the old Second Class.

SUGAR SHORTAGE

*112. **Shri B. L. Malviya:** (a) Will the Honourable Minister of Agriculture be pleased to state what steps Government have taken to fight the sudden scarcity of sugar created in the country?

(b) Do Government intend to import sugar to fight this shortage?

(c) If not, why not?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulatram: (a) The Honourable Member's attention is drawn to the answer given in reply to question No. 101 part (c).

(b) No.

(c) The main reason is the difficult foreign exchange position.

TARGET DATE OF FOOD IMPORTS

*113. **Shri B. L. Malviya:** (a) Will the Honourable Minister of Food be pleased to state whether it is a fact that the target date of 1951 for stopping all food imports has been changed to 1950?

(b) What intensive measures have been adopted by Government to make possible this change in schedule?

(c) Do the Government of India propose to build up a large food reserve by that date so as to meet any unexpected shortage of food in India?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulatram: (a) No.

(b) and (c). Do not arise.

CO-OPERATIVE FARMING

*114. **Seth Govind Das:** Will the Honourable Minister of Agriculture be pleased to state the total amount of land area under co-operative farming and the steps that are being taken to encourage co-operative farming in India?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulatram: The total area under Co-operative Farming in various Provinces and States and Unions of States (excluding Patiala and East Punjab States Union and Travancore and Cochin States Union for which information is not available) was 40,065 acres during 1948-49.

The steps taken to encourage Co-operative Farming are assignment of Government land for Co-operative Colonisation, free grants and subsidies, loans for purchase of manure, implements, bullocks, etc., free services of agricultural and Co-operative staff, and rebate or remission of land revenue assessment for the first few years.

LAND FOR FOOD OR FODDER CROPS

*115. **Seth Govind Das:** Will the Honourable Minister of Agriculture be pleased to state whether Government propose to consider the advisability of fixing a minimum area of land in each village where only food or fodder crops must be grown and if not, why not?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulatram: The suggestion is not practicable as the soil in certain villages may be more suitable for other crops.

CATTLE SLAUGHTER

*116. **Seth Govind Das:** Will the Honourable Minister of Agriculture be pleased to state:

(a) the number of cows, heifers, calves, bulls and bullocks, slaughtered in the years 1947-48 and 1948-49 in the Municipal Slaughter Houses, and the number killed in private butcher houses during the same years; and

(b) how many of the slaughtered animals were certified by the Veterinary Doctors as unfit for work, breeding or milk yield purposes, and how many non-officials were associated with the Veterinary Doctors to examine the utility or otherwise of the cattle killed?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulatram: (a) and (b). The information is being collected from the Provincial Governments, Local Administrations, States and States Unions and will be furnished to the House in due course.

FOODSTUFFS SUPPLIED ON THE RAILWAYS

*117. **Seth Govind Das:** Will the Honourable Minister of Railways be pleased to state:

(a) the number of cases reported to Railway authorities regarding adulteration of foodstuffs supplied on the Railways during the financial year 1948-49;

(b) the number of such cases that are being followed up by instituting prosecution proceedings; and

(c) the number of prosecutions already made?

The Honourable Shri K. Santbanam: (a) The number of reported cases of adulteration of food supplied in Railway premises over the Indian Government Railways during 1948-49 was fifty-eight.

(b) Prosecutions have been instituted in twenty-five cases.

(c) Of the twenty-five cases in which proceedings have been instituted, convictions have been obtained in thirteen; the others are pending.

NEW RAILWAY LINES

*118. **Seth Govind Das:** Will the Honourable Minister of Railways be pleased to state the number of additional railway lines that are proposed to be opened in the financial year 1949-50?

The Honourable Shri N. Gopaldaswami Ayyangar: The following additional lines of railway have already been opened in the year 1949-50:

- (i) Dahinsara-Malia on the Saurashtra Railway.
- (ii) Himayatnagar-Dhanora section of Mudkhed-Adilabad Branch on the N.S. Railway.
- (iii) Kanore-Bari Sadri section of Mayli Jn-Bari Sadri Branch on the Rajasthan Railway.

The following lines are expected to be opened within the current financial year:

- (i) Assam Rail Link, (ii) Khirsadob-Rawanwara N.G. section on the B.N. Railway, and (iii) Kanalus-Gop Branch on the Saurashtra Railway.

PRICES OF SUGAR

*119. **Shri O. V. Alagesan:** (a) Will the Honourable Minister of Agriculture be pleased to state the extent of the rise in price of sugar above that fixed by Government before stocks were frozen?

(b) What is the estimated loss to consumers on account of the rise in price of sugar?

(c) What steps have Government taken to prevent such rise in price of sugar in future?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulatram: (a) The rise in price has varied from place to place. The rise at Hapur on 31st August 1949 was Rs. 9 per maund above that fixed by Government when the stocks were frozen.

(b) It is not practicable to estimate this as the quantity of sugar purchased and the prices have varied from place to place.

(c) The question of steps to prevent steep rises in prices in future is under consideration.

SUGAR FOR PROVINCES AND STATES

*120. **Shri O. V. Alagesan:** (a) Will the Honourable Minister of Agriculture be pleased to state what are the quantities of sugar that have been allotted to the various Provinces and States after sugar stocks were frozen?

(b) What is the basis on which these allotments are made?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulatram: (a) A statement showing allocations of sugar made out of frozen stocks, is laid on the Table of the House. (See Appendix V, annexure No. 5.)

(b) The allotment of sugar to various Provinces/States Unions/States out of the frozen stocks was made after consideration of the following factors generally:

- (i) Sugar already received from U.P. and Bihar factories from 1st December, 1948 to middle of August, 1949 by each area.
- (ii) Total and urban population of each area.
- (iii) Per capita consumption of sugar in each area during the Control year 1945-46.
- (iv) The average off-take of each area per month from December, 1948 to June, 1949 during which period the sugar situation was more or less normal.

(v) Any special circumstances existing in any particular area.

FROZEN STOCKS OF SUGAR

*121. **Shri Basants Kumar Das:** Will the Honourable Minister of Agriculture be pleased to state:

(a) the total stocks of sugar frozen by Government in the month of September, in different provinces;

(b) the individual rationed quota and the controlled price of sugar in different provinces; and

(c) the estimated shortage of sugar for six months from October 1949?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulatram: (a) A statement showing the stocks freed in different provinces and allotments made to them and other areas is laid on the Table of the House. (See Appendix V, annexure No. 5.)

(b) A statement showing the quantity issued per person or family by different provinces and states is laid on the Table of the House. (See Appendix V, annexure No. 6.) Information in regard to prices charged is being collected and will be submitted as soon as received.

(c) It is difficult to give estimates of the supply and demand position for the period mentioned until production for the next season has appreciably advanced.

LOCATION OF FEDERAL COURT

*122. **Shri O. V. Alagesan:** (a) Will the Honourable Minister of Works, Mines and Power be pleased to state whether any decision has been taken regarding the location of the Federal Court?

(b) If so, what is the decision?

The Honourable Shri Satyanarayan Sinha (Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs): (a) and (b). Government have decided that the Federal Court should be located in Delhi. Due to financial stringency, it is not possible to construct a new building for the purpose at present. The question whether the Court should continue in the Council House for the interim period or be shifted to some premises in Delhi is still under consideration.

TUBE-WELLS FOR IRRIGATION

*123. **Shri Kishorimohan Tripathi:** (a) Will the Honourable Minister of Agriculture be pleased to state the total number of tube-wells the Government of India proposed to bore during the financial year 1949-50?

(b) In which of the provinces were these wells to be bored?

(c) How many of these wells have already been bored and are ready for irrigating land?

(d) Did Government execute the work through their own men and machinery or through some private agency?

(e) If through private agency, what was the agency employed?

(f) What has been the expenditure on each well bored and what will be the additional yield from each acre of land irrigated by such a well?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulatram: (a) The Government of India did not propose to construct any tube-wells themselves during the year 1949-50. The few wells dug were as part of training and exploration and not part of any construction programme which is a Provincial responsibility. But a programme for the construction of 4,000 tube-wells and 500 feeder-wells

during a period of three years by the Provinces of E.P., U.P. and Bihar has been under consideration. No specific target has yet been fixed for the financial year 1949-50, but the concerned Provinces have been asked for a target on the basis of the machinery available with them. It will be laid on the table of the House as soon as it is received.

(b) to (f). Do not arise.

INSURANCE OF CATTLE AND CROPS

*124. **Shri Kishorimohan Tripathi:** Will the Honourable Minister of Agriculture be pleased to state what exploratory or experimental measures the Government of India have undertaken to insure cattle and crops in India?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulatram: A research pilot Scheme for crop and cattle insurance, to be put into operation in selected areas, is being worked out on the basis of the reports of the Special Officer appointed for this purpose and will be considered in consultation with the Provinces and States.

DISEASE-FREE SEEDS

*125. **Shri Kishorimohan Tripathi:** (a) Will the Honourable Minister of Agriculture be pleased to state if any researches have been carried out under Government auspices to obtain disease-free seeds of wheat and paddy?

(b) If so, what have been the results?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulatram: (a) Yes.

(b) A statement is laid on the Table of the House. (See Appendix V, annexure No. 7.)

AGRICULTURAL QUOTA OF IRON AND CEMENT

*126. **Shri Kishorimohan Tripathi:** (a) Will the Honourable Minister of Agriculture be pleased to state what quota of iron and cement is made available each quarter to the different provinces for agricultural purposes?

(b) Is the quota constant or variable from quarter to quarter?

(c) How do the Government of India ascertain whether or not the agricultural quota of iron and cement is used for the purpose for which it is intended?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulatram: (a) *Iron and Steel.*—The quota of Iron and Steel for agricultural purposes has been separated from the general quota allocated to the Provinces and the States with effect from quarter II (April to June) 1949. Quota-wise allocations from period II of 1949 to period I of 1950 are as follows:

Quarter II of 1949—21867.5 tons.

Quarter III of 1949—24370 tons.

Quarter IV of 1949—24370 plus an *ad hoc* allocation of 15,000 tons.

Quarter I of 1950—34880 tons.

In addition, the Provincial Governments have agreed to utilize 50 per cent. of their general scrap allocation of approximately 16,600 tons per quarter for agricultural purposes.

Cement.—The quota of cement for agricultural purposes has been separated from the general quota allocated to the Provinces and the States with effect from quarter IV (October-December) 1949. The total quantity allocated for this period for agricultural purposes was 75,000 tons. Two statements showing the Province-wise break up of the iron and steel and cement allocated for agricultural purposes are laid on the Table of the House. (See Appendix V, annexure No. 8.)

(b) Quotas vary from quarter to quarter depending on the total availability and the demand.

(c) As the Government of India do not have an inspection agency functioning inside the Provinces and States, the responsibility of safeguarding against misuse of the quotas has been laid on the Provincial and State Governments concerned. Their attention has been invited to the necessity for introducing proper system of distribution, and most of the major Provinces and States have taken action. A note on the distribution arrangements prevalent in the Provinces is laid on the Table of the House. (See Appendix V, annexure No. 9.)

PRICE OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS

*127. **Shri Kishorimohan Tripathi:** (a) Will the Honourable Minister of Agriculture be pleased to state whether there is any proposal before Government to make certain legislation for ensuring minimum fair-price of agricultural products such as wheat, paddy, cotton and jute?

(b) If so, when do Government propose to come forward with the said legislation before this House?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulatram: (a) Minimum prices for raw cotton and sugarcane have already been fixed. In the case of foodgrains also, procurement prices have been fixed by the various Provinces and State Governments in consultation with the Government of India.

(b) There is, for the time being, no such proposal under the consideration of the Government.

NIGHT AIR MAIL SERVICE

*128. **Shri V. C. Kesava Rao:** (a) Will the Honourable Minister of Communications be pleased to state whether it is a fact that representations have been received by Government from air lines authorities against the resumption of night air mail service?

(b) What is the nature of the representation?

(c) Why has it been considered necessary by Government to restart the night air mail service?

Shri Khurshed Lal (Deputy Minister of Communications): (a) and (b). The air transport companies had represented that without a guarantee from Government of a minimum revenue per mile flown, the night air mail service would result in heavy losses to the operator and would deprive the day services of a substantial load of mail and revenue. The fare of 12½ per cent. over the first class railway fare would be uneconomic and, besides the wastage of fuel and equipment in its operation, there would be no appreciable saving of time in the delivery of letters.

(c) The night air mail services enable material saving in the time necessary for transport of mails and meet the proved requirements for air transport of persons who cannot afford the higher rates of air travel by day.

GROW MORE FOOD

*129. **Shri V. C. Kesava Rao:** (a) Will the Honourable Minister of Agriculture be pleased to state what are the latest plans that have been drawn up to produce more food?

(b) How do Government propose to implement them?

The Honourable Shri Jai Ramdas Doulatram: (a) and (b). The latest food production plans of the Government of India consist of a series of short-term Grow-More-Food Schemes both of permanent and recurring nature. The types of such schemes which are taken up by the Provincial and State Governments, and financed by the Government of India are of the following categories:

I. Permanent Schemes.—(i) Land improvement schemes including land reclamation, and (ii) Minor irrigation schemes like construction of wells, tanks, channels, small dams, lift irrigation.

II Recurring Schemes.—(i) Distribution of improved seeds, (ii) Distribution of chemical fertilisers, (iii) Distribution of manures like oil cake, compost, green manure, and (iv) Plant protection schemes and other schemes of miscellaneous nature designed to increase food production.

D.T.S. STRIKE

***130. Shri V. C. Kesava Rao:** (a) Will the Honourable Minister of Transport be pleased to state whether all the workers of the Delhi Transport Service who went on strike in August 1949 have been reinstated?

(b) What are the major demands of the workers and what action have Government taken to meet their demands?

The Honourable Shri K. Santhanam: (a) No. One hundred and forty-one strikers have not so far been re-employed. Their re-employment will be considered as and when vacancies arise.

(b) The major demands of the workers are:

- (i) recognition of the Delhi Transport Service Labour Union; (ii) grant of annual increment and bonus; (iii) payment of house rent and compensatory allowances to clerical and supervisory (traffic) staff; (iv) running allowance to the line staff; (v) supply of uniforms to certain categories of staff; (vi) application of Central Government servants leave rules to Delhi Transport Service employees; (vii) provision of medical facilities and arrangements for residential quarters; (viii) extension of facilities of provident fund to all the staff; and (ix) abolition of 'candidate' system and system of keeping unpaid apprentices in the workshops.

Demands relating to the provision of medical facilities, dearness allowance and abolition of candidate system have already been met. Facilities of the Provident Fund have already been extended to the staff taken over from G. N. I. T. The rest of the demands are under active consideration.

POSTS AND TELEGRAPHS

***131. Shri Arun Chandra Guha:** Will the Honourable Minister of Communications be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Posts and Telegraphs Department has been running at any profit;

(b) if so, how the profit is disposed of;

(c) whether there is any accumulated surplus fund; and

(d) if so, how it is kept and how it is going to be spent?

Shri Khurshed Lal (Deputy Minister of Communications): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) The net profit has been shared equally in 1948-49 and 1949-50 between General Revenues and the P. & T. Department. Previously the ratio was different.

(c) The accumulated surplus till the end of 1948-49 amounted to 9.64 crores, and as the finances of the Deptt. form part of the general finances of Government of India, the accumulated surplus remains merged in the general balances, and is not kept in any separate fund. A separate *proforma* account is, however, maintained, and in the interest which the Department has to pay to the general revenues on account of its capital at charge, the Department get a rebate, for the amount of accumulated surplus.

(d) The accumulated surplus should normally be available for improvement of services after providing for a reserve to meet possible losses in the future. But for the current year and probably for sometime to come, this is likely to be practicable only partially, taking into account Government's financial position as a whole.

EXTRA DEPARTMENTAL EMPLOYEES

*132. **Shri Lakshminarayan Sahu:** (a) Will the Honourable Minister of Communications be pleased to state whether the Extra Departmental Sub—and Branch Postmasters are entrusted with the duties that are performed by the Departmental Sub—and Branch Postmasters?

(b) If the reply to part (a) above be in the affirmative, do they get the same or proportionate pay and allowances based on the actual hours of duty performed by them?

(c) Is it a fact that there are about twenty lakhs of E. D. employees serving the Posts and Telegraphs Department?

(d) Is it a fact that these employees have asked for recognition of their unions by Government?

(e) If so, has the recognition been given?

Shri Khurshed Lal (Deputy Minister of Communications): (a) Only such of them as are most elementary.

(b) Their pay and allowances are considered commensurate with the work performed and the hours of duty put in by them.

(c) No. There are only about 25,000 E.D. employees serving the Department.

(d) Yes.

(e) No.

PLANT AT CHITTARANJAN

*133. { **Sjt. Kuladhar Ohaliba:**
Shri Lakshminarayan Sahu:

(a) Will the Honourable Minister of Railways be pleased to state what progress has been made in the scheme to start a plant at Chittaranjan for turning out railway engines locally?

(b) Has the plant begun working and if not, when will it begin to work?

The Honourable Shri N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar: (a) Out of 7 main units comprising the Workshops, 2, viz., the Light Machine Shop and the Pattern Shop have been erected and work on the remaining 5 shops is well in hand. In the Colony, 1100 houses out of 5,000 have been completed and the construction of another 1,700 is in progress. Work on other ancillary works like roads, water supply and sanitary arrangements is also advancing satisfactorily.

(b) The plant has not yet gone into actual production, which is anticipated to commence during 1950.

ALL-UP POSTAL SCHEME

*134. **Shri Ajit Prasad Jain:** (a) Will the Honourable Minister of Communications be pleased to state what was the total average monthly income from the Air surcharge during the period of one year preceding the introduction of All-up Postal Scheme?

(b) What was the average monthly expenditure during the preceding one year on the Air Mail and what would be the expenditure if the same mail was carried otherwise than by Air?

(c) What is the average monthly increased income on all mail resulting from the increased postal rates since the introduction of the All-up Postal Scheme?

(d) What is the average monthly extra expenditure incurred due to the All-up Postal Scheme since its introduction?

Shri Khurshed Lal (Deputy Minister of Communications): Statistics in such detail as asked for by the Honourable Member are not maintained by the Posts and Telegraphs Department. On sample statistics, however, the approximate figures will be as follows.

(a) Rs. 1,29,000/- per month

(b) Rs. 93,000/- per month.

There would be no extra expenditure if the mails were carried by rail.

(c) Rs. 30,90,000/- per month.

(d) Rs. 3,30,000/- per month.

RAILWAY CLEARING ACCOUNTS OFFICE

*135. **Shri Ajit Prasad Jain:** Will the Honourable Minister of Railways be pleased to state:

- (a) the functions performed by Railway Clearing Accounts Office;
- (b) the number of officers and ministerial and inferior staff employed there;
- (c) the expenses annually incurred on the office; and
- (d) whether there is any scheme for reducing the expenses?

The Honourable Shri N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar: (a) The Functions of the Railway Clearing Accounts Office are as stated below:

(i) Utilize the agency of the Railway Clearing Accounts Office for purpose of check of documents relating to Inter-Railway traffic (Assam, E.I., E.P., B.B. & C.I. and G.I.P. Railways), technically known as 'Foreign traffic' and the apportionment of the earnings between the Railways concerned.

(ii) Similarly, G.I.P. and Assam Railways utilize this organization for the check of documents relating to local traffic originating and terminating at stations on their systems and for the valuation and billing work relating to Military and Civil credit notes.

(iii) Compilation of initial statistical data for the five railways mentioned in (i) above relating to all traffic dealt with in the Clearing Accounts Office.

(iv) Compilation of zonal trade statistics for the Director-General, Commercial Intelligence and Statistics, Ministry of Commerce, Government of India.

(b) Gazetted Officers 9.

Class III Staff 1,801.

Class IV Staff 235.

(c) The expenses incurred for the year 1948-49 were Rs. 34.05 lakhs, the average annual expenditure for the quinquennium ending 1948-49 having been about Rs. 30.50 lakhs.

(d) In connection with the integration of the railway system, the future of the organization will come under review.

AIR COMPANIES IN INDIA

*136. **Shri Ajit Prasad Jain:** Will the Honourable Minister of Communications be pleased to state:

(a) the names of Air Companies operating in India and their routes;

(b) the names of the Air Companies which have ceased to operate since the 15th August, 1947;

(c) which of the existing Companies are working on a profitable basis; and

(d) what steps, if any, Government propose to take to stabilise the position of these Companies?

Shri Khurshed Lal (Deputy Minister of Communications): (a) I lay on the Table a statement giving the required information. (See Appendix V, annexure No. 10.)

(b) Jupiter Airways Limited and Ambica Airlines Limited.

(c) According to the latest available balance sheets of the companies, four companies, namely, Air India Limited, Air Services of India Limited, Airways India Limited and Indian Overseas Airlines, have been operating on profitable basis.

(d) The attention of the Honourable Member is invited to the reply given to Prof. K. T. Shah's Starred Question No. 1392 on the 25th March 1949. The maximum all-up weight of the Dakota has since been increased by about 25 per cent. to enable the companies to take in more pay load and provision has been made for a system of progressive Certificates of Airworthiness which saves an aircraft from being grounded for long periods. Further measures to improve the position of the air transport companies are constantly under review.

POST CARDS AND ENVELOPES IN HYDERABAD STATE

*137. **Lala Raj Kanwar:** Will the Honourable Minister of Communications be pleased to state:

(a) whether the rates of post cards and envelopes intended for internal traffic within the Hyderabad State are different from those in force in the rest of the country;

(b) if so, what steps Government propose to take to bring the existing rates on level with those obtaining in India;

(c) whether there are any other states in India in which postal unity is not observed in the matter of rates of post cards, envelopes, stamps, etc.; and

(d) if so, what their names are?

Shri Khurshed Lal (Deputy Minister of Communications): (a) Yes.

(b) The matter is under consideration.

(c) Yes.

(d) Rajkot and Junagad (merged in the United State of Saurashtra),
Kisengarh, Udaipur and Jaipur (merged in the Rajasthan Union).
Travancore and Cochin (Travancore and Cochin Union).

POST CARDS AND ENVELOPES

***138. Lala Raj Kanwar:** Will the Honourable Minister of Communications be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the quality of paper used in the making of inland post cards and envelopes has deteriorated in recent years; and

(b) if so, whether there is any possibility of better quality paper being used for this purpose in the near future?

Shri Khurshed Lal (Deputy Minister of Communications): (a) No.

(b) Does not arise.

POSTS AND TELEGRAPHS POCKET GUIDE

***139. Lala Raj Kanwar:** Will the Honourable Minister of Communications be pleased to state:-

(a) whether it is a fact that no recent edition of Posts and Telegraphs Pocket Guide is available; and

(b) if so, whether Government propose to consider the advisability of bringing out a new edition of the same at an early date, and publishing it at regular intervals in future?

Shri Khurshed Lal (Deputy Minister of Communications): (a) Yes; the latest edition is dated July, 1948.

(b) The next edition dated December, 1949 will soon go into print.

STAMP BOOKLETS

***140. Lala Raj Kanwar:** Will the Honourable Minister of Communications be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is proposed to revive the previous practice of the Posts and Telegraphs Department of supplying stamp booklets containing a dozen or two stamps of a few main denominations in a handy form for the convenience of the public; and

(b) if so, when this proposal is likely to materialise?

Shri Khurshed Lal (Deputy Minister of Communications): (a) No, not at present while the financial stringency lasts.

(b) Does not arise.

IMPORT OF FOODSTUFFS

***141. Lala Raj Kanwar:** Will the Honourable Minister of Food be pleased to state:

(a) the quantity of (i) rice, (ii) wheat, (iii) maize and (iv) barley, imported from foreign countries during the current year and the price paid or to be paid for the same;

(b) whether the import position during the current year shows a distinct improvement as compared to the previous year, i.e., whether there will be lesser imports than last year; and

(c) the names of countries to which payment was made for these commodities at the highest rates and the rates so paid?

The Honourable Shri Jajramdas Doolakram: (a) The following quantities of rice, wheat, maize and barley have been imported up to end of October 1949:

(i) Rice	749,000 tons
(ii) Wheat and Flour	1,776,900 tons
(iii) Maize	133,900 tons
(iv) Barley	188,300 tons

(b) Total imports in 1950 are expected to be very much smaller than in 1949.

(c) The grains mentioned in reply to part (a) above have been imported from under-noted countries:

Rice from Italy, Wheat from U.S.S.R., Maize from Yugoslavia and Barley from Iraq.

It would not be in the public interest to publish the prices paid to the different countries.

NEW TELEGRAPH LINE

*142. **Shri Santanu Kumar Das:** Will the Honourable Minister of Communications be pleased to state what progress has been made in regard to the opening of a telegraph line between Jaipur Post Office and Binjharpur Post Office (District Cuttack), Orissa?

Shri Khurshed Lal (Deputy Minister of Communications): The project is under consideration and if found remunerative, it will be executed when the financial position of the Government of India warrants it. If found unremunerative, a guarantee will be asked for.

RAMBAGH POST OFFICE, CUTTACK

*143. **Shri Santanu Kumar Das:** Will the Honourable Minister of Communications be pleased to state:

(a) what progress has been made in regard to the construction of building of the Rambagh Post Office, in District Cuttack;

(b) if the construction work has not yet been started, when Government propose to do it?

Shri Khurshed Lal (Deputy Minister of Communications): (a) Plans for the building have been prepared by the Central Public Works Department who are now working out the detailed estimates.

(b) The construction of the building is likely to be taken in hand in 1950-51.

REVENUE FROM RAILWAYS

*144. **Dr. P. S. Deshmukh:** Will the Honourable Minister of Railways be pleased to state:

(a) the income from passenger traffic for each of the Classes I, II, Inter and III for the year 1948 and Classes I, II, and III for the year 1949 month by month, from January to October; and

(b) the revenue derived from goods traffic during the same period?

The Honourable Shri K. Santhanam: (a) and (b). A statement is placed on the Table of the House. (See Appendix V, annexure No. 11.)

IMPORTED FOOD GRAINS (PRICE)

*145. **Dr. P. S. Deshmukh:** Will the Honourable Minister of Food be pleased to state:

(a) the rate in rupees per maund at Indian ports of the foodstuffs, namely, wheat, rice, milo and wheatflour imported during the years 1947-48, 1948-49 and 1949-50;

(b) the rate at which wheat would be imported into India in terms of rupees per maund at Indian ports during the year 1950, 1951 and 1952 under the Wheat Agreement;

(c) the percentage of wastage and dust allowed;

(d) the percentage of cost incurred in arranging for internal distribution;

(e) the rates at which wheat and other cereals were obtainable by Government in India itself during the years mentioned in part (a) above; and

(f) the amount of subsidy given by Government during each of the above-mentioned periods?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulatram: (a) to (c). Three statements giving the necessary information are laid on the Table of the House. (See Appendix V, annexure No. 12.)

(d) No uniform percentage of cost can be worked out as transport charges vary considerably according to the distance between ports and the receiving areas and the incidental expenditure including cost of storage and internal distribution also differ from province to province.

(e) A statement showing the procurement prices is laid on the Table of the House. (See Appendix V, annexure No. 13.)

(f) 1947-48 Rs. 17.12 crores. 1948-49 Rs. 26.50 crores (provisional). 1949-50 Rs. 25.00 crores (estimated).

REVENUE FROM POST CARDS, ENVELOPES, ETC.

*146. **Dr. P. S. Deshmukh:** Will the Honourable Minister of Communications be pleased to state:

(a) the income derived from post cards, envelopes, air letters and registered letters and parcels for each of the months from April to October in the years 1948 and 1949;

(b) the payment made to the Air Services carrying air mails in the years 1946, 1947, 1948, and 1949; and

(c) how the profit and loss for the months of April to October 1949 on each of the items, such as post cards, envelopes and air mail letters compare with those for the same months in the years 1947 and 1948?

Shri Khurshed Lal (Deputy Minister of Communications): (a) The information is not available as separate accounts are not maintained of the Revenue derived from each class of article.

(b) 1946-47.	Rs. 23,45,000	
1947-48.	Rs. 22,17,000	
1948-49.	Rs. 65,30,000	(includes Rs. 35,77,000 on account of arrears.)
1949-50.	Rs. 29,17,000	(April 1949 to August 1949—5 months)

(c) The information is not available.

PAKISTAN RICE IN KHASI AND JAINTIA

*147. Sjt. **Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri**: (a) Will the Honourable Minister of Food be pleased to state whether it is a fact that the Deputy Commissioner of Sylhet in the Province of Eastern Pakistan is supplying rice to the people of Khasi and Jaintia living on the border of Eastern Pakistan and if so, under what terms and conditions?

(b) Why are the Government of India not in a position to give these people the required quantity of rice?

The Honourable Shri Jitramdas Doulatram: Full information has been called for from the Government of Assam and will be supplied as soon as received.

RAILWAY DEPARTMENTS (ECONOMY DRIVE)

*148. Pandit **Mukut Bhanu Lal Bhargava**: Will the Honourable Minister of Railways be pleased to state whether any economy drive has been introduced in the Railway Departments, and if so, how this would affect—

- (i) the staff of Class III & IV—both permanent and temporary,
- (ii) the various sanctioned programmes—both Capital and Revenue—being worked through on different Railways,
- (iii) the programmes for providing greater facilities and amenities to Class III passengers,
- (iv) the new open line programmes connected with the introduction and expansion of strategic and commercial lines; and
- (v) the Rail-Road Co-ordination Scheme—both in the provinces and Centrally Administered areas?

The Honourable Shri N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar: Yes, an economy drive has been launched on the Railways:

(i) Permanent staff in classes III and IV will not be affected by the economy measures adopted. It is proposed, in respect of temporary staff, to retain as many as possible in service by the suspension of recruitment and the adjustment of existing staff between different departments. If thereafter there is a surplus, staff engaged after 15-9-1945 will be affected to the extent necessary, beginning with those having the least period of service.

(ii) The Works Programmes—both Capital and Revenue—have been curtailed, but care has been taken in the review to exempt from cut items which relate to the maintenance of efficiency in operation. The current Capital programme of Rs. 64 crores has been reduced by Rs. 6.75 crores. Similarly, the revenue programme of Rs. 7.65 crores has been reduced by Rs. 1.25 crores.

(iii) The present economy drive will not affect the programme for passenger amenities and steps have been taken to utilise the allotment in full. In fact, provision has been proposed for doubling the allocation to Rs. 3 crores in 1950-51.

(iv) So far as strategic lines are concerned, the programme—both Capital and Revenue—will not be affected and in fact, the Assam Rail Link is being accelerated. In regard to non-strategic lines, the schemes have been reviewed and only those projects which are in the national interest will be taken up.

(v) The schemes for such co-ordination in most cases are only in their initial stages and have not progressed to the extent estimated. The reduction proposed will not, therefore, affect the accepted programmes and the allotment of Rs. 40 lakhs will meet the full requirements of the current year.

FAMINE CONDITIONS

*149. **Pandit Mukut Bihari Lal Bhargava:** (a) Will the Honourable Minister of Agriculture be pleased to state what parts of India, if any, are at present famine stricken and what steps are being taken to ensure the supply of requisite quantities of food grains and fodder in such areas?

(b) What steps have been taken to relieve the famine conditions in Ajmer-Merwara, and have any arrangements been made for ensuring the supply of foodgrains, fodder and cotton seeds to that area? If so, from where and in what quantities?

(c) What quantity of loan, and in what form do Government intend to advance by way of Taccavi to relieve the suffering peasantry?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulatram: (a) and (b). Owing to failure of rains, there has been partial failure of crops in parts of Ajmer-Merwara and Jodhpur Division of the Rajasthan Union. The Government of India have made special allocations of food grains for distribution in both of these areas and will continue to make further allocations as required. The special allocations made so far are 1,000 tons of grain, 2,300 tons of barley and 2,000 tons of Bajra for Ajmer-Merwara, and 20,000 tons of food-grains for Rajasthan to meet the deficit estimated for two months i.e., November and December. 13,000 tons against this, have already moved into Rajasthan and further supplies will follow. As regards requirements of fodder arrangements for importing fodder are being made on the same lines as last year.

(c) A sum of Rs. 2,30,000 has been sanctioned for being advanced to cultivators as Taccavi loans.

PHADKA, A PLANT PEST (DAMAGE TO KHARIF CROPS)

*150. **Pandit Mukut Bihari Lal Bhargava:** (a) Will the Honourable Minister of Agriculture be pleased to state whether it is a fact that Phadka, a Plant Pest has caused vast damage to the Kharif crops in the Province of Ajmer-Merwara?

(b) If so, what steps were taken to control this evil during the Kharif crop, and how far have such control measures proved successful?

(c) What amount was provided in the budget for 1949-50 for fighting this pest, and how much money has actually been spent during this year?

(d) Were the measures to control this evil taken all over the Province, or in a particular number of selected villages?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulatram: (a) Yes.

(b) Control measures were taken to deal with the situation. These consisted mostly of dusting the affected areas with insecticides and for this purpose the Province was provided with 118 tons of insecticides and 200 dusting machines. In order to save the largest possible amount of crops, special attention was given to areas where the crop were better. The control measures covered about 27,600 acres and resulted in a saving of about 138,000 maunds of grains and 1,10,000 cart loads of fodder.

(c) A total provision of Rs. 1,83,000 was made in the year 1949-50 budget for the control of this pest. The amount which has been spent will probably be slightly in excess of this figure.

(d) Priority for control work was given to irrigated fields because of much heavier and luxuriant crops being in danger.

MICA MINING AND MICA MARKET

***151. Pandit Mukut Bihari Lal Bhargava:** (a) Will the Honourable Minister of Works, Mines and Power be pleased to state whether Government intend to start imparting technical training in Mica Mining? If so, at which place and by which date? If not, why not?

(b) What is the total production of Mica in India in different Provinces, States and Unions of States, and what quantity is exported every year since 1947-48?

(c) What quantity of Mica is lying accumulated for export at Calcutta and various other places, and what are the reasons for such accumulation?

(d) Do Government consider the advisability of fixing a minimum price for each grade and quality of Mica? If not, why not?

(e) What steps, if any, have Government taken so far or propose to take in future to improve our Mica market in America and other foreign countries?

The Honourable Shri Satyanarayan Sinha (Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs): (a) The Mica Enquiry Committee recommended the establishment of Mica Mining classes to train Managers for mica mines. The recommendation is under consideration but no decision has been reached yet as to the location of the classes, or the date by which they should be opened.

(b) The production figures for mica in India are extremely unreliable. In any case, production figures Province-wise or State-wise are not available, though it is known that Bihar produces, roughly, two-thirds of the total production, while the remainder is divided between Madras and Rajputana. As there is practically no indigenous consumption, the size of the industry is best reflected in the export figures, which are 2.6 lacs cwts. for 1947-48, 3.4 lacs cwts. for 1948-49, and 0.7 lace cwts. for the quarter April-June 1949.

(c) Government of India have no information.

(d) The matter is under consideration.

(e) The Mica Enquiry Committee recommended the establishment of a Mica Marketing Control Board for marketing mica. The recommendation is still under consideration, as its implementation depends upon the successful establishment of international standards in respect of the various grades and classes of mica.

SOCIAL GUIDES ON THE RAILWAYS

***152. Shri Damodar Swarup Seth:** Will the Honourable Minister of Railways be pleased to state:

(a) how many Social Guides have been appointed upto now on each of the various Railways in India;

(b) the task or duties allotted to them; and

(c) whether the posts of Social Guides are permanent or temporary?

The Honourable Shri K. Santhanam: (a) A statement giving the information asked for by the Honourable Member is placed on the Table of the House. (See Appendix V, annexure No. 14.)

(b) The duties of Social Guides are to render social service to passengers, particularly those travelling in Class III and be generally helpful to them in obtaining tickets and booking of luggage, finding accommodation, giving information required on the journey, making available the services of luggage

porters, station vendors, watermen, and protecting them from any possible harassments, etc., etc.

(c) The posts are temporary.

FISHING

***153. Shri P. T. Chacko:** Will the Honourable Minister of Agriculture be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken any steps to increase the output of coastal fishing;

(b) whether Government have taken any steps to transport fish from sea coast to inland regions; and

(c) whether Government are giving any facilities to the fishermen for curing fish and if so, what are the facilities thus given?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulatram: (a) Yes. Government have given financial assistance to the maritime provinces of Madras, Bombay, West Bengal and Travancore for improving coastal fishing by the use of power-propelled vessels. Government have also established a Deep Sea pilot fishing station at Bombay.

(b) Government have afforded facilities for rail and road transport specially in Madras, Travancore and Orissa.

(c) Yes. Facilities are provided for curing fish under hygienic conditions and proper supervision in the fish curing yards established in the main fishing centres by the Governments of Orissa, Madras, Bombay, Travancore and Cochin.

The Government of India have given financial assistance to effect improvements in the fish curing yards in Bombay, and for the erection of a model fish curing yard in Travancore.

The facilities provided are as follows: (i) enclosed space for the processing of fish, (ii) bringing tubs and cement platforms, (iii) supplies of salt, (iv) platforms or open space for drying of fish, (v) godowns for storage of cured fish, (vi) water for washing of fish and fresh-water for drinking, and (vii) technical advice and supervision.

NEW RAILWAY LINES](HYDERABAD)

***154. Prof. N. G. Ranga:** Will the Honourable Minister of Railways be pleased to state:

(a) whether the possibility of constructing a railway line between Ongole and Cumbum, and between Nellore and Cuddapah was ever studied by the railway authorities, and if so when, and how much was it expected to cost at that time; and

(b) whether the Nizam's Government were contemplating to construct a railway line from Hyderabad to Buser State and if so, whether the Railway Board propose to take up that project with or without contribution from Hyderabad Government?

The Honourable Shri N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar: (a) The answer is in the negative.

(b) The Nizam's Government did contemplate laying a Railway line from Ramgundam on their Railway to Bailadilla in Bastar State. This project will be considered in due course, by the Central Board of Transport along with other rail projects to serve Kankar and Bastar States.

MADRAS-DELHI MAIL TRAIN

*155. Prof. N. G. Ranga: Will the Honourable Minister of Railways be pleased to state whether Government have again examined the possibility of running a fast mail train between Madras and Delhi in addition to the Grand Trunk Express and if so, when and how soon do they expect to be able to run it?

The Honourable Shri N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar: No. The feasibility of introduction of such a train can be considered only when the power and coaching stock position further improves sufficiently.

IRRIGATION PROJECT

*156. Prof. N. G. Ranga: Will the Honourable Minister of Works, Mines and Power be pleased to state:

(a) what irrigation and flood control projects are affected by the Economy Drive;

(b) what projects are being developed during this year and next year; and

(c) whether the proposed Conference of Chief Engineers to settle the priorities for these projects is likely to materialise?

The Honourable Shri Satyanarayan Sinha (Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs): (a) The Economy Drive may affect all such projects, including the Damodar, the Bhakra-Nangal and Hirakud Dam Projects.

(b) The Central Government are mainly concerned with the Damodar and the Hirakud Dam Projects. The Central Water-Power, Irrigation and Navigation Commission has also undertaken construction of the Kakrapara Weir at the expense of the Bombay Government. In addition, Central Waterpower Irrigation and Navigation Commission has in hand preliminary investigations on the Kosi, Narbada, Tapti etc. Amongst major schemes taken up by Provincial Governments may be mentioned the Tungabhadra Project, Machkund, Sarda Power House, Pipri Dam, Mor Project and Ghataprabha Valley Project in Bombay. There are also some other projects being developed by Provincial Governments of which details are not readily available.

(c) The question of priorities for river valley projects is constantly under consideration. But it is not proposed to hold any conference at this stage, when sufficient financial and material resources are not available to undertake new schemes.

TRACTORS FOR P.E.P.S.U.

*157. K. K. Singh Roy: (a) Will the Honourable Minister of Agriculture be pleased to state how many tractors from the Central Tractors Organisation have been allocated to P.E.P.S.U.?

(b) What is the number already sent?

(c) When will the remaining tractors be sent?

The Honourable Shri J. B. Dutt: (a) to (c). No reclamation unit of the Central Tractor Organisation has been allocated to P.E.P.S.U. However, at the request of the Union Government this Ministry undertook the supply of twelve tractors on payment basis. Out of these six tractors have already been supplied and the balance are expected to be received from U.S.A. during the first quarter of 1950.

GROW MORE FOOD CAMPAIGN

*158. **Kaka Bhagwant Roy:** (a) Will the Honourable Minister of Agriculture be pleased to state how much subsidy under "Grow More Food" Campaign has been allocated to PEPSU for sinking tubewells during the current year?

(b) What part of it has already been paid?

The Honourable Shri Jairamdas Doulatram: (a) The Government of India have sanctioned to the P.E.P.S.U. Government a loan of Rs. 2,00,000 for sinking of tube wells in furtherance of the 'Grow More Food' campaign.

(b) The amount mentioned above has been sanctioned by the Government of India and can be drawn by the P.E.P.S.U. Government as the work under the scheme progresses.

UNSTARRED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

PETROLEUM AND PETROLEUM PRODUCTS

4. **Shri C. Subramaniam:** Will the Honourable Minister of Works, Mines and Power be pleased to state what was the total consumption of petroleum and petroleum products during (i) the half year ending 30th September, 1949 and (ii) the preceding two half years?

The Honourable Shri Satyanarayan Sinha (Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs): (i) 1,256,368 Tons.

(ii) Half year ended 31-3-49—1,124,665 tons.

Half year ended 30-9-48—942,822 tons.

NOTE.—Figures of consumption of lubricants and Asphalt are not included in (i) and (ii) above as they are not available.

MOTOR VEHICLES

5. **Shri C. Subramaniam:** Will the Honourable Minister of Transport be pleased to state the total number of motor vehicles viz., motor cars, buses and lorries in India as on 16th August 1947 and 1st October 1949?

The Honourable Shri N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar: The total number of vehicles in the Dominion of India on the 16th August, 1947 and 1st October, 1949 viz., motor cars, buses and lorries was 196,463 and 265,348. The details are as follows:

	16-8-1947	1-10-1949
Motor cars	113,290	153,360
Buses	24,349	29,864
Lorries	58,824	82,124
	<u>196,463</u>	<u>265,348</u>

DERAILMENTS AND COMPENSATION

- e. { Sjt. Kuladhar Chalkha:
Shri Lakshminarayan Sahu:

Will the Honourable Minister of Railways be pleased to state:

- (a) the number of serious derailments to passenger and mixed trains involving loss of life or serious injury to persons that have occurred during the present year so far;
- (b) the causes for such derailments;
- (c) the number of deaths caused; and
- (d) the number of cases where compensation has been paid and the total amount of compensation paid?

The Honourable Shri N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar: (a) The number of derailments of trains carrying passengers, involving loss of life or serious injury to persons, which occurred on the Indian Government Railways during the present year so far is four.

(b) Three of these derailments were due to the track having been tampered with by some person or persons unknown. The exact cause of the accident could not be determined in the fourth case.

(c) These derailments resulted in the death of 15 persons.

(d) Rs. 688 in four cases of simple injury.

Wednesday
30th November, 1949

**THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY OF INDIA
(LEGISLATIVE) DEBATES**

**(PART II—PROCEEDINGS OTHER THAN QUESTIONS
AND ANSWERS)**

Official Report

Volume VI, 1949

(28th November to 17th December, 1949)

Sixth Session
of the
CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY OF INDIA (LEGISLATIVE)
1949



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**CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY OF INDIA (LEGISLATIVE)
DEBATES**
(PART II—PROCEEDINGS OTHER THAN QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS)

Wednesday, 30th November, 1949.

The Assembly met in the Assembly Chamber of the Council House at a Quarter to Eleven of the Clock. Mr. Speaker (The Honourable Mr. G. V. Mavalankar) in the Chair.

(QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS)

(See Part I)

11-45 A.M.

**RESOLUTION RE ABOLITION OF NIGHT AIR MAIL
AND PASSENGER SERVICE**

Sjt. Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri (Assam: General): Sir, I beg to move:

"This Assembly is of opinion that the system of carrying mails and passengers by air by night should be abolished forthwith."

Sir, at the outset I want to make it clear that by using the word "forthwith" I do not mean that this system should be abolished tomorrow or as soon as the Resolution is passed. What I mean is this: I understand that the present licence will continue till the 15th of January, 1950. What I would request the hon. Minister in charge of Communications to do is this, namely, that he shall not renew that licence after the 15th of January, 1950 without carefully considering the points which I shall place before the House today. I am glad to have this opportunity of moving this resolution as it will enable the Government to clear many things which have been given out in the press and elsewhere and which have to some extent prejudiced our mind also. I believe that the hon. Minister in charge of Communications will also welcome this opportunity of explaining the position of the Government in having the Night Air Mail Service.

First of all I would request the hon. Minister to refute, if possible, the following charges, namely, that the Government has been favouring and supporting a particular concern—the Himalayan Aviation Co. Ltd.—although this Company has not been working properly in the past and although because of certain allegations or certain facts being proved against them, their licence was suspended. What has induced the Government to overlook that fact and now place that company in a very enviable position, namely that of carrying all the important mails in India practically and also the privilege of carrying passengers by night although it was stoutly stated by the Government in reply to certain questions last year that the industry has not arrived at such perfection in which you can allow passengers to be carried at night? In spite of all this why is it that the Government has now favoured this particular company and allowed them to carry passengers by night?

[Sjt. Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri]

Then it is also alleged by some that this policy of carrying mails and passengers by night has been resorted to as a result of a programme chalked out by the Government itself for nationalisation of the industry. If that is so and if the Government intends to nationalise the industry, although that is not the policy of the Government—a Resolution to that effect was moved on the floor of this House in 1946 and was negatived by the Government itself.....

Shri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar (Madras: General): No, no.

Sjt. Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri: Not quite negatived, but they said that the existing lines should not be interfered with and the Resolution was then withdrawn.

Sari M. Ananthaayanam Ayyangar: They said they would examine it.

Sjt. Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri: I stand corrected, I am only speaking from memory. Certainly there will be a large number of people in this country who are now wedded to the policy of nationalisation in every branch of activity. I do like the word 'nationalisation', however impracticable it may be; I would welcome it. But if that is the policy of the Government why adopt this indirect method of killing some operators first and then adopting the policy of nationalisation.

Thirdly it is alleged that in respect of the Licensing Board, which was presided over by a High Court Judge before, the Rules have been revised and the High Court Judge or an independent person does not find a place in the Board now. The Director-General of Civil Aviation who was never a Member of this Board and who was always only consulted as an expert—that gentleman, together with his Deputies—has been appointed Member of the Licensing Board. And it is alleged that the Licensing Board has been conceived in such a way that it is now at the beck and call of the hon. Minister or the Government Department.

The Honourable Mr. Rafi Ahmed Kidwai (Minister of Communications): It is there to carry out the policy of the Government.

Sjt. Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri: I am only stating the allegations which have been made. I have not got facts in my possession by which I can contradict these allegations. It is up to the hon. Minister of Communications to do that.

The grounds on which I object to this Night Air Mail Service are these. First of all, considering the present state of ground organisation, want of proper lighting arrangements, want of proper radio and other arrangements it is absolutely unsafe now to carry passengers and mail by night. And the fact that it is unsafe has, in my opinion, been carried home to the Government because this Night Air Mail Service was suspended during the months of the monsoon. I should like to know from the hon. Minister if any improvement in ground organisation has been made in the meanwhile which would justify the resumption of the Night Air Mail Service, and if he has got sufficient assurance from the company concerned or from any company that they would be able to operate the service at night during the next monsoon. If no such assurance has been given and if the Government is not in a position to give that assurance, namely, that they will be able to carry mails and passengers at night in the next monsoon season, then I submit that it is cruel and absolutely futile to have deprived a few existing operators from carrying mails by day and to bring about the ruin of their business. If the hon. Minister is in a position today to satisfy this House that the ground arrangements and other things are complete and that without any risk and without any fear the Night Air Mail Service can be carried on not only now but also during the next monsoon, then of course

there will be something to say in his favour so far as the question of safety is concerned.

Shri Suresh Chandra Majumdar (West Bengal: General): May I know what is your precise objection?

Sjt. Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri: My precise objection is this. Considering the present condition of arrangements in respect of ground organisation even at the principal stations where the night air mails are now operating I consider it absolutely unsafe for the Government to resort to the carrying of mails and passengers by night. I do not think any improvement has been made in the ground organisation since the time when it was considered prudent to suspend the night airmail system. If my information is correct, then even such an important.....

Shri R. K. Sidhva (C.P. and Berar: General): May I know whether the hon. Member has visited Nagpur during the night?

Mr. Speaker: Let him first finish. Why are Members so impatient to get at points which they consider of importance? Let him state his case to the House, then hon. Members will get a chance of replying.

Sjt. Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri: Why are you so unkind to me, Mr. Sidhva?

Mr. Speaker: Does the hon. Member know there is a time-limit?

Sjt. Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri: Sir, I did not know that.

Mr. Speaker: For the benefit of the House I may say that the time-limit is 15 minutes for each speech excepting for the mover who will get half an hour at the most and the Government Member who will also get half an hour in his first speech but not in the second speech.

The Honourable Mr. Rafi Ahmad Kidwai: What about the second speech?

Mr. Speaker: If necessary, 15 minutes.

Sjt. Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri: That being the position of time-limit. I would ask hon. Members not to interrupt me but allow me to speak.

That is the first point about public safety. The second point to which I would refer is the economic waste which has been caused by the introduction of the night airmail. The present position is that the night airmail service gets all the mails. It is only in some other routes such as between Assam and Calcutta where the night airmail system is not in operation that the others get mail to carry during the day. Otherwise the entire mail is carried by this night airmail service. If this system is allowed to operate for some time the day operators will have to close their business and practically the night airmail service and the night operators will be the only agencies in the field. It is meaningless even now to call it the "night airmail" because during the day no airmail is carried by any plane.

Speaking of the economic waste, I submit it will be up to the hon. Minister to contradict that, but now an additional 11,000 hours are being run on account of this night airmail. That is to say, 1½ million miles of distance is being operated by the night airmail and about 7½ lakhs of gallons of petrol is being additionally consumed by this service. The mail was very conveniently carried during day prior to the introduction of the night airmail system and if any large additional advantage has not been gained by carrying the mails at night then it is purely an economic waste and is an irresponsible act on the part of the Government. We want petrol and petrol products for various purposes. If we could have saved this 7½ lakh gallons of petrol, we might have

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got from the dollar countries petrol products or kerosene and the increased supply of kerosene to that extent would have been a great advantage to the rural public. Then we have the Grow-more-food campaign and the relief and rehabilitation of refugees. The Government of West Bengal have a project of rehabilitating the refugees by allowing them to run motor buses in the mofussil towns. The Magistrates of those Districts say that there is more room for running of bus services and thus giving an occupation to the refugees but on account of the order of the Government of India, due to shortage of petrol, that scheme has been kept in abeyance by the Province. If this petrol which is now being unnecessarily consumed by the night air services had been released for such operations then a large number of refugees might have been rehabilitated.

Then petrol is required for the Grow-more-food campaign also. It is more so when the campaign is undertaken on the basis of co-operative farming run by refugees, as for example in Jalpaiguri. Tractors are being used which now get a limited supply of petrol. That being so, the extra petrol consumption by this night-flying service should be stopped. Furthermore, for procurement of food grains from district areas, for transport of food, cement, iron and steel, sugar and salt, buses are being used in larger numbers in West Bengal because there the rail transport has become extremely difficult. These essential services also need an increasing amount of petrol but they cannot get it on account of shortage. While they cannot get petrol, we should not unnecessarily and uneconomically waste it for the luxury of night-flying schemes. So, as it is well-known to the hon. Minister, for various kinds of productive services a larger number of buses and motor cars and jeeps have to be used but they cannot get their full requirements of petrol because of a shortage. For this reason at least, the night air service should be suspended at least for such period as the position of petrol improves.

Then I come to the question of the scheduled air operators. There are six scheduled air operators who work during the day. They have been carrying the mails to the great advantage both of the public and of themselves. I say "themselves" for this reason, that no air service in India and very few air services in Europe or America have been able to earn much profit because the industry after all is in an infant condition. In other countries like America if there is a loss to any aviation company that loss is met by the Government itself at the end of the year just as was done in the case of Air India where Rs. 19 lakhs have been contributed by the Government of India to that company so that their losses may to some extent be met from this outside grant. If from these scheduled operators the entire mail service is withdrawn, the result will be that they will run at a very heavy loss. They are already running at a loss in spite of the subsidy but when that subsidy is withdrawn from them then their losses will be heavier. I think it was stated by the hon. Minister somewhere that the number of passengers in the day services has not diminished on account of the operation of the night airmail system. The night airmail service, as my hon. friend Mr. Kamath has said somewhere, was a "nightmare" service at the beginning, but when they are assured that they are going to get sooner or later the entire passenger service as they have already got the entire mail, if they also get the entire passenger service by killing all the other operators, then they are quite prepared to give "additional comforts" necessary for night buds. And after all what comfort do you need at night excepting a place to sleep? Even now you have got to spend about eight hours to go from Delhi to Calcutta. You start at 11 and arrive in Calcutta at 7 the next morning. Is it for such a slow service that aeroplanes are needed? The inventor of the aeroplane will simply bang down his head in shame if he knew that for a distance of 800 miles, it takes 8 hours.

Shri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar: You want to return at midnight?

Sjt. Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri: You cannot return at midnight.

Now, as regards the mail itself, you have got now only one time when you can send the mail by air from Delhi to Calcutta, that is at 7 P.M. If you want to send another letter, you have to wait till 7 P.M. the next day.

Shri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar: It can go by the morning plane.

Sjt. Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri: There is no morning plane. By morning train it may go, but it does not go by the morning plane. But if you have a day air mail service, you may post a letter in the morning and it will reach Calcutta by noon.

The Honourable Mr. Rafi Ahmad Kidwai: It goes by both. Mails go in the morning also.

Sjt. Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri: Am I to understand then that these scheduled operators, who operate during the day, get some traffic?

The Honourable Mr. Rafi Ahmad Kidwai: They get more than half the mail.

Sjt. Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri: If that is so, then my objection on that ground does not hold good.

Dr. P. S. Deshmukh (C.P. and Berar: General): So your Resolution is withdrawn?

Sjt. Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri: Not yet.

Formerly, the position was that surcharged air mails only will be carried by the night mail and all others by surface mail. No mail could go from different places by the night air mail which linked only important cities and could not be carried to all places. It could be done only with the help of the surface mail and only for that reason they had abandoned it. Only half of the mail went by air mail and half by the other mail. Now, even this subsidy cannot be obtained by the scheduled operators. I submit this is an infant industry. They have been carrying on somehow. If you now take away half the mail, then their position is to that extent worsened. The other company which is in a position to run the service at Rs. 126 in place of Rs. 203 or Rs. 190 from Delhi to Calcutta get the advantage of full load of both mails and passengers. I do not understand why one particular company or two particular companies should receive this special favour of the Government at the cost of the other scheduled operators who have been carrying on business to the satisfaction of the Government and not only carrying public passengers but also mails in their aeroplanes. It is these scheduled operators who had, at the end of 1947, placed their aeroplanes at the service of the Government in connection with the Jammu and Kashmir operations.

Prof. N. G. Ranga (Madras: General): Were they not paid for it?

Sjt. Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri: Of course, it was not free, but they did lend their aeroplanes. What is the meaning of killing these people? If you are prepared to run the whole aviation by the Government, that is to say, if you will not require the service of anybody, then why not run the night mail also yourself? And then, don't look out for anybody in the time of emergency, during war, during famine or any other similar situation, to provide aeroplanes. In my opinion, it is absolutely an irresponsible act to shape the policy in such a way as to destroy the existing operators and to favour two companies about whom there has been so much said. The Indian Overseas Service which had some financial difficulty and which had to close its

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business has now been allowed to operate between Bombay, Nagpur and other places, although they had declared their inability to run the service. Why should any special favour be shown to the Himalayan Aviation Company? These are the two companies which have been in the public eye and I hope the hon. Minister will be in a position to clear the allegations made about them.

Mr. Speaker: Resolution moved:

"This Assembly is of opinion that the system of carrying mails and passengers by air by night should be abolished forthwith."

There are many amendments to this Resolution. I would like to know which of these are going to be moved.

Shri H. V. Kamath (C.P. and Berar: General): I don't propose to move my amendment, but I would like to speak on the Resolution itself.

Mr. Speaker: That is a different matter, but I want to know at present which of these amendments are going to be moved.

Prof. K. T. Shah (Bihar: General): Sir, I beg to move:

"That in the Resolution for the words 'abolished forthwith', the following be substituted:

'suspended, pending investigation by a Committee of independent outside experts, fully acquainted with the economics of Air Transport Industry in all its aspects, including the requirements of national security, and appointed by Government, with instructions to consider the working of the Air Transport in India and report within three months of the date of their appointment on all factors affecting the aggregate cost of carriage by air of goods, passengers and mails, and advise Government upon the economic, equitable and efficient manner and conditions on which the widest possible use of Transport by Air may be brought about, and the greatest possible development of Aviation be achieved in India in the shortest possible time, meanwhile distributing the available mail traffic *pro rata* among the air transport services existing on November 1, 1949, at rates fixed by Government uniform per unit of weight and distance so as to guard against any tendency to monopoly in any branch of air traffic.'

Mr. Speaker: Amendment moved:

"That in the Resolution for the words 'abolished forthwith', the following be substituted:

'suspended, pending investigation by a Committee of independent outside experts, fully acquainted with the economics of Air Transport Industry in all its aspects, including the requirements of national security, and appointed by Government, with instructions to consider the working of the Air Transport in India and report within three months of the date of their appointment on all factors affecting the aggregate cost of carriage by air of goods, passengers and mails and advise Government upon the economic, equitable and efficient manner and conditions on which the widest possible use of Transport by Air may be brought about, and the greatest possible development of Aviation be achieved in India in the shortest possible time, meanwhile distributing the available mail traffic *pro rata* among the air transport services existing on November 1, 1949, at rates fixed by Government uniform per unit of weight and distance so as to guard against any tendency to monopoly in any branch of air traffic.'

I understand some other members have also given other amendments today. I take it they are not going to be moved.

Shri Alu Bai Shastri (U.P.: General): I have given notice of an amendment to the amendment of Shri Kamath, but in view of the fact that Prof. Shah's amendment contains the spirit of his as well as mine, I do not want to move mine.

Mr. Speaker: No explanation is necessary. I only wanted to know if he wants to move his amendment.

Shri T. A. Ramalingam Chettiar (Madras: General): May I suggest that since the facts are not known accurately, the hon. Minister may make a statement giving the facts and then the discussion may go on. I think that will be more convenient.

Mr. Speaker: I would personally prefer the Minister to intervene now. If he at all wants to intervene, it is better he intervenes at this stage.

The Honourable Mr. Rafi Ahmad Kidwai: Sir, I am thankful to my friend Mr. Robini Kumar Chaudhuri for giving me an opportunity to explain to this House the various points that have been raised since the introduction of the night air service in February last. Mr. Chaudhuri has himself mentioned that perhaps in allowing the Indian Overseas Service to operate the night services, a favour was shown to that company. On the other hand all the air companies have been saying that the night air service cannot be run with profit. They have been declaring from the very beginning that any company that undertakes it will suffer a heavy loss and the failure of the Overseas is cited as a proof of what they have been saying.

For the last ten months a whispering campaign has been going on making all sorts of allegations against the Ministry of Communications and against the Civil Aviation Directorate. The Air India has issued a pamphlet in which all those whisperings have been mentioned. I am thankful to the Air India for it gives me an opportunity to meet the charges that have been levelled.

Those friends who have gone through that pamphlet must have noticed that an insinuation has been made that while on the 18th of January Government had invited some air companies to operate the night service between Bombay and Delhi, all of a sudden on the 15th of January or the 16th of January, the Ministry decided to allow the Indian Overseas Services to operate the night service between Calcutta and Bombay and Madras and Delhi. This has been shown as a sudden surprise. Now, I have got before me letters from all the companies to the effect that they knew what our proposal was.

When this idea of starting the night services occurred to me, I was told that there were only two companies that had spare aeroplanes to undertake this service. They were the Air Services of India and the Indian Overseas. Of the two, the Air Services of India was better organised, financially more sound, and was being run economically. Therefore, I sent for its representative sometime in July 1948 and discussed the proposal with him. The representative promised to discuss the matter at the Headquarters and send me their proposals. The proposals came to me in the shape of a letter, dated the 5th August 1948, that is, six months at least before the licence was given. In this they accepted the proposal. They said that they were in a position to undertake the service immediately. They said that six planes would be required, of which they had four and that they would get one in no time. But they demanded a charter rate of Rs. 5 per mile. It was not my intention to spend even a single extra pie on this night service. Therefore, after some discussion the proposal was dropped.

Then the other firm, the Indian Overseas, were contacted. They demanded Rs. 4 per mile. I said, "No, we will pay for the mail whatever we are paying to the day services. But we will get you a licence for carrying passengers." Now, I may tell the House that all these negotiations were not being carried through the Director-General of Civil Aviation, but, through the Director-General of Posts and Telegraphs, because I had suggested that once the terms of carrying mails were settled with the Postal Department, the

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Director-General of Posts and Telegraphs would recommend to the Air Transport Licensing Board to give the licence.

As I have said the Indian Overseas in their first letter demanded Rs. 4 per mi'e. I told them that there would be no extra payment and that they would have to carry the mail on the terms on which the day services were carrying it. I further said I was offering this simply to expand the air services, because no operator of the day service was prepared to add to their present operations or to lower their fare and attract greater traffic. In the end, sometime in November, the Indian Overseas agreed to this proposal and wrote to the Director-General of Posts and Telegraphs that if they could get a licence for carrying passengers and mail they would undertake this service, and as they had spare Dakotas, they would start service without any loss of time.

Shri Mohan Lal Gautam (U.P.: General): What is the date of that letter?

The Honourable Mr. Rafi Ahmad Kidwai: That was some time in November--on the 25th of November to be exact.

Accordingly, the Director-General of Posts and Telegraphs recommended the grant of a licence. That recommendation was sent to the Director-General of Civil Aviation for report. The Directorate-General of Civil Aviation reported that although the aerodromes had got lighting arrangements, they would not advise a licence being given for carrying passengers, because the safety measures had yet to be completed. On that, when the Indian Overseas were informed that they would not be allowed to carry passengers, and that they would have to operate on freight, they said they could not undertake the service, because that would not bring them sufficient income.

When this happened all the air companies were called at a Conference. The Deputy Minister met them. As an alternative it was suggested that the Bombay-Delhi route could be equipped for carrying passengers and the two companies that were already operating this route were asked whether they were prepared to undertake night service. Before we received a reply from either of the two companies, the Indian Overseas reconsidered their original decision and said that they would be able to develop freight trade and were prepared, therefore, to operate the night mail service without the right of carrying passengers, provided the D.G.C.A. would be prepared to equip the aerodrome, as soon as possible, to enable them to carry passengers later. This reply was received some time in January. Then the two companies, who were asked to let us know the terms for running the night service between Delhi and Bombay, were informed that they need not bother, because the original scheme will be recommended to the Licensing Board.

The Licensing Board convened a meeting. They issued notices on 26th January for the meeting to be held on the 29th, because the Postal Department had arranged with the Indian Airways to start service from 1st February. All the companies affected by this arrangement were present at the meeting. They protested that the time was too short for them to decide whether they could undertake this or not. They asked for one month's time and the Board agreed to it. The Board said: The question of the Scheduled Air Services need not be taken up. The Board agreed to give licence only for a month to the Indian Overseas and had made it clear that if within one month's time the affected Scheduled Services came forward with a scheme, the Indian Overseas would not have any claim on the ground that they had been given one month's licence. The operation of the Scheduled Air Services under the scheme should not be deemed to confer upon the licensee any vested right

for the extension of the service beyond the period of one month fixed in the provisional licence or in any manner entitle them to a renewal of the licence for a further period. Therefore, this licence was given only for one month, simply because we wanted to allow other companies to consider if they were prepared to run this service. They later on said that they were not interested and were not prepared to incur any loss. This is all that happened. No other company was prepared to undertake the service.

Then another thing has been said or insinuated in the pamphlet. It is alleged that perhaps the Indian Overseas agreed to operate because they were quietly told by the Government or by the Minister concerned that he has in his mind an all-up air scheme due to come into force on first April. They therefore readily agreed to suffer the loss for two months to be recouped later on. Now, that is also a lie. I am surprised that the Air-India who happened to know the developments from the very beginning should have brought out this pamphlet.

Now here is the letter from Shri Gurunath Bewoor to the A.T.L.B. when they were issuing a licence in which he wanted to be assured that the conferment of the licence is only for the surcharged articles sent by air and that the licence should not be considered to cover the scheme of the carriage of unsurcharged articles. These are the two charges that I have ventured to explain to the House, because so much whispering has been going on against me and against the D.G.C.A. making all sorts of allegations by people who know that it was all wrong.

Now I may tell the House that the first person with whom I had discussed the "All-up-mail" scheme was Mr. Desai of the Air Services of India sometime in July last. That was for exploring the scheme and to find out how it will affect or help the Air Companies.

The other charge that has been brought against me is that I have changed the rules and changed the personnel of the A.T.L.B. to bring them under my control. I accept the charge. I found that if I wanted to pursue any particular policy, I should reconstitute the Board and frame new rules. Several instances that came to my notice forced me to come to this conclusion.

During the time of Hyderabad troubles, our Agent-General several times failed to get a seat for a passenger who had to come here with important papers. It was not economic to start another service on that account. But, he thought, whatever be the expense, we must have a service. He met in Bombay the Chairman of the Indian Overseas and requested him to extend the service that was running from Lucknow-Kanpur to Nagpur and to Hyderabad and beyond so that men could be sent out of Hyderabad by that service. The Chairman agreed, but said that this would be a losing service and therefore would expect the service later to be extended to Delhi. To this our Agent-General, Mr. Munshi, agreed. The Indian Overseas made the application and the Agent-General recommended it. This was recommended by the States Ministry also, but the Board did not accept it because the rules laid down that if one service was in operation, another service will not be allowed to operate as it would entail loss of traffic. I was not aware of this arrangement of the Agent-General. But when he found that he could not get a licence, even a provisional licence for the Indian Overseas in respect of their application which was a month old, the matter was brought to my notice. But I found that I could do nothing. I decided that if the Board would not issue a licence in that emergency, the Ministry should issue a licence. This decision forced the Board to issue a temporary licence.

I may also tell the House that it was not the only instance. The Madras Government was very anxious that an alternative service should be established

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between Delhi and Madras—a service that will not touch Hyderabad. I induced more than one company to make an application. An application duly reached us, but there was one difficulty in granting it. There was the possibility of the traffic of Deccan Airways which was plying between Madras and Delhi being affected. It took months and months to come to a decision on this question. By the time decision was taken, the Deccan Airways had ceased to operate and Jupiter Airways, which was given the licence, operated that line. The original purpose was not served.

These are not the only reasons. I will give another reason. The Bharat Airways have got three Skymasters. They are in the country now for more than a year. These planes are four-engined planes. They can carry passengers day and night. They can be equipped for carrying 60 passengers and they can be run economically at very cheap rates. They offered their planes for the night service between Calcutta and Bombay for carrying mails and passengers at cheaper rates than I had suggested. I was tempted to accept the offer. But Mr. Tata came rushing to meet me in Calcutta where I had gone for two days and said that if these four-engined planes were allowed to ply, Tatas would have to close down the service. I accepted his objection. Now I ask the House how any progress is possible if no new company is allowed to introduce better planes and more comfortable planes and operate economically?

Shri H. V. Kamath: More comfortable?

The Honourable Mr. Rafi Ahmad Kidwai: Yes, more safe to travel. But that was the objection. Then I tried to allow them to operate between Calcutta and Karachi. We found from the returns that many passengers from Calcutta to Karachi were travelling by International Planes because they were four-engined planes. I asked the Bharat Airways to put in an application for a licence between Calcutta and Karachi and cater for the traffic that was going to foreign planes.

But they could not get that licence also, because Indian National Airways was operating that route and they said that they would lose their traffic. Now this is the position. I am determined to pursue my policy and so long as I am allowed to pursue that policy by this House, I would not allow anything to stand in my way. That is why the personnel was changed and the rules were changed.

Now, it is said that the day services are losing traffic because the night services are carrying passengers cheaply. I have returns before me of the traffic of all the affected services since the inauguration of the night services. I have also got the returns for the last year to see if there had been any seasonal fluctuation and I find that excepting for the Deccan Airways, all the services are getting not only the passengers that they got last year but sometimes even more. Now Tatas say that they have lost almost half of their mail, but that they were bound to lose. When all-up air mail was introduced, the night service was in operation and the night service was getting half of the mail. It was on the advice of Mr. Tata that I suspended the service, announcing that the service would be resumed after the monsoon. I refuse to believe that Mr. Tata had given me this advice simply to get the load that the night service was carrying and then try to persuade me not to resume the night service so that he may retain the load.

Much has been said about the concessions that were made to the air companies in the current financial year. At the Budget time the Finance Minister announced the introduction of the all-up air mail and also the rebate in petrol tax. It is entirely wrong to say that these two concessions are not

bringing any benefit to the air operators. First they said that all-up will not bring any extra money because the rates for carrying airmail had been considerably reduced. Secondly, the benefit from the petrol rebate will not be as much as the Ministry claimed. I had said on one occasion that our estimate was that the benefit from the rebate to the air companies would be Rs. 40 lakhs and the benefit to Air India alone would be more than ten lakhs. Mr. Tata had again and again asserted that the benefit from petrol rebate would not exceed Rs. 20 lakhs and Mr. Bewoor told me more than once that the benefit to Air India will not exceed Rs. five lakhs. Now, I find that for the first six months Air India alone has claimed a rebate of Rs. 5,87,818.

Shri B. L. Sondhi (East Punjab: General): After devaluation?

The Honourable Mr. Rafi Ahmad Kidwai: Devaluation does not affect it at all. And so they will get more than Rs. ten lakhs for the year. Considering that their consumption of petrol has considerably increased during the last two months, they will get more than Rupees twelve lakhs, and yet they have been crying that this concession has not meant anything to them.

The third question that I want to take up is the uneconomic operation of the night airmail. I was reading.....

Sjt. Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri: This is something for Prof. Shah.

The Honourable Mr. Rafi Ahmad Kidwai: I was reading an article this morning by an American expert on Indian Aviation, and I found that while giving a description of all the operating companies, special mention had been made of two companies; one was Airways India and the other was Deccan Airways for their efficiency and economic operation. Now, going through last year's balance sheets of these companies, I find that last year the income per mile by Airways India was slightly over Rs. 3/8/-, and this income not only met the operation costs but after setting aside something for depreciation charges, they saved for profit account Rs. 3,87,000, say almost Rs. 4 lakhs. The capital of the company is only Rs. 21 lakhs. The company maintains only the planes that they require and they have done very well. The same is the case with Deccan Airways. Last year their income per mile was also slightly over Rs. 3/8/-. They were allowed to operate only for eight months and ten days because their licence was suspended for three months and 20 days. But whatever they earned, earning Rs. 3/8/0 a mile for 8 months and 10 days proved sufficient to meet their operation and maintenance costs for the whole year and also to leave a very small profit. Had they continued operation for the whole year, the result would have been perhaps a little better than Airways India.

Now Mr. Tata says and Air India say that their operation cost is Rs. 5/3/0 a mile (*Shri Mahavir Tyagi*: Because of hostesses). It is difficult to accept this figure because I know that whenever Government wanted to charter a plane, they quoted Rs. 5 a mile but when private parties chartered a plane from Air India, they charged only Rs. 3 or Rs. 3/4/0 a mile. It is difficult to believe that businessmen like them would charter the plane at a loss. I would like the members to go through their balance sheets to see how the profits are made.

[At this stage Mr. Speaker vacated the Chair, which was then occupied by Mr. Deputy-Speaker (*Shri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar*).]

Sir, I tried to look into the history of this Air Line. I was told that the company was started as a private concern of Tatas in 1932-33 and no accounts are available, but they had three planes at that time costing each Rs. 20,000. At the most they must have invested in the three planes only Rs. 60,000.

{Mr. Rafi Ahmad Kidwai}

They may have set aside a lakh for running expenses and we may presume that the capital they invested was Rs. two lakhs. Though no accounts are available, we have got accounts of the huge amounts that were being paid to them for postal mails. They were being paid, I think, Rs. five a lb. for carrying mail from Karachi to Bombay or Madras. Later on in 1944, for the first time, they submitted their accounts to D.G.C.A. because they intended to convert it into a public limited company. At that time the capital was shown to be a little over Rs. ten lakhs. Whatever may have been the investment in the beginning the accumulated amount at that time was this amount. For the two years of 1944 and 1945, they earned a profit of Rs. twelve lakhs on an investment of Rs. ten lakhs. Then in 1946 this company was converted into Air India Limited. They charged Rs. 13 lakhs for the assets; they charged Rs. 20 lakhs for goodwill and all that is there. All this has been added as a burden to the capital of the Company besides Rs. twelve lakhs taken as profit. Hon. Members will be astounded if they see their depreciation charges. They have got 15 Dakotas; they have got 6 Vikings and the total cost would not have been more than 66 lakhs. Today they have got, in three years' time Rs. 66 lakhs as depreciation charges. They have got a novel method of calculating depreciation charges.

Shri E. K. Sidhva: At what rate are they calculating?

The Honourable Mr. Rafi Ahmad Kidwai: Aeroplane they charge at 30 per cent. and they charge for the next year on the whole amount and not on the depreciated amount. I am told that income-tax laws allow such depreciation and today every Dakota that they are using has paid its cost in depreciation charges because they have set aside one third every year, calculating, three years as Dakota's life.

Shri Ajit Prasad Jain (U.P.: General): According to you they are charging 33 per cent. as depreciation charges each year on the total value of the plane. It means that the whole price of the plane is paid over in three years. What actually is the life of a Dakota?

The Honourable Mr. Rafi Ahmad Kidwai: I do not know but the Dakotas that were purchased three or four years ago are still continuing.

Shri E. K. Sidhva: What is their life?

The Honourable Mr. Rafi Ahmad Kidwai: I do not know. I was told that they will be declared obsolete in 1951.

Shri Mahavir Tyagi (U.P.: General): They cannot be obsolete so long as they are paying depreciation.

Shri Upendranath Barman (West Bengal: General): Mr. Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri referred to the appalling waste of petrol. Please say something regarding that.

The Honourable Mr. Rafi Ahmad Kidwai: I am coming to that. It has been said that a favour had been shown to Himalayan Airways. I have already told the House about favouritism shown to Indian Overseas. Now Mr. Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri has again asked me why this Himalayan Airways has been favoured. Has it been favoured? I have got the letters from Shri Gurunath Bewoor, from Mr. Tata, from Air Service of India, from I.N.A., from Deccan Airways and from other Airways in India. They say that the night flying will not pay. They complained that Government was not prepared to pay more for the night services than they were paying to the day services. They said that the night services will not get a single passenger except in

emergencies. When we received this reply, when these companies refused to operate, either jointly or separately, I suggested to the D.G.C.A. to negotiate with other companies.

I had made the offer of operating the night services, to Air India. I told them, "Your flying hours are at 30,000 and this will give you another 15,000; you have engaged so much staff and you are over-staffed and then this additional service will perhaps make the operation economical." Mr. Tata seemed inclined to accept it. He wanted three months' time. I told him that when we were suspending it for the monsoon, that would give him the necessary time. But it seems Shri Gurunath Bewoor had committed himself to other companies with whom he had formed a combine.

Sjt. Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri: Is it a fact that the hon. Minister agreed to guarantee at the rate of Rs. three per mile and five of the six scheduled operators wanted to accept that condition but the hon. Minister withdrew that?

The Honourable Mr. Rafi Ahmad Kidwai: I am coming to that.

Shri Mohan Lal Gautam: Is Shri Gurunath Bewoor connected with any of the air lines?

The Honourable Mr. Rafi Ahmad Kidwai: Well, Sir, I was telling that first I offered it to Air India. Then I offered it to I.N.A. and I offered it to other companies also.

Fandit Balkrishna Sharma (U.P.: General): Your fault seems to be that you did not accept their terms. Why did you not accept their terms to oblige them?

The Honourable Mr. Rafi Ahmad Kidwai: Well then, there was the formation of that combine. I said, all right. The idea was that all the six companies should combine to run these services, this night service and the day service that Indian Overseas were operating. They agreed; they demanded a guarantee of an income of Rs. 3 per mile. It was on my suggestion but then the suggestion was subject to the acceptance of Government. In the meantime, two of my suggestions they turned down. I had insisted that all the six companies should combine to operate this service. But because Bharat had offered to operate this service by Skymasters on our terms this was not acceptable to them. They said no, only five companies would operate and Bharat was not acceptable to them. I sent for Mr. Bewoor once again and impressed on him the necessity of accepting Bharat as one of their partners, as otherwise it would be thought that because Bharat had accepted Government's terms they were being victimised. He said that he would reconsider but again wrote back to say that they cannot work with Bharat. That was the one condition that they did not accept.

Then there was my anxiety to introduce a service to try lower fares. These companies were opposed to lower fares. I had proposed a ten per cent. surcharge on the first class railway ticket. They first suggested 25 per cent. and in the end they said they would agree to 12½ per cent. But when Mr. Bewoor went back to Bombay he wrote to me suggesting 25 per cent. Once again I had a talk with him and after he reached Bombay he wrote back the same thing. Therefore I could not pursue this question of the guarantee. Because, firstly, as everybody is aware, the financial position of the Government was such that perhaps they would not be prepared to give this guarantee although I was sure that there was no risk. Secondly, when these people are so much determined not to reduce the rates, I thought perhaps they would not be earnest in making it a success. Therefore the guarantee question was dropped.

Then there is the question about petrol.

Shri C. Subramaniam (Madras: Genera.): If Bharat had agreed why not give them the contract?

The Honourable Mr. Rafi Ahmad Kidwai: I do confess my weakness that I did not want to injure Air India.

Mr. Robini Kumar Chaudhuri said something about petrol consumption. Every service that operates consumes petrol and if petrol has to be saved then there are ways and ways of saving it. Why should I discontinue a service that is taking 100 per cent. load, and is very popular? If I had to discontinue any service then it would be the service that carries only 20 per cent., 30 per cent. or 40 per cent. load. Why should I discontinue a service that is carrying 100 per cent. load and which is very popular and which is prepared to extend their service if we ask them to? Only yesterday their General Manager came to me and said that they had only a provisional licence and therefore they are not prepared to invest money. They said that if they were given a term license like other companies they would arrange to import at least two four-engined planes to operate on the Calcutta-Bombay route, not only Sky-masters but new French planes that will do the Calcutta-Bombay trip in $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours and which will carry a larger number of passengers and a greater load of mail. They will be more economical to operate than the present Dakotas. Naturally they are not prepared to invest money so long as this controversy is going on and they do not know whether they will get a term license or not.

But I have asked them to put in their application now for a term license before the A.T.L.B. If they are satisfied with their working why should they refuse them a term licence? I have covered the whole ground...

Shri Mahavir Tyagi: You have not told us the rate at which they are carrying the mails now.

The Honourable Mr. Rafi Ahmad Kidwai: The same rate that the A.T.L.B. has fixed for the day services. They are not paid anything extra. The rate is freight rate plus 25 per cent. If mail is to be sent to Bombay it would be the freightage plus 25 per cent.

Shri Mahavir Tyagi: At what rate are they carrying passengers?

The Honourable Mr. Rafi Ahmad Kidwai: At first class railway fare plus $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent.

Sjt. Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri: If the two-anna postage is not agreed to either by this House or the Government in the next budget, will the hon. Minister be able to continue the night air mail service?

The Honourable Mr. Rafi Ahmad Kidwai: I have said again and again that the all-up air mail has nothing to do with the increase in the postage. It is a device to provide certain load to the air companies as a help to them and therefore it will not be affected by any change in the postage rate.

Shri Ajit Prasad Jain: It was alleged by Mr. Robini Kumar Chaudhuri that this Himalayan Air lines had misbehaved and its licence was suspended under suspicious circumstances. I would like the hon. Minister to enlighten the House on that point as it will go a long way to show the stability and reliability of the company.

The Honourable Mr. Rafi Ahmad Kidwai: It is true that we received certain allegations against two companies and immediately we suspended the services and referred the matter to the department concerned for further action. They wrote back to say that they had no proof and that all they had intended was to warn us to watch their working and not for any action.

Shri R. K. Sidha: What was the cause of suspicion?

The Honourable Mr. Rafi Ahmad Kidwai: I said that the department sent a certain complaint and we suspended the services and referred the complaint back to them. Then they said that they had got no proof but only asked to watch there.

Shri Ajit Prasad Jain: We would like to know the nature of the complaint.

The Honourable Mr. Rafi Ahmad Kidwai: The nature of the complaint in such cases is always smuggling.

Shri Arun Chandra Guha (West Bengal: General): Has any other company offered to lower their rates for passenger service?

The Honourable Mr. Rafi Ahmad Kidwai: Except the Air India, other companies after watching the working of the night air mail for one month are introducing lower rates to attract passengers. The Deccan Airways have already offered to lower their rates. The I.N.A. is introducing the return ticket system by which they will carry passengers back on the payment of 40 per cent. over the single fare. The Airways India has also introduced certain family concessions and Bharat has applied to lower their charges on one of their routes. They are seeking the permission of the A.T.L.B. for reducing their fares.

The Assembly then adjourned for Lunch till Thirtly-five Minutes Past Two of the Clock.

The Assembly reassembled after Lunch at Thirty-five Minutes past Two of the Clock, Mr. Deputy-Speaker (Shri M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar) in the Chair.

Prof. K. T. Shah: Sir, I have listened with the utmost attention to the speeches delivered this morning both by the Mover of the resolution and by the hon. Minister, giving certain very valuable information—facts and figures—which I must admit have gone a great way in enlightening myself and providing information which, I confess, is not easily accessible to the public. In the light, however, of this explanation and information and notwithstanding the fact that I do not make the slightest discount from the information supplied by the hon. Minister, I feel it necessary to press the amendment that I have had the honour to move; and I will shortly give you my reasons why I think it necessary that this entire matter needs to be investigated properly by an independent Committee of Experts (*An Honourable Member:* Not a Commission?) Committee or Commission does not matter—appointed by Government, and reporting within a very short space of time so that all the aspects of this matter, economic as well as other aspects, may be investigated and considered, costs and returns examined and recommendations made according to which the most equitable, the most efficient and the most economic arrangements can be made.

Taking that view, I think the first thing the House should recognize is this: that Air Transport is a war baby. It was conceived during the first war, delivered soon after, and all through its growth, its adolescence and even its maturity today, it has not ceased to suffer from the pains of delivery which attended it during the war time, both thirty-five years ago and ten years ago. As it was a war child, it was certainly one in the bringing up of whom there was no regard paid to what we call "economic considerations." Cost was no consideration at that time when the very existence of the warring countries depended upon the efficient and rapid growth of this new arm of warfare.

Though after the war the enterprise was continued and developed for civilian purposes in this country, that came somewhat later; and it came in a very haphazard and straggling manner, without any proper coordination, without any proper examination of the internal economics of that industry. Hence, if I may venture to say so, it even now suffers from many of the weaknesses that attended its birth and growth in the early years.

The campaign of calumny to which the hon. Minister has referred in reply to the charges that are urged against him or his Ministry in this matter particularly has no place in the suggestion I am making for an all-over, all-

[Prof. K. T. Shah]

round investigation and consideration of this whole question, not merely from the standpoint of the Night Air Mail Service but from the entire standpoint of aviation in general. I consider the Government's difficulty lies in the peculiar origin and consequent characteristics of this form of transport; and until we go to the root of the matter, we shall not be able to provide more than mere palliatives.

This country, like any other, which wants to exist as an independent sovereign nation, now-a-days in the world as it is today, cannot afford to overlook the necessity of having an adequate Air Service within the country, if only for considerations of national security and defence in times of emergency. Modern transport agencies cannot be looked upon merely as commercial transports. It is for that reason that most countries which have developed their air enterprise so far have found it necessary to subsidise it in one way or another, and conduct it with direct or indirect subsidies. At a pinch, therefore, it could be converted into a good auxiliary and even a direct method of carrying on warfare for ensuring the nation's security.

Taking that view, I think that it would be the best course to adopt that this should be exclusively, like the Navy or the Army, a government venture altogether. The nationalisation of air transportation, like that of railway transportation, should, I for one hold, have been from the start a public enterprise, owned, manned and controlled as a government enterprise. Then there would have been no vested interests of private owners, no spectacle of companies fighting against themselves with cut-throat competition, no necessity for the campaign of calumny to which the hon. Minister has referred, no occasion for insinuations of the type that have been made, there would have been greater cleanliness in public life as well as efficiency in public enterprise.

Unfortunately, however, Government themselves decided, I think it was two years ago or more, against nationalisation of air transportation. Hence, it is that they are themselves facing the consequences of allowing fattened private enterprise to grow which, if it cannot get satisfactory terms for itself, will necessarily prey upon the public, and, if not in direct ways in indirect ways, of forcing subsidies or concessions or direct gifts from Government from the public purse. At bottom, as far as I can see, this is a quarrel between commercial competitors, some of whom have succeeded in gaining concessions, some of whom have not succeeded. And those who have not succeeded are imposing their heart-burnings upon the innocent heads of those in authority for one reason or another.

I hold no brief, Sir, for either the companies concerned, or even, may I say it without any offence, for the Minister as I find he is a stalwart who can bear his woe himself and answer them himself. But I am pained to say that so far as the public interest as a whole is concerned, so far as the national security is concerned, so far as the utilisation of an efficient air service existing in the country, for not only the civil needs of the country, but also for defence, is concerned, here is a matter arrived at a stage at which I think it very badly needs careful consideration and investigation in all its aspects, and that too by independent experts, so that there should be no occasion afterwards of mud-slinging upon anybody, either upon the authority or upon those who are concerned otherwise.

As a rule I am not in favour of having outside experts to help us in the task of carrying our burdens. Here is a case, however, in which I think the exception should prove the rule. For reasons I have just hinted at, it would be best to have independent outside experts, unconcerned with either the one company or the other set of companies, or even with the Government, who can, from their own rich experience of working such enterprise, give you objective reasons for holding this view or that; and, taking a long-range view of the needs of the

country, of the possibilities of this enterprise, of the costs involved, of the potentialities for the growth of this enterprise, of savings that can be made, to make concrete recommendations upon which we can base a much more comprehensive and ensuring policy.

This should not, I repeat, be treated as just an *ad hoc* passing emergency, a mere quarrel between parties concerned, a mere matter of the public campaigning against particular individuals. It is a matter of vital importance to the country as a whole, not only in ordinary times but in times of emergency, as we had a very good example and experience some two years ago. With this experience before us, with this knowledge of the possibilities of utilising air ports, I think we must not overlook this opportunity to secure the best possible expert advice at this stage, and base our policy accordingly on developing on the soundest possible lines our air transportation, which is inevitable and indispensable for both the economic and the defence needs of the country.

I know that there is a definite limit beyond which air service cannot expand in ordinary times in a country like this, and cannot be popular in the mass sense of the term. It will remain, as far ahead as this generation can see, a luxury service. Even if you have fares corresponding to the I class fare, that too, as the Minister concerned with the Railways will tell you, as the Railway Administration Reports tell you, will be hardly utilised by perhaps one-fifth of the population of this country, if even as much as that. The maximum economy that we are told is possible today is perhaps air fares 10 or 12½ per cent. more than the I class railway fare of today. Even that is higher than it used to be some years ago. Taking that as a likely possibility of the ultimate development and potential development of this enterprise, we must recognise the limitations within which all economies that we can possibly effect can be affected. After all, a very considerable portion of the capital costs involved in providing and working an air service is supplied free of cost by the State in constructing its aerodromes, in providing certain equipment, in providing weather stations, radio stations, and so on. These involved a very considerable outlay on the part of the State. True, the State makes charges for landing, for housing etc. and these are quite considerable if you compare them, for instance, to a ship berthing at a port or to the railway station.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: The hon. Member has got two minutes more in which to conclude.

Prof. K. T. Shah: I am very sorry, Sir, if that is the time, I cannot finish all the points meant to deal with in this amendment. I have nothing more to say but to repeat the necessity of having an over all examination of this industry. I trust that it would not be anybody's intention so to handle this problem as to weaken the existing companies, so to work this concession of a mail service as to impoverish existing enterprises and then buy them out as it were for the State, because that would be not ethically just, economically sound, or politically wise.

I commend my motion to the House.

The Honourable Shri Jawaharlal Nehru (Prime Minister and Minister of External Affairs): I have just been listening to what my hon. colleague Prof. Shah has said. With a very great deal of the general propositions that he has laid down I am in complete agreement. Indeed, I don't see how anyone in this House can't agree with those general propositions that air services are essential in a modern country, essential from both the civil and the military point of view, therefore air services should be based on a strong foundation therefore every care should be taken that they grow up on this foundation and therefore that the best advice, independent advice, should be taken so that we may not fall into error.

[Sri Jawaharlal Nehru]

Now, all these are I take it admitted facts. Unfortunately, the way this motion has been brought forward in this House and some of the arguments advanced have hardly been on that high level of principle but have referred to all kinds of controversies and insinuations and the rest with the result that consideration of this vital principle has been shifted from that plane of principle to detail; and not only detail, but to personal accusation which is unfortunate because that somehow hides the main facts.

The motion itself, asking for the stoppage of the night airmail system, we cannot accept because we think the night airmail system is good for obvious reasons. But that does not mean that we are satisfied with everything in the night airmail system or that we are not prepared to inquire into this or that or to improve it or to find out what are the errors. But to say that it should be abolished forthwith seems to me to ignore all the realities of the situation and to proceed perhaps on some particular aspect which cannot be isolated from the others. So we cannot accept that motion. Nor can we accept the amendment that has been moved in this particular context and also because we think that the particular type of enquiry that Prof. Shah has suggested would be a long distance thing, would be a big thing. It may be that some time later we may have that enquiry but at the present moment and in the present context it would have an entirely different meaning even from what Prof. Shah intends to have.

It is obvious that the development of civil air services, just like the development of military air transport, is a highly technical and a highly difficult phenomenon. It is not, if I may say so, as easy as setting up a factory for the production of something. It requires a great deal of preparation, a great deal of training for the individual, both as an individual pilot but even more so on the organisational side. It is easy enough for any party to buy half a dozen aircraft—Dakotas or any others—and start an air service with them hiring pilots and the rest. But that is not the way to lay the foundation of an air service. It is possible that some money may be made for the time being because the capital cost involved was little. If we have to build an air service, it has to be on much surer and sounder foundations as indeed the air services of all the other countries have done. They have to have aircraft which does not last too long as technical changes take place quickly. All kinds of safety precautions have to be taken; we cannot take risks. Therefore, because of this element of danger one has to spend much time on the training on the safety side than normally one would in any other technical factory or elsewhere. One has to prepare for all kinds of contingencies, even the contingency of your aircraft becoming obsolete fairly soon. And this can only be done by a Government or any authority taking the best possible advice and the best possible independent advice, I agree with Prof. Shah. It is not quite enough to have the advice of those people who themselves operate because they have a certain set of views on the subject, they go on repeating them. Therefore, they have to be checked by other advice too. The unfortunate part in regard to this resolution is that I felt as I was listening that it has almost appeared that there was a dispute and the Government was a party to the dispute, or the Ministry of Communications was a party to that dispute. I do repudiate that and I do want to remove any such charge. The Government may make a mistake, the Ministry of Communications may or may not, but it is our duty to be above these party wranglings and to take advice, our own technical advice, independent advice, and to decide impartially, objectively, as to what is to be done from the point of view of the air services of the country. I would beg the House not to consider this as a matter in which Government or the Communications Ministry is a party to a dispute, but rather as a matter in which there are—let us put it at the highest—differences of opinion. It is for Government to consider every single point,

allegation or charge—whatever you call it—that has been made, and take independent advice of its own people and others and then come to a decision. It may be that at a later stage some such course as the one suggested by Prof. Shah, not in regard to present happenings but in regard to the future development of our air service, industry etc. might be considered by a committee or commission which Government may appoint. At the present moment, if you think in terms of a committee or commission, it simply means you are directing your attention to certain existing difficulties and throwing that larger aspect into the background.

Prof. Shah mentioned the desirability of nationalisation and State control of the civil air services. There is hardly a single member of the House who is opposed to that idea. The point is one of practicability and feasibility, of what we can do and when we can do it. Prof. Shah was incorrect in saying that Government "decided" two or three years ago that there should be no nationalisation. There is no "decision" this way or that way. I believe a Committee was appointed about three years ago—some kind of an Enquiry Committee—and it presented some kind of an interim report. The Government did not come to any conclusion on that. But it is a fact that apart from any formal conclusion by Government, they have considered this matter on several occasions and felt that, on grounds of feasibility and practicability, it was not desirable for any general scheme of nationalisation to be given effect to. It would have been a very expensive thing for one thing. The mere cost side was heavy. There were other considerations too. From the point of view of personnel, training and the rest there were difficulties. It was then that we decided in regard to this Air India International that it should be a mixed concern with Government capital and capital of a private company and that the running of it should be left to the company, to their expert personnel whom they have trained. Now, why did we do that? It was because really there was no choice. We the Government could not have done it, unless we sat down for a number of years to train up and prepare people. A private company may or may not have done it, I do not know. They might have done it by themselves.

The starting of an international air line was a big undertaking. It was an infinitely bigger undertaking than the starting of an airline inside the country.

3 P. M. It is not only quantitatively bigger but it is qualitatively different. It competes with all kinds of international airlines. It involves far more serious risks and dangers. Therefore, it requires the highest type of training, pilots and organisational skill. I may inform the House from such knowledge as I have gathered in my various journeys abroad in the course of the last year—and I have travelled about half a dozen times to Europe by Air India International and I have met people who have travelled by other lines too—first of all, I gathered there was a feeling of surprise among people belonging to other International Air Companies, British, American etc. that an Indian international line had come in and succeeded. They had thought that it was a highly technical, highly complicated and difficult thing. They themselves had experience of it. So they expected that any Indian attempt would be a failure. But when it came up and it succeeded, they were surprised, and sometimes perhaps a little disappointed.

The fact of the matter is I know nothing about the financial side, whether the charges are too high or too low or the overheads are excessive. That I do not know. It is a matter for enquiry. I am merely speaking from the point of view of the service rendered. There is no doubt that there is a general impression, whether you go to England or America, among the air travelling public that Air India International is in the top rank of international air services. Whether it is from the point of view of comfort, from the point of view of efficiency, of punctuality or of general courtesy, it is top ranking. Now, that could not come about without the most careful preparation and just as any

[Shri Jawaharlal Nehru]

kind of operation, whether it is military or civil on a big scale, it requires the greatest staff work behind it. A little over a year or a year and a quarter ago, the Hyderabad operation took place. It went like clockwork and on the fourth day the whole thing was over. Well, there was not very much fighting, but perhaps the House does not realise what months of intensive preparation were involved in it. Hon. Members who were sometimes a little impatient and asked "Why is this not being done, why is that not being done?" did not realise that all that time the most intensive and careful preparation was going on. If the House could see—I do not know what it is technically called—the list of directions as they grew, it was about that fact, all printed and confidential. Every little button was thought of. Every single step as to where somebody should arrive and somebody should leave was planned. Thus, when the operations started, they went like clock work. Because it was so efficiently arranged, a large number of lives were saved, damage to buildings averted. One does not know what the consequences would have been if there was delay in anything. So, any big undertaking requires a great deal of staff work and preparation; otherwise, if some little thing goes wrong the consequences may be serious. You may perhaps afford to see something go wrong when you are on hard ground, but if something goes wrong when you are far up in the air, it has more serious consequences. So one has to take even more precautions about that. This first Indian international air service was started after years and years of preparation and calculation. I am not talking about the financial aspect. It entailed many visits abroad, in America, in England, to see how other services were built up. So it was a success from the running point of view. As to whether it is more expensive or not, I do not know. It is for experts to consider and advise us. But this service is something of which India can be legitimately proud, not only because it is a good service but because it has added to India's credit very greatly; it has proved that we can undertake big things and carry them on in spite of the greatest competition.

As I said, I do not know exactly whether the overhead charges of one concern are more or less. But I must say that when I see this large sum that we have paid which has been incurred as loss, I am alarmed at it. It seems big, and it should be enquired into why it is so big and if it can be reduced. All that should be done by our financial and other experts. Undoubtedly, it should be done. Nevertheless, the fact should be remembered that in the first year or may be two years of the working of a big undertaking, all kinds of expenses come in which normally would not continue after a couple of years. Secondly also, in a matter of this kind almost every country, when it has tried to expand its air services, has had to subsidise them. It is not a new thing. If we want to do it, undoubtedly we shall have to subsidise them to some extent, obviously within the limits of capacity, but we have nevertheless to subsidise them both from the point of view of civil aviation and also as a standby in case of military or other special requirements. For my part, I would not at all like the development of a monopoly in India, unless ultimately the monopoly may be the monopoly of the State, which is a different matter. But I would not personally like any single company monopolising anything. Of course, we cannot impose efficiency on every company, as we cannot impose anything else. But a Government should try to encourage as many good services as possible. Good I said, because encouraging of many services may result in not only standards coming down but also in too severe a competition between them which may lead to their disruption and lack of success.

Now, may I, therefore, sum up and inform the House that so far as Government is concerned, we do not accept this resolution. Nor do we want to accept the amendments. But we propose to pay the greatest attention to everything

that hon. Members have said in this House and to look into this matter again and again.

In fact only yesterday—quite independently of this resolution, it had nothing to do with it—there was a meeting of the Scientific Co-ordination Committee which coordinates all scientific activities of the various Ministries and Departments of Government. Several Ministries, like Food, Health, Agriculture and Defence, have got Scientific Advisory Committees. We found that these Scientific Advisory Committees were functioning separately and independently of each other, as indeed unfortunately many of our activities are still carried on in various Ministries, sometimes one Ministry not knowing everything that the other Ministry does. So also, our scientific activities were not properly co-ordinated. Last year we formed a Scientific Co-ordination Committee to bring the work of these various committees together. There was a meeting yesterday—the usual monthly meeting—of the Scientific Co-ordination Committee and they considered the various scientific types of work that are being done and co-ordinated as far as possible. We were considering each Ministry separately and we found that there was no independent advisory committee for the Ministry of Communications, either in regard to posts and telegraphs or in regard to communications. They are separate subjects, of course, and you cannot have one committee for both. Similarly, there were no committees in regard to one or two other Ministries as well. So, it was recommended to me as Prime Minister that there should be an advisory committee of independent experts in regard to the air services for one, and in regard to one or two other subjects separately. The Committee will naturally consist of representatives, I imagine, of the Hindustan Airports, of the Aeronautical Society, of the R.I.A.F. of the Ministry of Communications and may be one or two others, who would also take advice from others, if necessary. That recommendation is before me and presumably it will be given effect to fairly soon. But apart from that we are sufficiently alive to the fact that the air services in India should be developed with the greatest possible care, and I would say with independent advice, because it is too risky a matter not only financially, but also otherwise and we dare not go ahead without as much assurance and surety as possible about the future. Otherwise danger may confront us and the whole thing may crack. I may, however, assure the House that we do intend to take every possible step to foster the air services in India.

Shri M. R. Meani (Bombay: General): Sir, I am sure the House is grateful to the Prime Minister for his very constructive approach to the subject and, if I may say so, for raising the level of the debate from the low level to which it had sunk in the course of this morning's proceedings. I, Sir, shall certainly respond to his excellent suggestion that we should discuss this matter free of personalities, insinuations and invective on any side whatsoever.

As hon. Members are aware, there has been a controversy, not only a whispering campaign as the hon. Minister said, but a shouting, raging and tearing campaign,—a very unfortunate one I think—in the press in which both sides have indulged and the hon. Minister repeated his side of the case again this morning. I, Sir, have no desire to join in that controversy or to carry it any further. I do not think it serves any purpose. We here have to take a broad national view and to consider the implications of the night air mail services on the development of this nascent industry which in a few years has made such wonderful progress and about which we can hold our heads high. Let us also not forget that when we discuss the night flying or civil aviation in general, there is another aspect which is important and that is the defence aspect which is apt to be overlooked. Civil aviation is in a way the second line of defence for the air arm of this country and, therefore, while I appreciate the fact that my friend Mr. Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri has served a public purpose in raising a discussion on this matter, I for one would not find myself in agreement with

[Shri M. R. Masani]

his proposition that night flying of mails and passengers should be abolished altogether. I think night flying is a thing that the country will have to go in for in a proper way. To stop night flying altogether because the present scheme may have its defects would be like throwing the baby out with the bathwater. We want to preserve the night flying of mails, passengers and freight, but we want to do it free from the disadvantages and the handicaps which the present scheme, the industry claims, imposes on it.

The Prime Minister, Sir, has made another contribution by showing us that night flying is not a thing that can be isolated, as he put it, from the broader problem of civil aviation and I think we cannot do better than consider the general position of the industry, against the background of which any scheme of night flying today or tomorrow has to be considered.

Now, what is the general position of the Industry in India today? It is on record that within the last twelve months two companies have gone into liquidation and one other suspended operation for a while. I am afraid the best information seems to me that one or two other companies may soon find themselves in a similar unfortunate position. Now there are eight companies, as far as I am aware, functioning in the field today and I would like to draw the attention of the House to the state of these eight concerns which form this industry. The published figures in the latest annual reports of these concerns show—I shall not give names, but shall just refer to the three or four leading companies—that they are not in too happy a state.

The first company has made an accumulated loss of Rs. 21½ lakhs, out of a paid up capital of Rs. 30 lakhs. The second company has made an accumulated loss of Rs. 19½ lakhs out of a paid up capital of Rs. 82 lakhs. A third company, to which the hon. Minister referred this morning, shows at the end of the calendar year 1948 a loss of Rs. 4 lakhs out of a capital of Rs. 50 lakhs, but its own annual report states that during the year 1949 it expects to make a loss of Rs. 15 lakhs, a fact which the hon. Minister did not mention to complete the picture. The fourth service made a profit in 1948 of Rs. 4 lakhs—that was another company the hon. Minister referred to—but I find from the Auditors' report that adequate depreciation has not been allowed for, with the result that even the tiny profit that it has shown is an inflated one on account of inadequate provision for depreciation. The biggest air line of the land, which has been making a profit in the past years expects to lose in this current year over Rs. 25 lakhs.

That is the grim picture of the industry as a whole and I do not think any one of us, whatever view we may hold on the present night air mail scheme, can view it with equanimity. I am sure the Government cannot do so and does not do so. These figures indicate that there is great substance in the claim made by the industry that it is operating under heavy losses and that it is unable to provide adequate depreciation. Now, Sir, this morning some light-hearted allusions were made to the effect that depreciation need not be provided for at such a high percentage. I do not want to go into the technical aspects of the matter for which I am not more competent than any other member here, but the fact remains that the aircraft industry, the aviation industry, is an industry where particularly rapid replacement of planes and parts becomes necessary. One cannot discuss depreciation as one does it in the case of a textile mill or a steel works. Therefore we must be prepared for heavy depreciation or replacement. Now, in their present plight, it would be futile to expect the existing concerns to replace their planes, which are in danger of being out-dated with new planes. That is why the position of the industry can be considered as a serious, a very serious one.

The real issue that is before the House—although we are discussing a limited aspect of it—is this: what is the economic rate at which air transit in this

country is possible? I raise that issue, that fundamental issue, on which some kind of expert, impartial verdict is called for. On this question, the Government in the Ministry of Communications and the Industry held views at variance. The industry claims—rightly or wrongly—that there is a large increase in the cost of operations, both in wages and dearness allowance and in the cost of materials such as spare parts, petrol and so on, prices of which have gone up, and this is aggravated by the devaluation of the rupee. I am aware that the hon. Minister very kindly tried to meet the difficulties of the industry some months ago by giving a rebate of 9 annas on a gallon of petrol. But, unfortunately, Sir, the whole of that and a little more has been eaten up by the rise in the price of petrol itself. First of all there is an initial rise of 3 annas per gallon in the price of petrol and then there is the provincial sales tax of two annas per gallon. Then on top of these, on 1st November, devaluation, brought in a further rise of 5½ annas per gallon as against the rebate or relief which the Government intended to give of nine annas. Their intention has been completely frustrated and more than frustrated by a ten and a quarter annas increase which they are paying today per gallon of petrol.

An Honourable Member: Is the provincial sales tax a new charge?

Shri K. R. Masani: Now, is the level of fares prevailing today high or low when compared with the level in other parts of the world? I would give the fares for U.S. and continental services and compare them with the fares here. You will see from this that the Indian industry is running at an operating cost below those of highly developed and technically advanced countries like America—an achievement of which we should be proud. The fares in Europe are high. The schedule for fares in the United States corresponds to 6 cent per mile—equal to 4½ annas per mile against that recently fixed by the Licensing Board for this country of a maximum of four annas a mile and a minimum of three annas.

The Honourable Mr. Rafi Ahmad Kidwai: They can raise it higher or reduce it with the permission of the Board.

Shri M. R. Masani: But for the present, the prevailing rate is a minimum of three annas and a maximum of four annas. Therefore, every Air Service in India, notwithstanding the handicaps as compared with their American counterpart, must run its service at a cost lower than that charged by the Air Services in America. For mail planes the same factor applies. Here the rate per mile for passengers is 2½ annas. That is only made possible because of the practical monopoly for carrying mails given to this one company. You will find that in the United States the rate is higher. Sir, may I with your permission read an extract from the *aviation week* of September 12, 1949, giving the state of affairs in regard to this matter in the United States? This is what the above weekly says:

"Limits within which the certified domestic air lines may offer air coach' & second-class rates as it were—first-of-the-week family fares and other promotional traffs during the coming year were outlined last week—that is the beginning of September—by the Civil Aeronautics Board—an independent Board which fixes the rates in that country. Four-cents-a-mile coach service conducted with 21 to 24 passenger DC-3s—the Dakotas—probably cannot be successful unless it shows a load factor in excess of 85 per cent—a figure unlikely to be attained over an extended period. Accordingly the Board said it would not grant approval beyond September 30 to TWA's DC-3 coach service between Kansas City and Los Angeles or Continental Air Lines' out-rate DC-3 operation between Kansas City and Denver."

What is the meaning of this? It means that when certain air-lines wanted to go in for a wage-cut or cut-throat competition, the Regional Board in the United States, only two months ago, prohibited them from doing so. We in our country are running a 2½ night service because there is the monopoly.

Shri K. Hanumanthaiya (Mysore State): Would you kindly give us a comparative statement of the wages of pilots, crew and staff of the air companies in India and in the United States?

Shri M. K. Masani: If I were a Cabinet Minister, I would have said: 'I would like to have notice of the question.' But I cannot help saying that our pilots and technical personnel are more highly paid than any other branch of labour in this country. Therefore hon. Members may not be led away with the impression that they are paid ordinary unskilled or skilled wages prevailing in this country. I mentioned these facts to show that it cannot possibly be alleged that the overhead charges here are very high or higher than that in other countries. On the contrary, it would appear that there is a *prima facie* case for the industry to make out that they are being made to work at uneconomic rates. (*Prof. N. G. Ranga:* Question) I am glad Prof. Ranga questions, but who is to decide? I am glad the hon. the Prime Minister has considered the scientific and expert side of the question with some kind of scientific approach to this problem and is referring the matter to some expert agency to see that whatever help is possible is given to this infant industry. But normally what happens is that when an industry in this country feels that owing to competition it cannot sell at the prevailing rates or prices, the question is invariably referred by Government—this has been the practice for 25 years—to the Tariff Board and not to a Branch of its Ministry. The Tariff Board then goes into the affairs of the industry, whether it is textile, sugar, paper, steel, chemicals or what not. Only a few months ago the cases of soda ash and caustic soda production were referred to the Tariff Board. Similarly the case of this industry should be referred to a specially appointed Board. There is no reason why a manufacturing industry should have the right to have its affairs investigated by an independent tribunal and not a public utility branch. I fail to see any distinction so far as the merits of the two cases are concerned. Just as a manufacturing industry offers to place its affairs for scrutiny by those outside its ranks, there is no reason why a similar independent body should not look into the affairs of a public utility service. They should be looked into by those who are competent and scientifically equipped to judge the affairs of the industry. Therefore, although I do not support the amendment of Professor Shah, I feel that we should ask Government to consider this constructive suggestion for an investigation into the affairs of the industry.

Shri Mohan Lal Gantam: Sir, I have heard both sides of the case, both on behalf of the industry and the Government. I, as one who is connected with neither, and who belongs to that class which is required to pay millions and millions of rupees to this industry, have come to the conclusion that there is something wrong somewhere. My simple question is, is this Government which is giving forty to fifty lakhs of rupees as petrol-tax refund to this industry and something by way of charges for carrying mails, making the best use of this money? If this industry is not utilising the money that is being paid to it properly, then what is the position? Why is the taxpayer taxed and this money wasted? If you say that these subsidies are meant to develop this industry, then I fail to understand why it has not developed. I have not succeeded in understanding it in spite of the attention that I paid to the speech of the honourable Minister. He has not proved the case that under his supervision with the subsidy that this industry has been paid by the taxpayer, the industry has developed. The figures that my friend, Shri Masani, has given prove that the industry is not in a good condition.

An Honourable Member: Therefore you kick it.

Shri Mohan Lal Gantam: You may kick it or finish it, but you have no business and this Government has no business to pay forty or fifty lakhs of rupees to an industry which is wasting. That is my conclusion. You allow this industry to be run absolutely privately and leave them alone, do not pay a single pie, and let them kill each other by cut-throat competition. I do not mind it. My grievance is that this Government is charging the taxpayer fifty or sixty lakhs of rupees and paying it to this losing industry. That is

what I want the Government to appreciate. Sir, I want this industry to be protected.

Shrimati Renuka Ray (West Bengal: General): It should be nationalised.

Shri Mohan Lal Gautam: I want this industry to be protected but it does not necessarily mean that it should be in private hands. It does not mean that. I was one of those who supported and would still support the hon. Minister when he said that this industry must be nationalised. I do not know what has happened to his declaration

The Honourable Mr. Rafi Ahmad Kidwai: When was that declaration made?

Shri Mohan Lal Gautam: I had a talk with the hon. Minister himself and he told me himself that he wants to nationalise it.

The Honourable Mr. Rafi Ahmad Kidwai: That was not a declaration.

Shri Mohan Lal Gautam: That I do not know.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Probably the Member was canvassing public opinion regarding that.

Shri Mohan Lal Gautam: It was nearly two years ago. My friends want the industry to thrive, but there ought to be a way out of it. I have found from the statement of the hon. Minister and from the speeches that have been made by some of my hon. friends that the whole thing is not pulling on well. The Minister finds it difficult to control the industry, to run the industry in his own way. So he has changed the Board from an autonomous Board into an official Board. I do not know what this independent autonomous body is. When I look at it, I find it difficult to see that this is an autonomous Board. It is presided over by a man who is connected with the industry again. It is presided over by Mr. Bewoor.

The Honourable Mr. Rafi Ahmad Kidwai: Who told you?

Shri Khurshed Lal (Deputy Minister of Communications): He is not a Member of any Board so far as I know.

Shri Mohan Lal Gautam: He calls himself an Adviser of Tatas.

Shri Khurshed Lal: Tatas are not an official Board.

Shri E. K. Sidhva: He is mixing up his ex-D.G.'s position.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: The hon. Member may be allowed to continue without interruption.

Shri Mohan Lal Gautam: I do not know how this Board was functioning. It is relevant to ask that, if the Ministry wanted to change the character of the Board, it should have come straight to us and should not have proceeded with it in an indirect way.

The Honourable Mr. Rafi Ahmad Kidwai: It has come straight to you.

Shri Khurshed Lal: The Board was constituted under the Indian Aircraft Rules and those rules were duly changed in the manner provided in the Act. There is no question of hanky-panky about it.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: The hon. Member is evidently under the impression that some person who is employed by Tatas is on this Board.

Shri Mohan Lal Gautam: I am not under any misapprehension about it, because I know that on this Board, as it is at present constituted, there are only three Government officials on it and not representative of Tatas or Birlas. That is quite clear to me. But my difficulty is that the way in which things are being done does not help the industry to develop.

Shri Ramnath Goenka (Madras: General): What is your concrete suggestion?

Shri Mohan Lal Gautam: My concrete suggestion is very simple. The Government has failed in its duty to nationalise this industry. It should have been nationalised. It should not have been allowed to be in the hands of private enterprise. My suggestion is that the whole thing must be consolidated as one unit and the Government must have full control over it. If you are not prepared to do it, you are playing with the money that is being paid to you by the taxpayer. This is not only an industry like the other industries. It is a very vital industry.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: May I remind the hon. Member that we are on the much narrower issue whether the night air mail service should be withdrawn or not.

Dr. P. S. Deshmukh: It was the Prime Minister who widened the scope of the discussion.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: To some extent every hon. Member is widening it.

Shri B. L. Sondhi: Having allowed it once, you cannot stop it now.

Shri Mohan Lal Gautam: I think it is very difficult for me to separate night-flying and civil aviation as a whole, and if it is asked of me to limit the scope, then I will not be able to follow the instructions of the Prime Minister. I will have to go into details which may not be palatable to so many of us. Therefore I am trying to raise the level.

Dr. P. S. Deshmukh: Quite right, raise it sky high.

Shri Mohan Lal Gautam: I do not want to attack one side or the other and especially when people are not in a position to defend themselves.

Dr. P. S. Deshmukh: The Minister is the only person here. So you must attack him.

Shri Mohan Lal Gautam: Sir, I think it is my duty to attack the Government primarily because they are responsible to us and they have to control the whole thing; we have given the reins in their hands of the entire country and if the country goes wrong and if the industry goes wrong, they have to control them and if they are not able to control them, we have a right to attack them and it is through them that I can attack the industry and everybody else. Therefore, I would request the hon. Minister to ponder over this whole thing, to think of the whole thing as such. This industry as I say is a vital one. It is the second line of defence and unless we develop it, we cannot count ourselves amongst the strong nations which claim to be strong enough to defend themselves. We are not yet out of the woods; we may have to fight our battles any moment, we do not know when and where. Therefore, Sir, at this stage not to pay attention and not to make this industry strong would be playing with the fate of the country and therefore, I say, Sir, that we have to look into the matter from this point of view whether every penny that we are spending on it, whether every penny that this country is spending on buying planes, on buying the spare parts, on buying petrol, is not wasted and whether we are making the best use of every rupee and every anna and every pie. I submit, Sir, after bearing the speeches, I have come to the conclusion that we are not. I would be glad if I prove to be wrong. I have definitely come to the conclusion that the money of the country is being wasted in buying planes, in unnecessary competition, in unnecessary wasting of petrol and all that. I want a way out of it and the Ministry has to find a way out of it. We cannot afford to buy petrol and spend it uselessly. We cannot afford to do it. My hon. friend, the Finance Minister, who is always trying to find

some money to be saved, if he finds that this money is unnecessarily going out of this country, it is his duty also to see that the money is not wasted like this. Therefore, my submission is that the whole thing, as I understand, is going wrong. There is something wrong somewhere. I am not here to apportion blame, but I think a way must be found and every effort must be made to make the best use of the money that we are spending to make civil aviation strong and not to allow these companies to fight amongst themselves and weaken the country which may prove to be detrimental to the best interests of all of us.

Shri E. K. Sidhva: Sir, as you rightly stated, this motion relates to the air night service only and I shall confine my remarks to night air mail service. As I said I shall confine myself to that in a restricted form only. My hon. friend, Shri Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri, in the morning while representing the case of the industry, I am sure after hearing the hon. Minister's speech, would have been surely convinced that the arguments that he advanced were not correct. The night air service, Sir, let me tell you, has become popular.

Sri. Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri: Question.

Shrimati Reuka Ray: Why?

Shri E. K. Sidhva: I am coming to the 'Why'. The hon. Minister has given figures and facts but from the people's point of view I am going to tell you, Sir, that it was never expected that the service from the passengers' point of view will be popular. Leave aside the mails and it has become more popular from the passengers' point of view than the air mail. Sir, whenever I travelled from Bombay and Delhi. I used to travel by Air India. I thought that I must travel by night service also because without travelling I could not get first-hand information and experience, and I did travel. Sir, after the introduction of this night service at the end of October and although when I travelled from Delhi to Nagpur the aircraft had no chairs but benches. I was first of all nonplussed when I did not find the usual chairs there and I took a blanket and made myself comfortable on the benches and let me tell you that I had two hours sound sleep. I find that the passengers desire that the chairs should be installed instead of the benches and I am told, Sir, that is being renovated in our Hindustan Air Craft because I wrote to the Honourable Minister my experience of this service immediately after the journey.

As regards the air-mail, the Honourable Minister at the last Budget Session is committed to this House by increasing the postal fares from 6 pies to 9 pies a post-card and from one and a half annas to two on covers and you know very well, Sir, how the House was opposed to it but still we agreed to it because he definitely stated that all mails wherever aerodromes exist, will be carried by this night air-mail service and the fact remains that we are paying—I do not know what the total amount of that revenue will be—and it will be a very good sum, which the Government will be recovering from this additional postal revenue and I do not desire, therefore, that there should be any breach of promise on the part of the Government to stop this service. If they at all contemplate doing it at any stage. Either they have to come back to the original postal stamps, six pies and one and a half annas, if they want to close down this or they shall have to retain and improve the service if there is any defect in it. (*Shri B. L. Sondhi:* The Honourable Minister stated in the morning there was no question between six pies and 2 annas.) I am referring to his budget speech, and if he goes back, we shall take him to task. The fact remains that that was the undertaking given to this House.

As I stated, Sir, in my opinion this night mail service as far as postal service is concerned has come to stay. After reading this controversy while I was in Bombay and Delhi, I have come to the conclusion that there is nothing

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in it except the business rivalry. From the pamphlet that was placed in my hands four days ago by Air India Limited and many other pamphlets, I have seen that it is due to certain competition. I welcome always competition. In the competition a third man is benefited and it is the passengers who are benefited by the competition of these companies; at the same time, I do want to say, Sir, that the efficiency should be maintained. As I stated in my amendment which I have not moved, while this service should be continued from the passengers' point of view, there should be strict vigilance over the security rules and all other rules and regulations which are applicable to the scheduled services and I am sure our Ministry must be quite alert about it. I do not dispute that because it will be a great risk to take, if they deviate from any of the rules that apply to the scheduled services and not to the night air mail service.

The Honourable Mr. Rafi Ahmad Kidwai: That is also a scheduled service.

Shri R. K. Sidhva: Well, I am very glad. These rules are applicable to them but I feel that the people in the night air service are not following strictly the rules imposed on the other scheduled services which operate during the day. I would like the Minister to take note of it and see that the night air mail service becomes popular and that it is made absolutely safe. I am told that the night service is safer than the day service. Experts have told me that. From that point of view I hope it will be seen that this night service is made more and more popular.

My friend Mr. Masani said that nobody is opposed to night service. I am very glad of that. He must in fact be knowing better than me that between London and New York there are 12 planes during the nights only. The night service is not only cheaper but it is also beneficial from the time point of view. Businessmen and public men who have to travel can leave at 11 in the night and arrive by 7 o'clock the following morning. My friend Mr. Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri talked of 11 hours: from 11 to 6-30 does not make eleven hours. At the same time there is a halt of 1½ hours at Nagpur for transshipment of mails. With all this inconvenience the passengers have preferred this service to the ordinary scheduled services.

Shri H. V. Kamath: Not always.

Shri R. K. Sidhva: We tell the Railway Minister that passenger fares should be reduced and today when the Government themselves find a way to reduce the air fares we blame the Government. I do not want the industry to suffer but I must tell my friend Mr. Masani that they must reduce their overhead charges. Unless they do that even the Rs. 175 from Delhi to Bombay will not suffice. He has compared the fares between New York and London. Mr. Hanumanthaiya asked about the wages paid to his labourers but he evaded the issue. You cannot compare our service which is in infancy and our expenses with those of such advanced countries. Every worker in the Ford factory has a motor car for himself. What has my friend Mr. Masani to say to that.

Shri Mohan Lal Gautam: Why a subsidy then?

Shri R. K. Sidhva: My friend Mr. Gautam raises a different issue altogether. By all means have a nationalised service. I have no quarrel. As far as my memory goes back the Communications Department decided for nationalisation of the air service. But there may have been some difficulties in the way. That is a different matter but that is not the issue at the present moment.

I have tried to understand how the Government are involved in this matter. The Government has done something right in relation to the public. They had given 40 lakhs concession on petrol. Mr. Masani pointed out that on the other hand on account of this the cost of petrol has gone up. It has gone up now. The fact remains when this issue was not there they were given Rs. 40 lakhs concession. Despite that they raised the fares from Rs. 150 to Rs. 175 and if there is no competition they will surely raise it to Rs. 200.

The Minister spoke about the depreciation charges. I interrupted him to clear the position. Air India have set aside 83 per cent. for depreciation. Sir, the hon. Member in reply to my question in this House had stated that the life of a new Dakota is eight years. I do not know whether any air line have got secondhand aircraft or new ones. The literature on the subject says that the life of a new aircraft is eight years and if that is so why depreciation for three years. If you carry a sinking fund, a reserve fund and a depreciation fund and at the same time want money from the Government at the cost of the poor taxpayer, I am certainly opposed to it. We do not want to pay the industry at the cost of the taxpayer. They must reduce their overhead charges. I have very great respect for Mr. Tata. I know him personally. His patriotism towards industry cannot be questioned; there can be no two opinions about it. But in this matter he has lost the balance of his mind. He has entered into a competition with a rival and I am very sorry about it. Some insinuations have been made against the Ministry. I have been bearing for six months that the Ministry was somewhat concerned in this and there was some favouritism involved. From the reply of the Honourable Minister let me tell you I have found no basis for these insinuations. It reminded me of another instance. There is some sort of rivalry in Sambhar Lake where our salt factory is and in the trading of bags there has been so much competition that they have involved the officers of the department. The Honourable Minister for Industry and Supply has been receiving letters for a number of months. He appointed some officers to enquire and asked me also as Chairman of the Advisory Committee to find out. From my enquiries I was convinced that although there were some defects the competition among the big merchants involved our officers into charges of corruption. My point is that in this business of rivalry if there was anything that the Ministry had done I would be the last person to support the Honourable Minister.

There is only one point on which I wanted to be clear. The Honourable Minister said in reply to Mr. Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri that this particular company's licence was suspended, because they were charged with smuggling and that they were carrying articles to Pakistan . . .

The Honourable Mr. Rafi Ahmad Kidwai: I did not say that.

Shri B. K. Sidhva: He said smuggling which is a very serious offence. I do not know how far he has enquired into it. I hope the company to whom the contract has been given would not play a similar game with us. That is the only thing I want to be sure of. Otherwise the deal is straight and I strongly support that this service, both from the mail and passenger point of view should be continued.

Shri M. Tirumala Rao (Madras: General): Sir, the Government department has shown greater enthusiasm than discretion in bringing about this night air mail service at such great hurry. They had appointed for themselves a target date and before that date they had made up their mind that this service should be brought into operation. Otherwise I do not see any valid reason why they should have started it early this year and suspended it during the monsoon

[Shri M. Tirumala Rao]

months. Is it going to be suspended for four months during the monsoon every year or has it occurred only this year? They have been carried away by their enthusiasm before ascertaining all the facts and figures and also the handicaps of a night air mail service. They have taken a final decision in the matter without having a proper agency to carry on their plans. They have rushed into this business thus estranging established air services in the country.

Whatever may be said, the commercial air lines are the second line of our national defence. We must be thankful to those people who have put in their capital into this industry and risked large sums of money and thus built up a large number of trained personnel without government aid or assistance . . .

Prof. N. G. Ranga: How can you say that?

Shri M. Tirumala Rao: Government subsidised not from the beginning but only at a later stage . . .

Prof. N. G. Ranga: Yes, from the very beginning.

Shri M. Tirumala Rao: This is a matter which I do not know and I will stand corrected if the honourable Minister will correct me. But I would have been pleased if my hon. friend had given all the names of the companies. Mr. Masani gave us to understand to which company he was referring but did not mention the other companies. He could have taken the House into confidence. Here there are the Tatas, Birlas, Dalmias and I think the Scindias also. These are the four big companies that have started this air service and have given a sort of air service to this country. There is no use blaming them. Nor is it any use for any Government, however strong, to estrange these people and people in the line. There is a lot of literature published in the papers to which the Ministry or the Minister could have given reply publicly, contradicting them. As my honourable friend was saying there was mudslinging, and when two commercial people quarrel they throw the whole blame on the Government. I would like to ask how far Government have taken sufficient care to see that these services are manned by efficient people. The one that was running it four months ago has gone out of existence—I think it has gone into liquidation. (*An Honourable Member:* No). That is what I saw in the newspapers and newspapers are my only source of information. With regard to this Himalayan Company there seems to be something shady about it. It was under suspension for four months. (*Interruption*). If I understood the Minister this morning I think it was said they were guilty of some smuggling. All people are guilty of smuggling and blackmarketing for that matter. (*An Honourable Member:* They have not been caught). Therefore how can we say on the floor of this House that they are guilty of smuggling.

The Honourable Mr. Rafi Ahmad Kidwai: That is what Mr. Sidhva said.

Shri B. K. Sidhva: You said 'smuggling' in answer to a question.

The Honourable Mr. Rafi Ahmad Kidwai: I referred to the allegation.

Shri M. Tirumala Rao: Therefore I do not know the previous experience of this Company. It might have come in handy to the Minister who is a determined man with firm ideas and convictions that he would not be fettered by the threats of people in prosecuting his plans. But I would like to know whether he has taken the proper instrument for carrying out his plans, whether the Himalayan Company will stand the test of time and efficiency in carrying out your plans.

With regard to night air service I am not an enthusiast like my friend Mr. Sidhva who wants travel by night at a cheaper rate. After all your life is more valuable than a difference of about Rs. 80 in the fare. Has your night aviation service developed to the extent which it has done in other countries?

The Honourable Mr. Rafi Ahmad Kidwai: Yes.

Shri M. Tirumala Rao: I do not know. From the papers I see that you are equipping certain aerodromes where all these air mails are cleared for these eight services. But suppose there is a shortage of petrol or there is engine trouble or something happens between here and Nagpur, is there a possibility of these planes having a safe belly-landing during night?

Shri Khurshed Lal: I may inform my friend that in addition to the port at Nagpur there are intermediate ports fitted with all facilities for forced landings.

Shri H. V. Kamath: Between Calcutta and Nagpur there is only one aerodrome properly illuminated at night and there are few radio stations.

Shri E. K. Sidhva: But that is sufficient from his point of view.

Shri Khurshed Lal: Not from my point of view. It is a question of things being sufficient from the point of view of technical people who know the job.

Shri H. V. Kamath: The others know better than the Honourable Minister!

Shri Mohan Lal Gautam: If the Ministry or the Minister were to make further investigation in this matter then the Minister ought to revise his opinion.

Shri Khurshed Lal: May I inform my honourable friends that between Calcutta and Nagpur there are three intermediate posts for emergency.

An Honourable Member: Even three are not enough.

Shri M. Tirumala Rao: I do not want that my speech should be taken advantage of by people who have confirmed notions about it. I am trying to elicit information and to know the facts of the case, and I am sure the Minister in charge and the Government of India are sufficiently aware of their responsibilities to take all the necessary precautions as advised by their experts in the matter.

With regard to Air India International let me say this. My friend Mr. Mohan Lal Gautam has just returned after the Inter-Parliamentary Conference. Surely he did not travel by train or bullock cart—I think he travelled by air. Whatever the business side of it may be it is one of the services which has planted India on the international aviation map. Now, millions of rupees are spent in sending people abroad. You cannot help sending your delegations to all the foreign countries for one purpose or the other. And we are sending every year some hundreds of passengers on which Government spends millions of rupees. In the absence of an Indian company the money goes to the T.W.A., the Pan-American Airways or the B.O.A.C. They receive support from their respective Governments in some way or another. When Tatas have placed a service on the international plane, which is second to none and which is more convenient and more useful in several respects than others—the Government should encourage it.

Shrimati Renuka Ray: But this is irrelevant to this particular issue which is about the internal air services.

Shri M. Tirumala Rao: I am trying to be as relevant as the other speeches of all my colleagues, and I think you will follow me. You don't practise any ropewalking, I suppose. What I say is by all means, as my friend suggested, let there be an independent authority or agency—an impartial agency—which

[Shri M. Tirumala Rao]

will be able to go into the merits and demerits and the claims of all these companies that have been operating and let us see that this night air mail service is put on a sound basis.

Shri E. K. Sidhva: The first preference was given to them, but they were not prepared to come in.

An Honourable Member: Give them a second chance.

Shri M. Tirumala Rao: But there is no point in my friend Shri Rohini Kumar Chaudhury asking for the abolition of this service. He has, however, created a good opportunity for raising a good debate and for the House to hear the experience of friends like Mr. Sidhva. I therefore wish that you would take all these points into consideration and pay greater attention to the points raised in this debate.

Sjt. Kuladhar Chakha (Assam: General): I had thought all this time, and think, there would be only two classes of people in this country, the industrialists on the one hand and the government on the other. There is, however, I find, a third class of people, namely the poor who want to travel in a better way by the night air mail. This aspect is not considered by many people. I have been hearing the speeches of Honourable Members, and with a certain amount of gusto, and I find they have presented the case of either the one line or the other and the poor man who wants to travel better is deprived of the night air service because they want to have it abolished. On the 18th of November I travelled by the night air service and I found it very convenient. I am telling my own experience. I had a Polish Pilot who gave me all the good time and I went on very safely to Calcutta. I could do my work there. I performed my work on the 19th and went to Orissa on the same day. It saved me a lot of time. I therefore think that for the poor people it is one of the best services that one can conceive of. There is a class of people who cannot pay high fares, and there is a difference of Rs. 79 for me which incidentally saves me of three days hotel expenditure also. Why should I not utilise it? I think the Government here should see what convenience it can give to the poor people. Even if the service incurs a loss and it is necessary that Government should subsidise them I think they ought to do it. We have heard a lot of things about U.S.A. But their air rate is as much as the bus fare. Therefore we should go to that extent, and if it is possible we should encourage such companies so that these fares will come to the level of third class fares on the railways. We should aim at it. Actually, with better arrangements and with better safety devices I think we should be able to level the rates further down so that even the poorest man in the country can avail of the service. Excepting for Mr. Sidhva, nobody else thought of the poor people. As he said, the Ford Company labourers had motor cars; why should we not try to give our poor people this comfort at least once in their lives? It is enough if you give them the chance once in their time. (*Interruption*).

Sir, I congratulate Mr. Kidwai for having the boldness to start on this scheme. I trust he will be able to continue it even in the monsoon. Of course during the monsoon there are some difficulties in Provinces like Assam where there is rain in abundance; yet I think there is no harm if he tries to keep it up. I think the pockets can be located by careful survey and by the opinion of experts. If it is continued in the months of monsoon in Assam and other Provinces, I think he would have done a great achievement; we take our hats off to Mr. Kidwai. It would be a feather in his cap.

Shri Aji Prasad Jain: Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, it is an irony that this resolution should have found its author in a person who was once a great enthusiast of the night air mail.

Sjt. Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri: Not night air mail but air mail.

Shri Ajit Prasad Jain: I would read from one of his speeches made on the 19th March, 1949, when this question was under discussion. Referring to what the Honourable Mr. Kidwai had proposed, Sjt Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri said:

"For my part I not only congratulate him but I also envy him. This new arrangement of conveyance of all mails by air will not only gladden the hearts of my friends like Mr. Kamath and Mr. Sondhi who have yet to set a future home but of many married people also who even under the shadow of the Hindu Code have not already decided to cancel their marriages."

Sjt. Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri: Sir, on a point of order. I have been misquoted because I never mentioned anything about the night air mail in that speech.

Shri Ajit Prasad Jain: Nonetheless, the House and many of us are thankful to Sjt. Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri for raising this question which has given us an opportunity to clarify many things which have been hitherto in comparative darkness.

The resolution as it stands is a very simple one. It says that the system of carrying mails and passengers by air by night should be abolished forthwith. The word used there is "forthwith", but when my friend Sjt Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri was speaking he gave a peculiar interpretation to the word "forthwith". He said that by that word he meant that this system should be abolished with effect from the 15th January when the Himalayan Airlines' licence expires. Later he went on to say that he would be satisfied if all the points which he had made out are taken into account in deciding whether the provisional licence of the Himalayan Airlines should or should not be extended. What I could gather from his speech was that he was not so keen about abolition of night flying as he wanted to place certain facts before this House and the hon. Minister for careful consideration. I think that was a very proper thing.

Now, this question has been given too wide a scope. Originally it was confined only to the carrying of mail and passengers by night, and that to my mind raises only three essential questions. One is the question of safety precautions, the second is the question of economic waste and the third is the question of competition which the night air service creates as against the other air services. These alone are the relevant points.

So far as the safety precautions are concerned, I must say that I am no judge of them. I tried to ascertain from the Department concerned today whether there are sufficient safety precautions and they told me there were. If any precautions are wanting, I must say that the service should not be run at all either by the Himalayan Airlines or by the Indian Airways or by any other company. Flying whether by night or day is not free from danger, and more so at night and unless there is full safety margin, no flying should be allowed. That is an absolute question. If there are not safety precautions, if our aerodromes are not sufficiently equipped for night landing or if there are no equipments in the planes such as beacons, direction-finding waves, wireless services and radio telephones then in no event should there be any night-flying.

As for the question of economic waste, I think the hon. Minister has said the last word. If the question of saving aviation petrol arises, then the service which is most uneconomic, which is rendering the least benefit, should be

[Shri Ajit Prasad Jain]

curtailed and not the one which is carrying the maximum amount of passengers and the maximum amount of load.

Coming to the last of these questions, I must submit it is a very important one: how our civil aviation is going to be affected by this night air mail service. My honourable friend Shri Masani has placed the case of the companies with sobriety and moderation. I agree that civil aviation has a great importance for the nation. It is the second line of defence. It quickens the means of transportation and any scheme which adversely affects the civil aviation must be carefully looked into. But the whole question is: does this night air mail service affect the civil aviation companies adversely? That raises a big issue. We have got a number of companies which even as a layman, I can say are not operating economically; they are run extravagantly. I am told that for one single plane service, one of our aviation companies in India is paying Rs. 4,000 a month as office-rent in the Grand Hotel Building at Calcutta. Surely one single aeroplane service cannot bear such heavy expense. Again everyone of these air companies maintain their separate buses, they have their separate booking staff, their separate establishment and reserve planes. If all the flying done by the companies is pooled together it will give us a big saving and reduce the air rates. What we need is rationalisation and I think that is an aspect to which the hon. Minister give attention. I think there is a case for a full and complete enquiry not only into the question of carrying passengers and mail by night but into the whole question of civil aviation—whether our companies are operating economically, whether they are or are not wasting money. The Government have given help to companies at the expense of the tax payer and no money of the tax payer should be spent on any concern which is not working efficiently and economically.

[At this stage Mr. Deputy-Speaker vacated the Chair which was then occupied by Shri S. V. Krishnamoorthy Rao (one of the Panel of Chairmen)]

Sir, I admit that there is a case for giving subsidy or support to the aviation companies. They deserve it, because in no other country has it been found possible for civil aviation to grow without the assistance of the Government. I think the Government will be well-justified in giving adequate support to these companies, but such support should be given under certain conditions: that the companies coordinate and rationalise their working; they render adequate service; they work in an efficient and economical manner. Our companies, I am afraid, are not doing that.

So far as the limited question of carrying mail and passengers by night is concerned, I think it has been conceded by practically everybody including my friend Mr. Chaudhuri that there is no absolute case for the abolition of night-mail system. In fact, it has provided a cheaper service, as my friend Mr. Sidhva and the honourable Member who just preceded me have pointed out. If we find that there is something wrong with the Himalayan Company, which we do not know, as we are not in possession of full facts—the contract may be given to another company. That is a different question. In fact, I am unhappy that this matter, which is of great public interest, should have taken an unfortunate turn. For some time past, a sort of unhealthy controversy has been going on in the Press, and what is worse, a whispering campaign. I will not go into its details. Many of us are not at all concerned with what the two companies are doing. Nonetheless, I was sorry to see that this House should have been converted into something of cock-fight pit between the upholders of the two rival concerns. I want everybody dissociates himself completely from any of those concerns and looks at the question purely from the public point of view. I have no manner of doubt that this system of carrying mails and passengers at night is beneficial to the country. It has already

helped to reduce the passenger rates on some routes and I am sure that by providing cheaper service it will further help to reduce rates. I hope that the force of competition will compel the other companies to rationalise their methods of working and effect economies by giving up extravagant ways. It is in that hope that I suggest to my honourable friend Sjt. Chaudhuri that his resolution has served its purpose, namely, that it has brought out the salient features of this problem publicly and I am sure the Ministry will take due care to rationalise the whole system of civil aviation. I hope that Sjt. Chaudhuri will see his way not to press his resolution.

Sardar Bhopinder Singh Man (East Punjab: Sikh): Sir, I move that the question be now put.

Mr. Chairman: There are still a large number of speakers.

Shrimati Renuka Ray: Mr. Chairman, I rise to oppose this resolution. I should like to congratulate the Minister in charge of the Department concerned for the frank manner in which he has taken the House into confidence on this subject. I do feel that the matters that he has brought out considerably strengthen the argument that civil aviation should be nationalised. It is one of the most vital communications and a new venture and if Sjt. Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri's resolution was that it should be nationalised, I would have certainly supported him.

Now, Sir, about two years ago, the Government published their economic policy in which certain chosen sectors, in which were included communications and transport, were reserved for State enterprise and others were left for private enterprise. I cannot understand why the Government have not yet implemented this policy, and particularly so, in the case of such a vital means of communication as civil aviation, which is vital for the defence of the country also. I am not one of those optimists who feel that if civil aviation is taken over by the Government, it will necessarily be better administered, but I do feel that it is the duty of the State and of the Government to improve the administrative machinery and not to own defeat and say that they are not able to do it and therefore, they make it over to private enterprise. That I think has a great deal of bearing on this subject. The point that was raised by my hon. friend Shri Mohan Lal Gautam and later by my hon. friend Shri Ajit Prasad Jain regarding subsidies to private enterprise which do not bring a commensurate return and leads to waste of money is a very important one.

The next point that has been raised by Sjt. Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri about these night-flying facilities is that the night air mail service is destroying the existing companies. I think this is a very exaggerated statement indeed. His words were "destroying existing companies." I suppose he means that there will be undercutting and therefore it is an uneconomical proposition. But since civil aviation has been given over to private enterprise, should we allow also monopolistic ventures to come in, so that it shall be run in such a way that it will be all the more difficult to nationalise at a later stage.

I should like to remind the House that when the railway rates were enhanced some time back, the day-flying companies, which are operating now, also raised their rates, but later on when the railways reduced their rates, there was no such reduction on the part of these companies. When the argument is put forward that the lower rates of the night-flying company are going to affect them adversely, I should like to point out that they have got a certain margin in any case. This margin is there. Apart from this, as the hon. Minister has already pointed out, the clientele for the night-flying company . . .

Sjt. Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri: May I correct the hon. Lady Member? I am not saying that the lower rates of the night air mail will ruin the other companies. I am saying that the absorption of the entire money which is coming from the Government in carrying mails by these night air mail companies would ruin the other companies.

Shrimati Benuka Ray: As soon as I have finished the present point, I will come on to that. As I was saying, the night service caters for a different clientele of passengers. You may say there is rivalry from the night air service amongst those who go by first-class Railway service but there is no rivalry with the day air mail service. That is one point. The other point is, that the cost of operation is based on the utilisation of the aircraft. Although I am not an expert on this subject, I have been able to ascertain certain facts. I am told that if there are 240 flying hours per month, the cost per mile is Rs. 2-6-0. If there are only 60 flying hours, the cost per mile is Rs. 4-4-0. The actual night-flying involved will be much more than 240 hours.

Therefore, the plea that the rates are uneconomical is not true. Rupees three per mile is not at all an uneconomic rate. There is no question of under-cutting at all in that respect.

Now I come to the question of the all-up air mail system. It is quite true that because there is a night service, a large amount of the mail goes by the night service. But the day services are actually, the hon. Minister will correct me if I am wrong, getting more mail than they were getting before the introduction of the night service. I do not think the day services were getting as much mail before as they are receiving today. So they have no reason for any grouse on that account either.

Now, Sir, the hon. Minister has explained to us that he had negotiations with a number of companies. These companies wanted guarantees from the Government which the Government and the Finance Ministry very rightly refused to give. Because some company has agreed to work the scheme on this basis, are we going to be deterred by, what I call, these blackmail tactics. I do not think, Sir, that it is the duty of us here as legislators to make it quite clear to all types of private enterprise that if the Government's actions are to be called into question in regard to their own vested interests that can only be done by the representatives of the people who are here in this Legislature. It may be for the Standing Committee of the Legislature to consider this point. But I do not think it is befitting that we, either as legislators or as the Government, should agree to such astounding propositions that have been made outside this House and have also been insinuated here to some extent. I say, Sir, that it would be better for this Legislature and the Government, that derives its power from it, to abdicate and tell the country that democratic Government in this country is not possible as private interests are too powerful than to submit to such astounding propositions as have been made.

I do congratulate the Ministry for the stand that it has taken and I think the House will support them.

Mr. Nasiruddin Ahmad (West Bengal: Muslim): Mr. Chairman, Sir, this debate has evoked a considerable amount of public interest outside. At lunch-time a visitor asked me: "What about the night mere mail?" I think it is night air mail.

Sir, the supporters of this resolution must have to face three very important concrete facts. The first is that the night air mail service has proved to be cheap. It has afforded cheap air travel. It has also afforded cheap carriage of mails. The other factor is that it saves a considerable amount of time.

effective time, for businessmen. It is always convenient to travel by night, for the travellers do not lose working hours of the day.

This being in favour of the present policy, the only question for us to consider would be the capacity of the industry itself, that is, the operation should be such as not to be uneconomical. There must be a thorough and expert investigation as to the actual rates at every renewal of the contract. It is very necessary that this industry, which is a key industry and is likely to play an important role in our history, should be saved.

The other question that naturally arises is whether we should at all encourage any monopolistic tendencies and at the same time in choosing one company against the other there should be any discrimination. I do not suggest that this case have proceeded on the ground of economy and efficiency. The Government discrimination has been made. On the other hand, the Government in fact should also see that there is no cut-throat competition. If this happens the industry will die.

From these points of view, I welcome the attitude of the Government who say that they will thoroughly investigate into the matter with a view to finding out the best means of perpetuating the interests of the industry.

In the course of the debate some very interesting side issues have been raised. One is the nationalisation of the industry. I fail to see what the night air mail service and its stoppage has anything to do with nationalisation. The hon. Lady Member, Shrimati Renuka Ray, has gone a step further and said that she could not understand how private enterprise could exist in a democracy. I fail to understand why democracy should be inconsistent with private enterprise. The great difficulty in regard to nationalisation is want of money. The Government have no money; the public have no money and we have to borrow money from outside. Nationalisation therefore is a very distant cry. Nationalisation implies that the Government will manage business more efficiently than a businessman. If a business concern fails, it will fail for reasons connected with its management and if the concern fails, that means bad luck and it can thank itself for it. But if the Government undertake nationalisation of big industries and if they fail, it would mean that so much of tax-payer's money is lost. For these reasons, I submit that the less we talk of nationalisation of big industries, the better it is for us. It creates some amount of unsettlement in business and it is not a good thing to talk about. (Interruption) We are not thinking of what will happen after ten years. It may be that the Government may become efficient after ten years of which there is hardly any tendency or sign at present. I think the Government is sufficiently entangled with their departmental matters. Let them 'expertise' in their own departments.

I welcome the attitude of the Government and I also welcome their assurance that a thorough investigation would be made with a view to preventing monopolistic tendencies and also to prevent cut-throat competition. But I suggest that the right of carrying air mail should be distributed among all the eight companies. If that is done, then there is nothing further to say. There has been some suggestion that there was some kind of discrimination between the companies which run their mails at night and those who fly their mails during day. If there is no such discrimination then there is nothing further to say. I submit, Sir, that the purpose of the hon. the Mover of this resolution has been served by public attention being drawn to it, and I believe that by the time the next renewal of the contract comes up for consideration, his remarks, his apprehensions will be given full consideration.

Shri H. V. Kamath: The question be now put.

Shri Khurshed Lal: Sir, in accordance with the salutary direction given by the Deputy-Speaker, I propose to confine myself exclusively to the question of the night mail service to which the resolution relates.

Now, so far as this question is concerned, whether by the introduction of night mail service the Government have been able to expedite the carriage of mails, I do not think there is much room for any argument. The whole position is so apparent that I really do not think that anybody can be serious in suggesting that the night mail service does not confer an advantage in the expeditious carriage of mails.

Shri Mahavir Tyagi: I am here.

Shri Khurshed Lal: My hon. friend, of course, is there. I know the mind of my hon. friend. He would have all air mail services abolished.

Shri Mahavir Tyagi: All civil aviation may be abolished.

Shri Khurshed Lal: All civil aviation! So far as my friend is concerned, he cannot raise that question now. The question we are considering just now relates only to night air mails and day air mails. We are not considering the advantages of air mail transport over other forms of mail transport. The only point worth considering in this connection is speed. On that point of speed, I submit that the night air mail, so far as mails and passengers are concerned, confers considerable advantage over the day mail.

Then we have to consider whether the night air mail service is uneconomic. When we are on this question we have got to remember that the well-established air-lines, about whom we heard so much today, were prepared to run this very service for a guarantee of Rs. 3 per mile. The proposal was that the Government should guarantee a revenue from mail and passengers of Rs. 3 per mile and, anything between Rs. 3 and Rs. 3-8-0 will be theirs and anything above that will be shared by them with the Government. I submit that if the present Air Company which is running the night service is making a revenue of Rs. 3-8-0 a mile, there cannot be any question of this service being uneconomic. It is all very well to say that Dakota service should fetch Rs. 4 per mile and quote all sorts of figures. I submit that the well-established air-line operators know their job well and would not have agreed to share any excess over Rs. 3-8-0 per mile if they found this rate uneconomic. The present company is earning a rate of Rs. 3-8-0 per mile on passengers and mails. Therefore there cannot be any question of the service being uneconomic. Then, Sir, why is it that the other concerns are so anxious about this service being an uneconomic service? On the one hand the Government are accused of doing a favour to this company by giving it a contract, and on the other hand there is the statement that the favour done to this company is such that it will sooner or later be driven to the insolvency court. I cannot make anything out of these arguments. Sir, the truth of the matter is that the older air-line companies made a miscalculation. They insisted on a guarantee of Rs. 3 a mile. They were repeatedly told that the question of a joint guarantee did not arise. Today, when they find that this company is actually earning a revenue of Rs. 3-8-0 per mile, they raise a hue and cry about loss. You can understand what this cry is for.

Then, the other aspect of the question is that this service is going to ruin all the day services. What are the facts? From the figures that we have with us of the traffic of passengers in the day services—last year in the corresponding period no night mail service was there—we find that there has not been any diminution of their traffic. Actually, the night mail service is

attracting a class of traffic which was not travelling by air in the past. Most of these are people who could not afford that. Now they are taking advantage of the night mail service. Therefore, so far as passengers are concerned, a review of the position of all day companies except one shows that they have not been affected by the introduction of the night air mail. My hon. friend Shri Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri repeatedly said that the loss to the day companies is due to the loss in revenue they were getting from mails. If my hon. friend had cared to see the figures he would have found that this too is not a fact. When we think of the revenue earned by the day services we have to take into account their earnings last year when the surcharge mail system was in force. I find that last year the average monthly income of the day companies from surcharged mail was about a lakh a month. Now, even after the introduction of the night mail system, their income is above this by at least 50 per cent.

Sjt. Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri: What was their income in the month of September last?

Shri Khureshd Lal: The day companies cannot now take advantage of the position. They refused to run the night service and then they said that they should have all the advantages created by the introduction of the all-up mail scheme and that the mails should continue to be carried during day. The day services could have a grouse if they could prove that they have lost in comparison with what they were earning before the introduction of the all-up scheme. The comparison can be only with the income they had last year from mails and this year after the introduction of the night mail system. As I was submitting, even on the figures of September last year, their income now is about 50 to 60 per cent. more. So the day services have lost neither in passengers nor in mails. The cry they are now raising is a wrong cry. This position arose only because they did not take courage in their hands and join the night service system offered to them. If they had accepted the night service, I submit the cost would have been less than what it is now, because they had their aircrafts and staff and could have utilised them also for the night service. Had they done this, the cost to them would have been less than what it now is to the company operating only the night service. But the trouble here is that the air companies thought that the Government were committed to start these operations on the 15th October. They thought that they had combined into a Transport Association and so they could dictate any terms to the Government. It is time, Sir, that the industry realised that, while the Government is prepared to listen to all the advice given by the industry, while Government is prepared to give all help to the industry, the ultimate decision in these matters must be of the Government and the Government alone. (Hear, hear).

Sir, another point which was sought to be made was whether the night air mail operation was safe or not. I am not an expert on these matters, and the Government have to rely on the advice given to them by their experts and from their advice, I can assure the House that we did not allow passengers to be flown in these planes until and unless we had been assured by our Technical Officers that these operations during the night were as safe as operations during the day and that everything possible had been done to ensure safety.

Shri Ramnath Goonka: Even without safety belts.

Shri Khureshd Lal: My hon. friend, Shri H. V. Kamath, suggested that between Calcutta and Nagpur, there are no intermediate arrangements. I will just give the names of intermediate stations between Delhi and Madras and between Bombay and Calcutta:

[Shri Khurshed Lal]

Delhi-Madras.—Delhi, Agra, Gwalior, Bhopal, Nagpur, Hyderabad, Bezwada and Madras.

Bombay-Calcutta.—Bombay, Poona, Aurangabad, Akola, Nagpur, Raipur, Jharsuguda and Calcutta.

Shri H. V. Kamath: Are there facilities for lighting and radio contact in all of them?

Shri Khurshed Lal: In all of them.

Shri H. V. Kamath: My information is that only Jharsuguda has got it, and not the others.

Shri Khurshed Lal: I would not like to contradict my hon. friend, but these facts have been given to me by the Civil Aviation Directorate. Surely they should know better than my friend, Shri Kamath. As far as human safety is concerned, I can only say that all that is humanly possible to ensure safety on these operations has been done, and services are running under safe conditions. I would like to remind Shri Kamath that these services are being run by pilots who have got experience of three or four thousand hours flying. Most of them had also been in Bomber Command during the war and had to fly during the night. These pilots know their job and they also value their lives and they are not going to risk them for the sake of the Government or anything.

Shri H. V. Kamath: I was not talking of the pilots. I was only asking whether all safety arrangements had been made. Let me make it clear. I am not against nightflying as such, but it should not be at the cost of safety and comfort.

Shri Khurshed Lal: I was only trying to point out that these pilots who are so experienced in the matter of night flying will not unnecessarily risk their lives unless and until proper safety measures had been provided. They also value their lives as much as anyone else does.

Shri H. V. Kamath: Not very convincing.

Shri Khurshed Lal: That is my misfortune. The point has also been made that this company should not have been given this licence as they were suspected of smuggling. In the first instance, I would submit that so far as this hon. House is concerned, the question to be faced is not of this company or that. But so far as the facts of the matter are concerned, I had to go into some detail and I would place all the facts before the House. As soon as the Ministry received an information from the Intelligence Bureau that there was a suspicion that this company was engaged in smuggling, immediately on receipt of that information, I ordered that all non-scheduled flights of this company should be stopped. Later on, detailed enquiries were made from the authorities concerned and they said that they had no evidence in support of the suspicion. There may be suspicions. There are suspicions about so many of us in this country, but you do not hang a man on mere suspicion. Under these circumstances I ordered that the non-scheduled flights of this company might be resumed, as there was no case against them.

Shri H. V. Pataskar (Bombay: General): What were they suspected of—smuggling?

Shri Khurshed Lal: I do not know that.

Sjt. Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri: You do not know that?

Shri Khurshed Lal: We do not know that they smuggled at all. So, Sir, I would submit that if you will look at all the facts, you will come to the conclusion that the introduction of the night air mail service was not only a good

thing but that it was also very necessary. After all, we have heard so much throughout the day of civil aviation being very important as being a second line of defence.

Shri Mahavir Tyagi: It is not.

Shri Khurshed Lal: How can civil aviation be a second line of defence if you are only having day services and our pilots have absolutely no experience of night flying? I submit that in the interests of defence it was necessary that we should have night flying services and that our pilots should have experience of night flying. Not only that. I would say that every pilot in whatever company he is employed, in rotation, should be employed on night flying and should get experience of night flying.

Shri H. V. Kamath: Does the time-limit apply neither to the Minister nor to the Deputy Minister?

Mr. Chairman: He is replying to the various points raised by Members.

Dr. Mono Mohon Das (West Bengal: General): May I know from the hon. the Deputy Minister whether it is not a fact that all the pilots employed by this company are non-Indians?

Shri Khurshed Lal: It is true that in the beginning all their pilots were non-Indians. During the last one month they have taken three Indian pilots and we will see to it that they take more Indian pilots.

Shri R. K. Sidhva: Our Indian pilots have no licence to fly during the night?

Shri Khurshed Lal: We have not enough pilots who have got experience of night flying. How are we going to have pilots with night flying experience if all the time we are flying only during day time?

Now, Sir, what is the alternative to this night service which has been suggested by the industry? The only alternative which we have received from Mr. Tata again of Air India is to stop this night service and instead thereof convert the Delhi-Bombay halting service, the Delhi-Calcutta halting service, Bombay-Madras halting service and Bombay-Calcutta day service into night services. That is the alternative which came to us from Mr. Tata. Fact is that except Bombay-Calcutta route, there are no facilities for night flying on these routes. It will take about a year to equip them, costing about 5 lakhs in capital, Rs. 6 lakhs annually, and Madras would remain unconnected from Calcutta, and instead of the Himalayan Aviation getting this service, the Tata line would have got the monopoly for of the routes suggested by Mr. Tata only route which belongs to another company is Delhi-Calcutta and that was the sort of conversion which Mr. Tata suggested. I am sure the House is not interested whether the Tatas or some other company comes in.

My hon. friend Mr. Masani depicted before us a very gloomy picture of the Civil Aviation industry in this country. Government can help civil aviation in various ways and as was shown to the House this morning by the hon. Minister they have been trying to help as much as possible and not only we have given them rebate of petrol duty we have also increased the overall weight which the Dakota can carry, allowing them to carry 25 per cent. more weight without increasing in any way the landing charges which they have to pay. We have also extended the period during which they have to obtain the certificate of air-worthiness and the Hindustan Aircraft have also reduced their charges. These are some of the ways in which Government have tried to help

[Shri Khurshed Lal]

companies but I suggest that the industry too has got a certain amount of responsibility to put its house in order. We have heard Sir, a lot today about well-established companies. What is the history of Civil Aviation in this country? Up to the end of the War, there were only two companies operating in this country, the Tatas and the Indian National Airways. So far as the Indian National Airways are concerned, the Govan Brothers cashed all the profits and went away so that all the advantage gained during the war was gone. So far as the Tatas are concerned, as was shown this morning, they too cashed all the war profits and formed a new company which had to pay Rs. 20 lakhs as good-will alone. All other companies which have come into the field have come after 1944-45. The trouble with civil aviation in this country is that it is mostly being run by people who have no experience of civil aviation. It is one thing, Sir, that you may have made money in jute, you may have made money in cement or you may have made money in so many war contracts. So actually to talk of well-established air industry in this country, I submit is wrong. All the air lines in the country are new. That have not got the experience. There are over-heads and the airlines have not done everything possible to control their expenses and I submit civil aviation in this country will not be put to order only by the unilateral action of the Government; it will not be put to order, if I may use an Americanism, by mollycoddling these companies; these companies have got to stand on their own legs and put their houses in order and in that effect, I can assure the industry, the Government is prepared always to give them all possible help.

Mr. Chairman: Is the hon. Member withdrawing his resolution?

Sjt. Robin Kumar Chaudhuri: Who says that I am withdrawing it at this stage?

Mr. Chairman: And then my hon. friend will want the right of reply.

Shri H. V. Kamath: Does my resolution on 'prayer' lapse?

Mr. Chairman: It does lapse.

Shri H. V. Kamath: It is most unfortunate, but God's will be done.

Mr. Chairman: Shri Chaudhuri, are you withdrawing your resolution?

Shri Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri: I am not withdrawing my motion, but I shall, after hearing the hon. Minister decide what to do, but in the meantime a lot of things have been said and I am still smarting under what was said by Shrimati Renuka Ray. I must give some reply to her.

Mr. Chairman: Yours is the last thing.

An Honourable Member: Have it in the lobby.

Mr. Chairman: In any case it cannot go to the next session. Either we have to take the vote or you withdraw your resolution. If you are not withdrawing it you may just speak for a minute or two.

Pandit Hirday Nath Kunzru (U.P.: General): May I ask under what rules of the Assembly is the hon. Member being asked to restrict his remarks within a minute or two?

Shri M. Tirumala Rao: Should he claim this right before the Government Member replies?

Shri H. V. Kamath: Of course he has the final right of reply.

Mr. Chairman: He has got every right to reply if he wants to.

Shri Jaspal Roy Kapoor (U.P. : General): I would like to have a ruling on this point whether this right to have a reply is not consistent with the right to withdraw.

Mr. Chairman: If the Honourable Member withdraws the resolution, then no speech is necessary, but if he presses his resolution, then he has got the right of reply.

An Honourable Member: Let us adjourn.

Mr. Chairman: He cannot make a speech and then withdraw.

An Honourable Member: Let the House be adjourned.

Mr. Chairman: Since it is already five o'clock, does he want a long time.

Sjt. Rohini Kumar Chaudhuri: Yes, Sir.

Mr. Chairman: The House stands adjourned till a Quarter to Eleven tomorrow.

The Assembly then adjourned till a Quarter to Eleven of the Clock on Thursday, the 1st December, 1949.