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(Official Report)

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SECOND SESSION

OF THE

THIRD LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, 1928



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Legislative Assembly.

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THE HONOURABLE MR V. J. PATEL.

Deputy President :

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MR. K. C. NEOGY, M.L.A.

MR. M. R. JAYAKAR, M.L.A.

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MR. D. G. MITCHELL, C.I.E., I.C.S.

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MR. G. H. SPENCE, I.C.S.

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CAPTAIN SURAJ SINGH, BAHADUR, I.O.M.

Committee on Public Petitions :

MAULVI MUHAMMAD YAKUB, M.L.A., Chairman.

SIR HARI SINGH GOUR, KT., M.L.A.

MR. N. M. JOSHI, M.L.A.

MR. JAMNADAS M. MEHTA, M.L.A.

DR. A. SUHRAWARDY, M.L.A.

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, 28th February, 1928.

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

ELECTIONS TO THE STANDING FINANCE COMMITTEE FOR RAILWAYS AND THE CENTRAL ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RAILWAYS.

The Honourable Sir George Rainy (Member for Commerce and Railways): Sir, there are at present on the Order Paper for Thursday next two motions dealing with the elections to the Standing Finance Committee for Railways and the Central Advisory Council for Railways. I understand, however, that it will be more convenient to Members generally if these motions were not taken up till later, and I wish to inform the House that, in these circumstances, I shall not move them on Thursday but postpone them to a later day.

THE RAILWAY BUDGET—LIST OF DEMANDS—*concl'd.*

SECOND STAGE—*concl'd.*

Expenditure from Revenue—concl'd.

DEMAND No. 1.—RAILWAY BOARD—*concl'd.*

Making the reports of the Department and Committees available to the Members of the Assembly and to the general public.

Mr. N. M. Joshi (Nominated: Labour Interests): Sir, yesterday I moved my motion to reduce by one rupee the grant of the Railway Board in order to draw the attention of this House to the fact that the Railway Board does not make some important reports published by them available to the Members of this Assembly as well as to the public. Recently the Railway Board have published a report called the Dickinson Report and the second report published by it is the report on the education of the children of the employees of the Indian Railways. These reports are important from the point of view of the public, and the latter one is also important from the point of view of the employees. I find that these reports are not available for sale. I thought as a Member of the Assembly I might be made a present of these two reports. I thought the Government of India would treat the Legislative Assembly as the real Parliament of India. In Great Britain the Members of Parliament

[Mr. N. M. Joshi.]

are given Government publications free, and I thought that the Government of India would follow a similar practice. Although I made a request for free copies of these two reports, the Government of India did not think it quite proper to give me them. I thought I might purchase them but they were not available for sale. Then I thought that the Railway Board considers that these reports are only meant for those who are interested in the proper management of the Railways, and that neither the public, nor the Members of the Legislative Assembly, much less the employees of the railways, have any right to get copies. I know my friend Mr. Parsons has kept some copies in the Library and he was also kind enough to lend copies, but, Sir, I sometimes do not like to go into the cold room of the Library and I like to have a copy of my own in order that I may be able to study it at home in Bombay when I have got more time. I wonder why the Government of India show disregard for the interests of the public in this respect. The Indian Railways are public property. There is nothing confidential in the reports which are published, and I cannot see why these reports should not be made available to the public and why they should not be given free to Members of the Legislature as all Government publications are given free to Members of Parliament. On one occasion I found that an Indian report was distributed free to Members of Parliament. When I wanted a copy I was told that I was only a Member of the Legislative Assembly, not of the British Parliament. It may be said that these reports cost a good deal but the reports are printed and a few additional copies are not going to cost more. I know something of the printing trade and I can say this much. If you strike a hundred copies and then want a hundred copies more, the second hundred copies will only cost the price of the paper and nothing more. If the additional copies of a report cost four annas a copy, these two reports would have cost Government Rs. 50 only at the most, and by spending this sum they could have made the reports available to the public. I feel that the spirit of the Government of India is wrong. They do not realise that it is not only they who are interested in the Indian Railways. They do not realise that more than the Railways the public are interested in the proper management of the Railways, and therefore they have no right to keep back these reports from the Indian public, I hope that the House will accept my motion.

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons (Financial Commissioner, Railways): Sir, my Honourable friend will not expect me to deal, nor indeed am I entitled to deal, with the general question whether all important reports of all departments of the Government of India should be supplied to Members of this House. I can only speak of the two important reports which we have just published in the Railway Department, the Dickinson Report on Accounts, and the Jones' Report on Education. Now, our practice, so far as the supply to Members of reports of that nature is concerned, is this. We place half a dozen copies in the Library of this House for Members who may be interested in them to study; and if we have any indication of a general desire on the part of Members of this House to have copies of particular reports, and if important questions are likely to come up for which a consideration of those reports will be necessary, we

are quite ready to supply copies to all Members of this House. So far as the Dickinson Report is concerned, a good many copies have already been supplied to Members who have asked for them, and we are at present in a position to supply any other Member who asks for it with a copy of the Dickinson report. If the applications are more numerous than the remaining copies, we shall certainly reprint it. My Honourable friend will be pleased to hear that he may retain possession of the copy which has already been supplied to him.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: Thank you.

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons: I must add that it is not very often that we see an indication of a general desire on the part of the House to have copies of these sometimes *je june* documents. I made an inquiry two or three days ago in the Library whether there had been many applications for copies of these two reports, and I found that only three Members, I will not mention their names, had asked for either of them. So far as the Jones' Report is concerned, we have not got very many copies, but I am quite prepared to have it reprinted if there is any indication of a desire for copies on the part of Members who have not got copies now. We have already supplied a certain number of copies to Members of this House. That is the main point raised by Mr. Joshi.

His second point deals with the supply of these reports to the public. There I think the matter must be left to our discretion. I cannot imagine for instance that we could usefully put the Dickinson Report on sale at a price which would anywhere near cover the cost of printing; I doubt whether we should get a demand for a very technical report of that nature from the public. I am not so sure about the Jones Committee's Report; but even there I am very doubtful if it would be worth the amount of the tax-payers' money which printing to place it on sale would cost.

Mr. K. C. Neogy (Dacca Division: Non-Muhammadan Rural): As an old Member of this House (Laughter) (*Several Honourable Members:* "No, no.")—well, as one of the oldest Members, I think I am entitled to complain in this matter, because as far as I recollect at least the administration reports of Railways used to be supplied to Members of the first Assembly. I speak subject to correction. But it seems to me that ever since the separation of railway from general finance the Honourable the Financial Commissioner has been a little too strict in these matters. So far as the Dickinson Report is concerned, I am perhaps one of the three Members who took a copy of it from the Library; but I may tell the Honourable Member that the report itself was received in his Department long ago; and it does not altogether meet our object if such reports are available only in the Library, because we cannot go through them when they are published and have to wait till we come to Delhi. We saw summaries of the Dickinson Report some months back in the newspapers, and I personally have been looking forward to seeing the report but I could not get a copy. As to the Jones' Report, my Honourable friend Mr. Kunzru complained the other day that it has not been sent even to the educational departments in the provinces who are at least as interested in the question as the Honourable Member in charge of Railways. I therefore hope that the Railway Department will come to some reasonable decision in this matter and supply the Members of the Assembly at least with the administration report and some other important reports,

[Mr. K. C. Neogy.]

such as the reports of the Jones and Dickinson Committees. I do not of course mean that all the papers, such as those containing a mass of figures like the statistical publications, would interest every Member of the House. So far as those publications are concerned the Honourable Member in charge might supply those only to such Members as might specifically ask for them. But for the rest I do not see any reason why any discrimination should be made.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: I ask for leave of the House to withdraw my amendment.

The amendment was, by leave of the Assembly, withdrawn.

Control, Management and Use of the Fines Fund.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: Sir, I move:

"That the Demand under the head 'Railway Board' be reduced by Re. 1."

This motion, Sir, is intended to suggest to the Railway Board and the Government of India that the large amount which they have collected on account of fines levied upon their employees should be placed under the control of a joint committee of the employees and the railway management itself. Sir, it is wrong that fines should be levied upon employees. My Honourable friend the Member in charge of the Department of Industries and Labour is at present investigating the question of the suitability of fines as a corrective measure. I am quite sure he has received a volume of evidence stating that the method of fining is not a good form of corrective. But leaving that aside, I think that even if employees are allowed to be fined, it is not right that the amount collected by fines should be under the control of the employers. There are many countries in which legislation definitely lays down that if an employer levies a fine upon his employees that amount has to be spent for the welfare of the employees and has to be under the control of a joint committee of the employers and the employees. It is but fair that this should be done. I do not suggest that the Fines Fund is not used for the welfare of the employees, although I have some complaint to make that, while fines are levied upon one class of employees, the amount so recovered is used in some cases for the benefit of another class of employees. But it is true that in some way or another the Fines Fund is used for the welfare of some of the employees. I am not however concerned with that to-day. What I wish to insist upon is that in the different railway administrations there should be a joint committee consisting of the representatives of all sections of the employees and of the management to decide how the amount of the Fines Fund should be spent. I hope, Sir, the Government of India will accept my motion.

Lieut.-Colonel H. A. J. Gidney (Nominated: Anglo-Indians): Sir, I rise to support the motion of my Honourable friend Mr. Joshi. A few years ago I asked some questions in this House as to the legality of imposing fines on railway employees. I was supplied with replies which convinced me to the extent that if fines were stopped alternative punishments may be severer and more detrimental to the employees. I was told also that the fines inflicted on certain employees as a punishment were very small in

comparison with the damage which an employee's negligence may have caused, as in the case of a collision. But, it is the principle that underlies this form of punishment that I take exception to. I believe I am right when I say that there is no other Department of the Government of India which fines its servants, and I do not think the Honourable Members sitting on the front benches or their Secretaries or under officers have the power to fine their subordinates, nor would they submit to being fined themselves. I believe also that the system of fining as a punishment does not exist on British Railways, and I cannot understand why it has been resorted to on Indian Railways. Certainly there are some minor offences for which a fine might be justifiably inflicted, but I have in my mind many cases in which very heavy fines have been inflicted and the heaviness of those fines has been at times entirely dependent on the whims and fancies of a junior officer, when the fine has not been a matter of 10 or 20 or 30 rupees but a sum extending over six months or a year. Surely there must be some other means of punishing employees who are guilty of offences than that of depriving them of the pay for which they have been engaged. I agree also with my Honourable friend Mr. Joshi in regard to what he said about the utilization of the amount recovered by fines. I believe since the East Indian Railway has become a State line the Fines Fund has been subject to a committee of administration. I remember that previously these fines were used for the benefit of certain institutions, such as the railway institutes in the various stations. I would submit that if fines are to be levied, then the employees should have some voice in the utilization of the money realised.

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons: Sir, Colonel Gidney has raised a rather different point from that of Mr. Joshi. I understand from his speech that he is not entirely averse to fines in certain circumstances on railways, but that he does consider that occasionally at any rate, possibly frequently, too heavy fines are imposed. The view of the Railway Board on this subject is as follows. In order to maintain discipline among a staff which is largely illiterate it is probably necessary to continue a fining system, but we do not wish that system to be extended further than is absolutely necessary, and we have asked railway administrations to make a careful survey of the various offences at present punished with fines with the object of gradually reducing fines as much as possible so as to eliminate avoidable hardship. There have been before in this House complaints as to the utilisation of Fines Funds, complaints that is to say that fines which have been chiefly collected from subordinates have been applied to a certain extent to the advantage of officers. Here again the Railway Board are quite definitely of the opinion that as a whole fines should be used for the benefit of those classes of people from whom they have been collected; and I remember a recent instance, Sir, not a very important one, in which we found that a particular officer had benefited by a grant from the Fines Fund, and we insisted that that should be given back to the Fines Fund and that the grant, which was a quite legitimate grant, should be made from railway revenues. We do in fact take a considerable interest in these Fines Funds in the Railway Board's office. We receive statements of their balances, I think it is once a year; and quite recently, considering that the balances were growing too large, at any rate on one or two railways, we wrote to the Agents asking them to put forward concrete proposals for spending a portion of the accumulated balances with the object of securing special benefits to the staff, such as maternity benefits and the endowment of beds in

[Mr. A. A. L. Parsons.]

public hospitals, assistance towards forms of sport in which the staff generally take interest, and so on. I hope that that will show that we do attempt to carry out what I have said, namely, that as a whole the Fines Fund should be utilised for the benefit of the staff from whom in the main the fines are collected.

Lieut.-Colonel H. A. J. Gidney: Use them for hospitals.

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons: I have mentioned already maternity benefits and the endowment of beds in public hospitals. Those were merely suggestions we made to Agents about a couple of months ago. We have not yet received their replies.

I am afraid I cannot say anything very definite at present on the interesting suggestion of Mr. Joshi that the Fines Fund should be under the control of—I think he used the phrase a joint committee of employees and the railway management; but I think the suggestion is interesting and we will certainly discuss with Agents the question whether it would be desirable to associate with them in this matter members of the staff who could represent the wishes of the staff.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: Sir, I ask leave to withdraw my motion.

The motion was, by leave of the Assembly, withdrawn.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 11,70,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1929, in respect of the 'Railway Board'."

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND NO. 2.—INSPECTION.

The Honourable Sir George Rainy (Member for Commerce and Railways): Sir, I beg to move:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 1,67,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1929, in respect of 'Inspection'."

*Control over the Hours of Work of the Employees to secure
Safety of the passengers.*

Mr. N. M. Joshi: Sir, I move:

"That the Demand under the head 'Inspection' be reduced by Rs. 100."

Sir, the object of making this motion is to draw the attention of this House to the danger to the lives of those people who travel on Indian railways on account of the long hours of work which the railway employees are compelled to work for.

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons: Sir, on a point of order, I would submit that the employees whom Mr. Joshi mentions are not under the Government Inspectors and their staff, who are the only people for whom money is asked under this grant. The motion therefore that Mr. Joshi has moved is out of order under this head. There will be opportunities for raising it, I may say, under Head No. 5 or possibly under Head No. 4.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: On the point of order what I beg to say is this that I am moving my motion on the ground of the safety of the passengers. I think, Sir, that these Inspectors are appointed to secure the safety of the passengers: and if the Railway Board does not care for that or if they say that these Inspectors are not appointed for the safety of passengers, then my motion may not be in order. So I hope I have got . . .

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons: Sir, the Government Inspectors and their staff for whom the Demand is made under this head are employed for the inspection of the line and the works on the line. They are not employed to inspect in any way the staff of the railways.

Mr. President: Are they employed for the safety of the passengers?

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons: They are employed to see that the lines themselves, but not the staff on the lines, are safe for the movement of trains for the carriage of passengers: they have nothing to do with the staff employed by railway administrations.

Mr. President: Has the staff anything to do with the safety of passengers?

Mr. N. M. Joshi: That, Sir, is exactly my ground.

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons: I understand Mr. Joshi's argument to be that if the railway staff, say at a particular station, is employed for too long hours, the safety of the passengers will be endangered. That staff is not under any of the Government Inspectors: It is under officers a Demand for whom appears under Head 4 "Administration".

Mr. N. M. Joshi: My question is not whether the staff is under any of the Government Inspectors. The main question is that Government themselves, when they printed the list of Demands, said that the question of safety should be discussed on this Demand. I hope my Honourable friend will look into that paper which he has circulated to the effect that all questions of safety are to be discussed under Demand No. 2. I am therefore discussing the question of safety under these demands. I hope, Sir, there is not much difference whether the question is discussed on this demand or another except that I shall be able to discuss this question certainly if I discuss it on this motion, and there is some doubt about if I take it on some other motion. Sir, the main question is this, that the railway workers in India are asked to work the longest hours that are worked by railway employees in any country in the world. Large numbers of them work for twelve hours a day. Sometimes they work even more. The minimum hours of work are eight and a half. I am not considering the question from the economic point of view at all. I am considering the question from the point of view of the safety of the passengers.

Lieut.-Colonel H. A. J. Gidney: From the workers' health point of view?

Mr. N. M. Joshi: Sir, it is wrong that the Railway Administration should ask their employees to work such long hours. Twelve hours' work is certainly very long for these classes of employees who have to look after passengers. In England there is legislation giving power to the

[Mr. N. M. Joshi.]

Government to restrict the hours of work and this legislation was passed avowedly for the safety of passengers. I hope, Sir, the Government of India also cares for the safety of passengers, and if that is so . . .

Mr. B. Das: How are the Inspectors responsible for the safety of passengers?

Mr. N. M. Joshi: If you listen to me, you will know it. Sir, it is therefore necessary, if the safety of the passengers is to be secured, that the employees should not be overworked. Take the question of the guard.

Mr. President: I am afraid these arguments are too far-fetched.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: What I would suggest to you, Sir, is that legislation which exists in England and also in some other countries . . .

Mr. President: The Honourable Member knows that he is not entitled to discuss the desirability of amending the existing law.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: I am not discussing it at great length at all. (Laughter).

Mr. President: I think the best course for the Honourable Member is to take up this amendment in its appropriate place.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: All right, Sir, if that is your wish.

Travelling Ticket Inspectors and their Increments.

Lieut.-Colonel H. A. J. Gidney: With your ruling, Sir, on Mr. Joshi's motion, I beg to move the motion that stands against my name.

"That the Demand under the head 'Inspection' be reduced by Rs. 100."

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons: I am afraid I must again rise to a point of order. Government Inspectors have nothing whatever to do with travelling ticket inspectors and their increments. I think my Honourable friend has also got a similar motion under the correct head, Demand No. 4.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 1,67,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1929, in respect of 'Inspection'."

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND NO. 3—AUDIT.

The Honourable Sir George Rainy: Sir, I beg to move:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 10,44,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1929, in respect of 'Audit'."

Separation of Audit from Accounts.

Mr. K. C. Neogy (Dacca Division: Non-Muhammadan Rural): Sir, I beg to move:

"That the Demand under the head 'Audit' be reduced by Rs. 100."

It is not my intention to go into the merits of the question of separation of audit and accounts on this occasion. The House will remember that a Resolution was passed in the autumn of 1925 by this House under which this system was introduced in the East Indian Railway as an experiment. Since then the Government have been trying to do a little bit of propaganda work in its favour, as a perusal of the Audit and Appropriation Reports of the Railways as also the evidence volume of the Public Accounts Committee's Report which was published last autumn will show. Then again we have the Dickinson Committee's Report covering this very particular point. In that report the Committee has gone into the various questions regarding the reorganisation of the Accounts Department of the Railways, and among other fantastic recommendations they have suggested that there should be European officers in charge of every department, every section, and so on, to supervise the accounts; and then again as the European officers are entitled to long leave of absence on occasions, they should be given deputies, so that they may be in a position to carry on the work of supervision during the absence of their chiefs. It is not my intention to go into that aspect of the question at the present moment, but I mention this just to point out the danger of any premature action being taken on the Dickinson Committee's Report without giving this House an opportunity of examining the result, the practical result, of the working of this system as an experiment in the East Indian Railway. A report reached me some time back that the Government intended to expand this experiment and extend it to the other railway systems too. I should like to know from the Honourable Member in charge what exactly his intentions are in this matter. As far as I am concerned, I should very much like to see this question also referred to the Committee which is proposed to be appointed to go into the various details regarding the practical result of the working of the convention of separation of finances. Audit control is a subject in which this House naturally takes great interest, and I submit that this question is akin to one aspect of the question of separation of the general finances from railway finances, as control over the railway expenditure is exercised not merely by this House, but also by the audit authorities. We must see that neither kind of control is relaxed. I hope to get a definite assurance from the Government that nothing will be done in this matter, either on the recommendations of the Dickinson Committee's Report or on any report about the working of the system in the East Indian Railway, without giving this House the fullest opportunity of discussing the question.

Mr. R. K. Shanmukham Chetty (Salem and Coimbatore *cum* North Arcot: Non-Muhammadian Rural): Sir, I understand that the intention of my Honourable friend Mr. Neogy in moving this motion is just to remind the Government that they ought not to take any action on the Dickinson Committee's Report without giving an opportunity to this House to discuss the whole matter. In so far as my Honourable friend has made this demand, I am perfectly in agreement with him and I have no doubt, if I have rightly understood what my Honourable friend, the Financial Commissioner for Railways, has said that the intention of Government is to give an opportunity to the Standing Finance Committee for Railways, in the first instance, to discuss the proposals of the Government on the Dickinson Committee's Report and, finally, to bring it up for discussion in this House before any action is taken upon

[Mr. R. K. Shanmukham Chetty.]

it. That certainly will be the right procedure for Government to follow. But in what my Honourable friend Mr. Neogy has said about the advisability of the separation of audit and accounts, I must very respectfully beg leave to differ from him.

Mr. K. O. Neogy: I never said anything of the kind.

Mr. R. K. Shanmukham Chetty: My Honourable friend said that since the experiment of the separation of audit and accounts on the East Indian Railway, the Government have been doing some sort of propaganda work in favour of this procedure. I wish, Sir, that they do something more than mere propaganda work in this affair, for I am convinced that if the railway accounts are to be placed on a sensible basis, the first necessary reform in this direction must be the separation of audit from accounts. We all know that the Auditor General is now responsible for the accounts of the Railways, and it has been pointed out by the Dickinson Committee—and I submit it does not require the services of an expert like Mr. Dickinson to show that—that in any commercial concern the statistics required for accounting purposes are entirely different from the statistics required for audit purposes. The whole basis on which the accounts of the Railways are now maintained are to meet the requirements of the Auditor General, and that I submit, Sir, is entirely in violation of all recognised commercial principles of accounting. If this House has not been in a position to appreciate the accounts of the railway administration in a better manner, one of the contributory causes towards that is the fact that the accounts are not kept as they ought to be kept, I hope that when this House discusses the Dickinson Committee's report, I will have an opportunity of expressing my opinions in more detail. I will only say at the present moment that if Government give to this House an early opportunity of discussing the Dickinson Committee's Report and take the necessary steps to place the accounting of the railway systems on a more commercial and sensible basis, then it will not merely be for the good of the Railways, but it will enable this House to understand the Railway Budget better.

Mr. B. Das (Orissa Division: Non-Muhammadan): Sir, I am surprised at the speech of my Honourable friend, Mr. Chetty. Sir, it was in accordance with precedents which some of my friends of his Party have established and that I did mention two or three years ago on the floor of this House when my Honourable friend Mr. Sim from the Government Benches used to pay compliments to those Members of the Standing Finance Committee of the Swarajist Party about the very successful working of the separation of railway finance from general finance. Government never came before this House for a complete separation of the accounting from the audit. They only wanted to introduce it in an experimental state in the East Indian Railway. Here my Honourable friend Mr. Chetty, out-Heroding Herod, gives a general certificate and says he wants it to be introduced in every railway.

Mr. R. K. Shanmukham Chetty: It is a matter in which there is no necessity for experiment.

Mr. B. Das: Does my Honourable friend Mr. Chetty think that three months' experiment in the year on the East Indian Railway has given Government and the country sufficient material to justify its introduction in various railways in India?

Mr. R. K. Shanmukham Chetty: It does not require any experiment at all.

Mr. B. Das: My Honourable friend Mr. Neogy wanted that the system should not be introduced in any other State Railways unless and until this House and the Standing Finance Committee or the new Committee that the Government are going to appoint have had an opportunity of going into the question of the separation of railway finance from general finance. I fail to see any reason for this hurry. My Honourable friend Mr. Chetty is a very cute and shrewd Member of this Assembly, and he ought to realise that what the Government have in their mind, as a result of the Dickinson Committee's Report, is that they want establishments created with European head accountants as though Indians had not proved their capacity as successful Accountants-General and Members of the Finance Department of the Government of India. Sir, everybody knows that Indians have proved their capacity in this line very creditably. I do not know what the Honourable the Railway Member and the Financial Commissioner have in their mind, but the Railway Board do not like the interference of too many Indian members of the Audit and Accounts Department in matters of railway audit and accounting. So they want the creation of an Accounts Department for each railway, which should have a European as its head. They may also provide for an Indian as its Deputy Accountant-General. Sir, this fact alone is sufficiently patent to make us very suspicious, and we should consider the matter thoroughly before we allow it to come into force in any of the railways in India. I am really surprised that my friend, who belongs to the Congress Party, the members of which are supposed to be the watch-dogs of the country, and are here to oppose the Government at every stage, should be so enamoured of compliments paid by the Government Benches that he has fallen into their snare and does not question their *bonâ fides*. Sir, this is the time when we ought to be very suspicious of the Government attitude. I know that in the matter of the separation of railway finance from general finance, the members of the party to which I had the honour then to belong, I mean the former Independent Party, and even the members of the present Nationalist Party were very suspicious of the attitude of Government. I am sorry to remark that my friends Messrs. Chetty and Jamnadas Mehta, who belong to the Congress Party, sometimes show absolute confidence in the policy of Government. In fact, at times they become so artless that they cannot even observe the guile and subterfuges by which the Government are going to deprive the Assembly of its powers and place them entirely in the hands of the European members of the Railway Board. Sir, we are here to oppose this policy and to see that the power of the Railway Board is entirely cut down and is under the watchful control of this Assembly.

Mr. M. S. Aney (Berar Representative): Sir, I felt it somewhat difficult and uneasy if not unsafe as I stood between two stalwarts of the two parties on this side who have been just crossing swords. I do not think that there was anything in the speech which my Honourable friend Mr. Chetty has just made that it should have given cause for such annoyance to my friend Mr. Das, that he thought it necessary not merely to attack Mr. Chetty but direct his remarks against the party of which Mr. Chetty is one of the prominent and respected Members.

Mr. B. Das: My remarks were meant for my friend and were not directed towards the great party which he represents.

Mr. M. S. Aney: You did not mean to say so; but your language unfortunately meant it. I am however very glad to hear your explanation.

In the second place, while the question under discussion was a simple one confined only to the separation of audit from accounts, my friend Mr. Das has also touched upon the question of the separation of the general finance from the railway finance. I believe that the House knows that the separation of railway finance from general finance had been made with the full consent of this House. And we have now the working of that system for the last four years. Whatever be the defects of the railway administration in other respects, I feel certain that they cannot be attributed to the working of that separation. The other Honourable friend of mine, Mr. Neogy, also made certain remarks and tried to show that there were certain defects as regards the control of this House on the expenditure of the Railways, and he also seems to attribute all that to the separation of general finance from railway finance. I have not been able to understand the exact connection between the existing defects of the control of this House and the separation scheme. In my opinion those defects were due to certain defects inherent in the existing system itself which leaves undefined the powers with which this House is invested with regard to its control in the details of expenditure. It is also because the powers conferred upon the executive and which they have been exercising for a long time have not been curtailed under rules as they ought to have been. So, I desire this House not to confound the question under discussion, *viz.*, the separation of audit from accounts with the separation of general finance from railway finance. Sir, this is one point which I wish to make.

Now, as regards the question of the separation of audit from accounts, I must say that that matter was as an experimental measure placed for consideration before the Standing Finance Committee for Railways, and they have decided that the system should be tried as an experiment on the East Indian Railway. It would, therefore, not be possible for this House to come to any clear understanding and reasonable conclusion about the utility or otherwise of this system unless and until the results of that experiment have been placed before the Standing Finance Committee for its consideration. The House is not yet in a position to come to a definite understanding on this point. I do not wish to prejudge the issue or the results, but so far as I have been able to see, the extension of this system to the East Indian Railway will probably justify its extension to other Railways. Of course, I am not so sanguine as Mr. Chetty is, nor am I so despondent as my friend Mr. Das appears to be.

Reference has also been made to the Dickinson Committee's for its Sir, that report is not for consideration before this House and I believe most of the Members of this House have not yet even gone through it. I am not sure whether the copies of this report have been supplied to all the Members of the Assembly; they have been supplied to the members of the Standing Finance Committee for Railways. I have gone through a portion of it and I admit that there is much in it which this House will have to consider seriously before the recommendations of that report are given effect to. There are many observations in the report which ought to make us think seriously, if not furiously, as to what the

real motive of the scheme outlined therein is. And the proper time for giving our opinion on that report will be when the Government give this House an opportunity for the consideration of it. What I want this House to bear in mind is this. The two questions, namely, the Report of the Dickinson Committee as well as the question with regard to the separation of railway finance from general finance, should be kept entirely apart from each other. We are at present considering the particular issue which is raised by the cut moved by my Honourable friend, Mr. Neogy. If the cut is moved, as it is I am certain, solely with the intention that this House should be given an opportunity before any extension of the system of the separation of audit from accounts is made to the other Railways, then I believe it is by itself a sufficiently important and strong ground to justify the vote of this House.

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons: Sir, I hope my Honourable friend Mr. Chetty has succeeded in making an impression on the stalwart conservatism of Mr. Neogy.

Mr. K. O. Neogy: He is your hope.

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons: Personally I agree very definitely with Mr. Chetty. First of all, I cannot see any connection between the separation of audit from accounts and the separation of the finances. You could have separation of audit and accounts if your finances were not separated, and you could have your audit and accounts as at present not separated when finances have been separated. There is no connection, to my mind, between the two things. Nor do I think that there is any connection between the separation of audit and accounts and either the control of this House over railway expenditure, or the matter of Indianization which was very briefly referred to by my friend Mr. Das.

The position is, I think, very simple. The auditor is there to audit the doings, and possibly the misdoings, of the railway administrations. His principal function, therefore, is that of a critic of the past. The accountant is there to compile the accounts of the administration; he deals mostly with the present and he is there to assist the administration. And one of the main arguments for separation is that it is not desirable either from the point of view of accounts or from the point of view of audit to combine in the same person the functions of critic and colleague. On Indianization I do not think the House will wish me to say much, except that I yield to no one in this House in my admiration for the body of men with whom I have served for much of my service, that is, the members of the Indian Audit and Accounts Department who are mainly obtained in India.

I think I have now only got to deal with Mr. Neogy's remarks. He wished to make certain that Government was not attempting to extend surreptitiously the experiment which we have been carrying on since 1925, the experiment having been intended to last for a period of three years. The answer is this. We purposely did not put anything for an extension into the Budget this year, because from our previous experience we did not expect that during this Session or even during the Budget debates there would be sufficient opportunity for discussion in this House. We therefore thought it better to leave the matter over until we could lay it before the House, probably in the September Session, with a request for a supplementary grant. By that time we are hopeful that we shall have been able

[Mr. A. A. L. Parsons.]

to have worked out a complete scheme for further separation, so that it will be possible to come before the House for an additional grant, if we are able to go further with the separation during the current year. We decided on that course particularly because we thought it would be more to the convenience of the House, who will have an opportunity if we ask them for a supplementary grant of threshing out the whole matter.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: Do I understand that this question will come up before the Dickinson Committee's recommendations are considered by this House?

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons: Whether it will be necessary to put before this House every minor recommendation in the Dickinson Report for an alteration, we will say, in the form of an accounting document, I could not at present say at all. I cannot say that the recommendations of Sir Arthur Dickinson will come in one body before the House. They will be put individually before the Standing Finance Committee. Nor can I at the moment say definitely that we shall lay the question of the further separation of accounts and audit before the House in the September Session; that will depend on whether we have gone far enough in working out the cost that further separation will involve. But I hope we shall be able to do so.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That the Demand under the head 'Audit' be reduced by Rs. 100."

The motion was negatived.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 10,44,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1929, in respect of 'Audit'."

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND NO. 4.—WORKING EXPENSES: ADMINISTRATION.

The Honourable Sir George Rainy: Sir, I beg to move:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 12,62,00,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1929, in respect of 'Working Expenses: Administration'."

Top heavy Administration.

Mr. M. S. Sesha Ayyangar (Madura and Ramnad cum Tinnevely: Non-Muhammadan Rural): Sir, I move:

"That the Demand under the head 'Working Expenses: Administration' be reduced by Rs. 3,00,00,000."

Sir, the Railway Board has after all survived our fire. Now it is the turn of the Railway Administration. Its top-heaviness is notorious. Honourable Members have only to look at Appendix D of the pink books supplied to them, and they will find that in every railway there is an Agent whose pay varies from Rs. 3,000 to Rs. 3,500 a month; and under him there are seven or eight departments, the head of each one of them is

getting from Rs. 2,000 to Rs. 2,500. Then lower down there is the regular gradation of subordinate officers consisting of Deputy Agents, Assistants and so on down to Rs. 1,000 a month. The sum total of the pay of all these officers would consume a very decent percentage of the total Demand that is asked for; and it is also known that almost all the Indian Railways are State-managed. So it becomes a national concern. Should there not then be any relation between the administrative charges and the capacity of the Indian people to bear them? India is decidedly poor; so should not the administrative charges be made to have some definite relation to the capacity of the Indian people? On that ground I would submit that there is a very great reason why there ought to be a reduction in this Demand. Now I will at once tell the House how I arrived at the figure of three crores of rupees. The total demand was Rs. 12,62,00,000. Three crores amounts to less than 25 per cent. of the total Demand. The present operative ratio is about 61 per cent., while 46 to 47 per cent. was the pre-war ratio. Reducing the proposed rate to the pre-war basis works out the figure I claim in my reduction. There may be a difference of one or two lakhs. That is certainly not much, regard being had to the difference of four crores in the estimates of the Government which I brought to the notice of the House the other day. And it does not require anything in the shape of argument to establish this. In season and out of season we are asked to compare the system obtaining elsewhere. A survey of the railways in other countries gives this result that in Sweden the highest railway officer gets about Rs. 780 a month, and the highest pay in France is Rs. 2,500; so that in all other countries the pay ranges from Rs. 730 to Rs. 2,500 a month, while a Railway Agent in India gets Rs. 3,500.

This question of top-heaviness is more or less an ancient grievance and dates as far back as 1870. This fact was made mention of then; and Sir J. Danvers expressed the view that the chief expenses were attributable to the expensiveness or the high cost of the European Agents employed on Railways. Even as recently as last year in the Raven Committee's Report, they complained within their short ambit of the enquiry that they found that the staff was in excess of the requirements and that there was a paucity of supervision. All these things establish the fact that since the inception of Railways in India to the present time it has been one continuing wrong.

The question is what is the remedy to rectify this top-heaviness? 12 Noon. As I stated at the outset, if the operative ratio can be reduced, it would be the best means of reducing this expenditure. When this was mentioned last year in the course of the Railway Budget discussion, Sir Charles Innes characterised it as an ancient fallacy; and he also tried to repel that argument by mentioning two important facts. He first said that there are different tracts of country through which the different railways have to pass, and that would make it difficult to have an average operative ratio to obtain on all railways. Next he said it will be difficult to make it vary with the ranging gross receipts of the year. That certainly was not what we aimed at then or what I am aiming at now. Let us take the Budget figures for the coming year 1928-29. If we try to reduce the operative ratio to what obtained in the pre-war period, which was 46 or 47 per cent. which we can take as the basis of our calculation, we could work that for some time and then see what the results are. We do not say that year after year it must be changed. We do not say that every year this operative ratio should be changed and that the pay of the officers also ought to change year after year. As regards the argument of Sir Charles

[Mr. M. S. Sesha Ayyangar.]

Innes that different railways have to pass through different tracts of land, that difficulty is not the monopoly of any one railway; one railway exclusively does not have broad rivers or mountainous tracts; that is more or less common to all railways—it is a question of degree—and so that is no argument to say that something like a reasonable operative ratio cannot be aimed at for all the railways. He then said it was very difficult to work out an operative ratio because year after year we have to change. I have already submitted that it is not necessary at all. Take the figures of 1928-29. We will cut it to 46 or 47 and try to work it to that figure for the next 10 years and then see what it looks like. I submit, therefore, the two arguments with which Sir Charles Innes tried to repel our arguments by characterising them as an ancient fallacy do not bear examination. I might also say that the operative ratio basis for which I plead is not quite new. In fact the Inchcape Committee also emphasised upon some reasonable basis that the working expenses must bear to the gross earnings. It is upon the basis of that calculation that they came to recommend certain retrenchments. I might also instance what happened in 1926. When there was a new railway line—the Dhond-Kurnool extension—the Government of India agreed with H. E. H. the Nizam's Government that the operative ratio should not exceed 50 per cent; so that between the 46 per cent. which obtained during the pre-war period and the 50 per cent. which the Government of themselves agreed to work this extension, I submit that if there is something like 47 per cent. as the basis for the purposes of calculating these expenses, this reduction of 3 crores which I plead for in my amendment would be very reasonable.

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons: Sir, there will be some Members of the House who will recognise in Mr. Sesha Ayyangar's remarks an echo of previous debates. I do not know whether it is worth while going over again the old controversy about the operating ratio. It is really impossible to compare the operating ratio now when prices, wages of subordinates, apart from wages of officers, and wages of labour are much higher than they were before the war, and when we have a depreciation fund which we had not before the war—it is impossible to compare the operating ratio now with the operating ratio, say, in 1913, and to arrive at any useful result. We have also many times before threshed out the question whether the officers' grades are paid adequately or too highly. I can only wish that my Honourable friend in moving his cut had not selected a figure which would mean that we should have to dismiss every gazetted officer on every railway in India and still leave us half a crore short. (Mr. M. S. Sesha Ayyangar: "Question.") I am glad that that has been questioned by my Honourable friend; I am glad also that he has raised this matter, because I think there is a good deal of misunderstanding in the House as to what actually are the expenses for which we are asking here a matter of something like Rs. 12½ crores. I think the phrase "Administration" under which they are compiled lends itself to that misunderstanding. These are not only expenses on the purely supervising machinery of railways. First of all, we have to omit a matter of something like Rs. 3½ crores as contribution to Provident Fund, not for officers only but for all our employees, gratuities and so on, leaving us with about Rs. 9½ crores for the other expenses which are chiefly, but by no means wholly, of an establishment nature. Those expenses do not only include Agents or even principal officers; they include all engineers on the open line including temporary

engineers, and subordinate staff like Inspectors of Work and permanent-way inspectors; also my friend Colonel Gidney's protégés the travelling ticket inspectors, various other inspectors and the office staff of all these officers. In the Locomotive Department not only the Chief Mechanical Engineer who is a supervising officer and his deputies who are also supervising officers, but also all works managers, foremen of workshops, draftsmen and store-keepers. In fact practically all charges for staff come under this particular head "Administration" except what is spent on labour and staff actually operating the trains or employed in stations. I am glad of an opportunity of giving this brief explanation, because I think there has been a real misunderstanding when we come before this House for as large an amount as 12½ crores for what we call Administration; it naturally suggests itself to the House that it is for the people concerned with what I may call the higher administration of railways. It is not. It is largely for people who work all over the line and without whose work on the line the railways could not be carried on.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That the Demand under the head 'Working Expenses : Administration' be reduced by Rs. 3,00,00,000."

The motion was negatived.

Facilities afforded to Third Class Passengers.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: Sir, I move:

"That the Demand under the head 'Working Expenses : Administration' be reduced by Rs. 1,00,00,000."

This motion is being made to draw the attention of the House to the travelling facilities afforded to third class passengers. Sir, this subject is discussed every year without much effect. Although the Railway Board perhaps may be tired of hearing the same criticisms over and over again, I feel, Sir, it is necessary for us to deal with this subject even during this discussion. The main purpose for which the Indian Railways exist is to provide comfortable travelling facilities for the common people of this country. The Railways do not exist for the Railway Board, nor do they exist to provide employment for the superior or the subordinate employees. I therefore feel that it would be well that this House during the Budget discussion should give greater attention to the travelling facilities provided by our Railways than even to those important subjects like the financial position of the Indian Railways. I do not object to any Member discussing the financial position, but, Sir, the more important question is whether the Railways in India fulfil the main functions for which they have been brought into existence.

(At this stage Mr. President vacated the Chair, which was occupied by Mr. K. C. Neogy, one of the Panel of Chairmen, amidst applause from all sides of the House.)

The main function is, as I have said, to provide comfortable facilities to the common people in this country.

I have already stated that this subject has been discussed several times. I have myself made several speeches on this subject. I have quoted figures to show that the Railway Board has not done what it should to provide

[Mr. N. M. Joshi.]

sufficient and proper facilities for third class passengers. I have also quoted facts and from the divisions, the House will see, Sir, that it has generally approved of the arguments which I have put forward. Unfortunately, it is the Railway Board which is not convinced by the facts and figures which I quote every year, and that is why they are not doing justice to the third class traveller in this country. Sir, if we look at the earnings of the Indian Railways, we find that the earnings from the third class passenger are more than ten times the earnings from the second class and the first class passengers. On the other hand, we find that the space provided for the third class passenger or the other facilities provided for him are not even one-tenth of what is provided for the first and second class passenger. Sir, with your indulgence I shall again state the fact which I stated once before, that the Indian Railways make out of a third class seat as much as they make out of a first class seat. This clearly means that they do not, as compared with the earnings from the third class passenger, give to the third class passenger his due.

Now, Sir, let us look at the facilities provided for the travellers on the Indian Railways. Take the carriage itself. You will find that for the third class passenger there is a hard seat provided which is made of a wooden plank, while the other classes have got softer seats, as if the third class passengers will not appreciate a soft seat. I could have understood the Government not giving a cushion or a softer seat of any other kind if they had not made money out of the third class seat. Sir, not only is the seat a harder one, but there is hardly any accommodation in the carriage for the passengers to sit or even to stand. Overcrowding in Indian Railways is proverbial. So far, nothing has been done to reduce this overcrowding.

Then, Sir, in the carriage itself the facilities for ordinary conveniences, like latrines and arrangements for drinking water, are not quite good. I do not say that Government do not provide some kind of latrines, but they are not spacious and are not even kept clean as some one said here only a few days ago. Then, Sir, the water arrangements are not quite good. The third class passenger is not given a proper waiting room. For the first and second class passengers there is a waiting room, while for the third class passenger there is what is called a waiting shed. So there is a distinction between the two classes of waiting rooms. Sir, I do not know why Government should not provide proper waiting rooms with some benches or chairs for the third class passengers to sit on. Will not the third class passenger like to recline in an arm chair if some of them are provided in the third class waiting rooms? Certainly they would do it and appreciate it very much; but in some third class waiting rooms or sheds there is not even a wooden bench

Nawab Sir Sahibzada Abdul Qaiyum (North-West Frontier Province: Nominated Non-Official): Do they use benches in their homes?

Mr. N. M. Joshi: It is not a question whether the third class passenger uses wooden benches in his home or not. The question is, whether the third class passenger pays his fare or not. If he pays his fare

Mr. A. A. I. Parsons: Not always.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: My Honourable friend in charge of the Railway Department says "not always," but I am quite sure, Sir, that the fact should be investigated as to whether it is the first and second class passenger

who avoids paying his fare more than the third class passenger. As a matter of fact, if you ask the experience, as I have asked, of ticket collectors, they will tell you that it is the Burra Sahibs who travel without tickets far more frequently than the poor third class passenger. The poor ticket collector is afraid of asking for tickets from first and second class passengers, because he knows that the man who sits in the higher classes is either the Police Superintendent or the District Magistrate of that district. I have heard this several times from several ticket collectors. So, Sir, it will be found that it is mostly the first and second class passengers who deliberately avoid paying their fares more than the poor third class passengers. The third class passenger pays his fare, and the Railways earn from each third class seat as much as they earn from a first class seat. That fact is not yet disproved, and as long as that fact is not disproved, you have no right to discriminate as regards the facilities accorded to a third class passenger and those accorded to first and second class passengers. (*An Honourable Member*: "They pay for the first class and get better facilities.") As I said, they do not, and if the first class passengers are not willing to pay the fare which they should, then they have no business to travel first class. To-day the first class travellers are not willing to pay such fares for the first class as will not cause loss to the Railways, but they are provided with first class accommodation simply because the Railways are anxious that some classes of people should travel more comfortably than the other classes. That, Sir, is the only reason why the first class is maintained in India. Formerly, the Government of India used to publish figures about the profits or losses they made out of the first and second class passengers every year. Sir, since these facts were placed before the House, the Government of India have ceased to give these figures in their reports. Those people who want to study these curious phenomena would be well advised to look at the old reports and the new reports.

Now, Sir, I was told last year by Sir Charles Innes, when I said that the Government makes the same amount from a first class seat as they make from a third class seat, I was only considering the class of seats. That is exactly so. The third class does pay, while the other classes do not pay and, although the other classes do not pay, the Government of India, simply because they belong to that class of people, give them better facilities. This cannot last very long.

Sir, there are several other facilities which are wanted for the third class passenger, but I do not wish to deal with all kinds of facilities because I have submitted all these points several times and I have even once moved a Resolution and that Resolution was carried in this House. Unfortunately, there was not much effect given to it. Now, what I suggest is this, that the Government of India should once for all find out the facts of the situation by appointing a committee. It may be said that I am very fond of committees, although sometimes I do not believe in some of them. Still, Sir, I am prepared to make a suggestion to the Government of India that they should appoint a committee to go into the question of facilities provided for third class passengers. Let that be also a roving committee. Sir, these roving committees are sometimes ridiculed. I do not want people to rove about but I want a committee to go about the country to find out and inquire what facilities should be given to third class passengers and that committee should make proposals

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for bettering these facilities. (*An Honourable Member*: "Would they travel third class?") Well, Sir, I do not mind the committee travelling third class on the Indian Railways. If the committee likes to travel third class so much the better. If they do not like, I don't mind the Government of India giving them second class or first class, or even reserved saloons (*An Honourable Member*: "Shame.") Let them travel and investigate, even at the cost of a reserved saloon; let them investigate and make a report. Then, Sir, this House and the public also in the country will be in a better position to judge what the Government of India have done for this class of passengers. Then, Sir, if the Government of India do not like roving committees, as I am told several times they do not, I will make another suggestion to them. They have got the Central Advisory Council. Last year the Central Advisory Council did not meet simply because, I was told, there was nothing to place before them. As the Central Advisory Council had no work last year, I suggest to the Honourable Member in charge of the Department some kind of work for them, namely, that the question of the provision of facilities for third class passengers be placed before a special session of that Advisory Council. Let the Government of India place the materials before them or let the members also make suggestions, and if the Government of India cannot think of any suggestions and the members of the Advisory Council also cannot think of any suggestions, Sir, I undertake to send them sufficient suggestions for consideration to last them for at least a week. I therefore hope, Sir, that at least one of my suggestions will be accepted by the Government and by this House.

Mr. M. K. Acharya (South Arcot *cum* Chingleput: Non-Muhammadan Rural): Permit me, Sir, to say that I am rather grieved that some of the Members opposite who have been listening to the remarks of my friend Mr. Joshi seem to have been rather smiling in ridicule when I believe they ought to have been listening to his remarks with some pain and grief. I am here, Sir, to emphasise very strongly the fact that the third class passengers pay practically the largest percentage of revenues while they get the very least conveniences possible. I speak particularly with reference to the Railways that run through my part of the country. I wonder whether Mr. Parsons or Sir George Rainy had been to South India and looked into one of these third class railway carriages of the South Indian Railway. If they had, they would have perceived how the men who pay the largest percentage of railway revenue are treated and what conveniences are furnished for them. For instance eight is supposed to be the maximum seating accommodation for each compartment, but you sometimes find that 15, or 20, never less than 12 or 13, are pushed into a compartment of 8. My friends would have seen how these carriages are not even provided with the most ordinary facilities—with some kind of a plank even to lean against. There are supposed to be some planks, not more than 8 or 12 inches in breadth, and if a man should lean upon any one of these planks at the back of these benches, I suppose he would find after 5 minutes a terrible pain in the middle of his back. After leaning on this for little more than half an hour, a man would prefer to stand up rather than sit on that bench. And this South Indian Railway Company charges the very highest fares that any company in India charges for third class passengers; 5 pice, $4\frac{1}{2}$ pice, never less than $3\frac{1}{2}$ pice. Much of this Railway runs over what is called the metre gauge and on this metre gauge I believe the men are carried as if they were no better than animals. In

fact I have seen horse-trucks and trucks for other animals which are far better constructed than the trucks in which these men are carried, which are unspeakably horrible. I believe it is a disgrace to any civilised Government to say that these are railway carriages which are provided by State Railways, even though they are Company-managed railways. The sight of these poor passengers is generally pitiable. Sir, it will bring tears to anybody's eyes. On every occasion when there is heavy traffic, we see things, things a hundred fold more. South India, luckily or unluckily has got a large number of temples with festivals almost throughout the year; and when coming to these festivals men are simply packed in the vans where goods are carried, trunks are carried, animals are carried; and they are shoved in there sometimes without even breathing space. Is this, Sir, the treatment that is to be given to your largest and most respectable class of customers, if what they contribute to the railway revenues is of any respectable account? I put the simple question, Sir. The trains again pass through places where these poor fellows, men, women and children, packed like sardines, cannot get any drinking water for miles at a stretch. I am told there are Railway Advisory Committees attached to many of these Railways; that if these things are brought to the notice of these Committees they will insist on the convenience of passengers; but these Railway Advisory Committees are mostly a sham. They are given no powers to do anything worth doing; they possibly pass resolutions that more conveniences and facilities should be provided, resolutions more honoured in the breach than in the observance. I therefore think, Sir, that if we mean to be serious, if this House or the railway administration should pass for civilised agencies, then we must strongly insist on railway regulations providing for the convenience of third class passengers.

I do not think it would be right for me to take up more time on this last day of the Railway Budget discussion, as I should have to if I were to enumerate all the things that require attention. The main point is that third class passengers are charged very high rates and they are given very meagre facilities, inhumanly meagre. Therefore, I hope, Sir, that this matter will receive not the absent-minded ridiculous smile playing on the faces of some Members, but that attention at the hands of all which humanity, human charity and kindness ought to compel all to pay to those who are their poorer brothers. I therefore commend, Sir, very strongly the motion of my friend Mr. Joshi to the attention of this House.

Nawab Sir Sahibzada Abdul Qayum: Sir, I do not want to intervene in this debate but the remarks of my friend, Mr. Joshi, compel me to say just a few words. I admire his pluck in advocating the cause of the lower employees of the Railway Department and really appreciate his solicitude for the welfare of the lower class of these employees. It is with his permission that I am going to criticise some of his remarks and even that to a very small extent. Sir, Mr. Joshi is always anxious to improve the wages and the conditions of service of the lower classes. It is all very well to say that the Railways should improve these conditions, but unless we improve the condition of labour and private service all over India, we shall be only disturbing the contentment of servants other than railway servants in the country. I mean we shall be disturbing the peace of mind of all private servants

Mr. Chairman (Mr. K. C. Neogy): Order, order. The Honourable Member should remember that the House is not discussing labour questions at the present moment.

Nawab Sir Sahibzada Abdul Qaiyum: Sir, I thought we were discussing the question of how far we should improve the condition of these employees. (*Honourable Members:* "No. no.") That is my point, Sir, I would not advise the House to lay much stress on this point, because they would only be disturbing the comfort of the third class passengers if they were to put benches in a cold waiting room for them in the middle of winter. They are not accustomed to sit on benches and they would rather like to sit comfortably on their little blankets on the floor.

Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh (*Muzaffarpur cum Champaran: Non-Muhamadan*): Then take away all the benches from third class carriages.

Sir Hari Singh Gour (*Central Provinces Hindi Divisions: Non-Muhamadan*): Let them squat.

Nawab Sir Sahibzada Abdul Qaiyum: It will be simply changing the mode of life of these people and instead of helping them and making them more comfortable, you will be really making them uncomfortable. If Honourable Members will only remember how some of their own private servants are treated in their homes, I am sure they will not blame the railway authorities very much. We often notice that a single servant in a family is used for all sorts of purposes in the family, irrespective of the number of hours he has to work or the amount of wages he receives. If you make life more comfortable for these people on the Railways than their home life, you will be only making private service as unpopular in the country as it is already in some parts of India even now.

Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh: Sir, I should like to speak just a few words on this motion. The first difficulty that a third class passenger comes across specially at important railway stations is the difficulty in purchasing tickets. This is a matter which I have repeatedly brought to the notice of this House. The booking offices are not opened sufficiently early to allow all the passengers to take their tickets. There is only one small window for the selling of tickets, and the frantic rush of third class passengers at that booking window can be better imagined than described. I suggested, Sir, in the course of one of my earlier speeches that the booking offices at big railway stations should be open all the 24 hours, and that at smaller stations the booking offices should be opened one or two hours at least before the arrival of trains in order to enable all the passengers to book their tickets with ease. Sometimes the booking offices are supposed to be open at these hours; but as a matter of fact I myself have noticed that the booking clerks do not give out tickets at the hours prescribed. I also suggested that the booking hours should be notified by posters in the vernaculars and exhibited conspicuously before the windows so that passengers may know the booking hours and insist upon their right. In dealing with this matter, Sir, the Honourable Sir Charles Innes referred to my suggestion last year in the following words:

"Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh was perfectly correct in saying that last year he brought up the vexed question of booking facilities. That is a disability with which I myself have very considerable sympathy. Well, I have always told the House that all these debates, after the budget debate, all the speeches of all Honourable Members are examined and we do take action wherever we can on any suggestions made. Now, that particular suggestion of Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh regarding booking facilities

was made the subject of a circular which we issued to all Railway Agents. We drew their attention to this particular matter and to the suggestions made by Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh, and we are now just beginning to get in replies on the subject. All Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh's suggestions have been examined."

I should like to know what is the result of my suggestions? I am glad to note that so far as the Bengal and North Western Railway are concerned, they have acted up to this suggestion, and I have seen these notices exhibited at the booking windows, although I confess complaints continue to come that tickets are not always issued at the proper times. I have had occasion to travel on some of the Railways during the last few months, and I have noticed that booking offices are not opened at the hours mentioned, and that there is a frantic rush of passengers at the windows.

The second point I should like to refer to is the harassment to which the third class passengers are subjected by the exactions of the coolies at big railway stations. I do not like to go into details, but I will just refer to one instance which occurred recently at the Allahabad railway station where a few coolies were hauled up before the Special Railway Magistrate on a charge of levying blackmail on a certain passenger. The case has been reported, Sir.....

Mr. Chairman (Mr. K. C. Neogy): Does the Honourable Member make this out as a special grievance of third class passengers?

Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh: Yes, because the third class passengers are subjected to these exactions and intimidation from the coolies. They are mostly ignorant, they do not know the rates prescribed, and these coolies are therefore quite at liberty to make all these exactions from the third class passengers. Probably the case to which I am going to refer related to a third class passenger although it is not so stated in the course of the judgment to which I was going to refer.

Mr. Muhammad Yamin Khan (United Provinces: Nominated Non-Official): What punishment was awarded? It was a severe one.

Sir Victor Sassoon (Bombay Millowners' Association: Indian Commerce): Is this the Railway Board or the Police? Is it the fault of the Railway Board?

Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas: The Railway Administration concerned.

Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh: If my Honourable friend had a little patience he would have seen the connection my remark had to the railway authorities. In the course of the judgment the Special Magistrate made the following observations. This is reported in the *Pioneer*, dated the 24th February:

"Such aggression on the part of Railway coolies continued unrestrained due to the persistent indifference of the railway authorities as well as that of the railway police"

—I hope my Honourable friend is within the reach of my voice. (Laughter)—

"although I have several times had occasion to draw their attention to this unsatisfactory state of affairs obtaining here and at other important stations. It is a matter of regret that no care is bestowed on the recruitment of coolies, who, I am afraid, may in most cases turn out to be previous convicts, or are at least persons whose antecedents are unknown, and yet they are the people in whom passengers have to repose their confidence."

[Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh.]

And he concluded his judgment in the following words:

"Knowing as I do that it is useless to invoke the aid of the railway authorities in this matter I have no other alternative but to pass a sentence which may prove deterrent to this class."

That is all I have got to say on this point.

The third point to which I should like to refer is that of overcrowding. That matter has been referred to by previous speakers. I should like to say that this matter is not a sort of favour or indulgence which the third class passengers are asking for from the railway authorities. Under the law they have a right to see that no more passengers are put into the compartments than the prescribed number exhibited inside the compartments. I refer, Sir, to the Indian Railways Act.

Section 63 of the Indian Railways Act runs as follows:

"Every railway administration shall fix, subject to the approval of the Governor General in Council, the maximum number of passengers which may be carried in each compartment of every description of carriages, and shall exhibit the number so fixed in a conspicuous manner inside or outside each compartment in English or in one or more of the vernacular languages in common use in the territory traversed by the railway, or both in English and in one or more of such vernacular languages, etc."

Then section 93 says:

"If a Railway Company contravenes the provisions of section 53 or section 63, with respect to the maximum load to be carried in any wagon or truck or the maximum number of passengers to be carried in any compartment or the exhibition of such load on the wagon or truck or of such number in or on the compartment . . . shall forfeit to the Government the sum of Rs. 20 for every day during which either section is contravened."

Then again section 97 says:

"When a Railway Company has through any act or omission forfeited any sum to the Government under the foregoing provisions of this Chapter, the sum shall be recoverable by suit in the District Court having jurisdiction in the place where the act or omission or any part thereof occurred."

I asked a question in this House on this subject on the 25th August, 1927, with regard to overcrowding, and the reply which I received was that Government never exercised the power which is vested in them of levying a penalty under the terms of the section which I have just read, and the reason given was this. The reply says:

"Such action would not have been in the interests of the travelling public. The alternative to overcrowding was the stoppage of booking, and such stoppage would, Government understand, have caused greater inconvenience to intending passengers."

The Railway Board evidently think that the only alternative to the action contemplated under that section would be the stoppage of booking; but there is another alternative, and that is making the Railways run more trains. That is an alternative which never occurred to my friends on the opposite side.

The fourth point to which I should like to refer is the harassment to which the third class passengers are subjected by some travelling ticket checkers. I certainly do not object to a reasonable examination being held with regard to the possession of tickets; but the amount of free luggage which the third class passengers, as well as other passengers, are entitled

to take is a subject of much complaint. Third class passengers are, I understand, entitled to take only 15 seers of luggage free. Sometimes it happens that even if the weight carried exceeds this amount by half a seer or one seer, the ticket examiners pounce upon these helpless people and make them forfeit the free allowance they are entitled to, and charge them for the whole weight. These scales of free luggage allowance were fixed more than 25 or 30 years ago when people's needs were few; and I would suggest that the railway authorities should rearrange and increase the weights in such a way as to give a more decent free allowance to the third class as well as other passengers. Moreover I understand that these ticket examiners have to show a certain amount of earnings every day; and unless they do so, they are liable to be dismissed for showing indifferent results. Naturally the result is that the ticket examiners pounce upon these ignorant unfortunate people and make them pay for the whole weight even if there is a little excess.

I shall just conclude with one observation in regard to the supply of drinking water at the railway stations. I note with gratitude that the East Indian Railway have introduced a system of carrying in hot weather pure and cool drinking water in big jars in a third class compartment in the train, and this innovation I understand has been much appreciated by the travelling public. This improvement should be effected on all other Railways. I made a suggestion to this effect to the Agent of the Bengal and North Western Railway, with which I am more particularly concerned, and the Agent, if I remember aright, has promised to look into the matter in this connection. (*An Honourable Member*: "There should be no separate arrangement for Hindus?") Certainly, for every class of passengers, just as they do on the East Indian Railway. With these few words I strongly support the motion which is now before the House.

Mr. Varahagiri Venkata Jogiah (*Ganjam cum Vizagapatam*: Non-Muhammadian Rural): Sir, the first and foremost inconvenience of the third class passengers is the overcrowding in the third class carriages. Any casual visitor to any Railway station can see this; and the crowding becomes all the greater during times of feasts and festivals. There is no doubt that the normal condition is a state of overcrowding and the number which you always find in a third class carriage is greater than that fixed. But the question arises as to what is the remedy for this overcrowding. The chief remedy seems to me to be to increase the number of train services. The trains at present run are quite insufficient. They should not only be doubled but even quadrupled. To emphasise this point, I would refer this House to the evidence given by Sir Alexander M. Rendel, Consulting Engineer of the East Indian Railway, in the year 1884, before a Select Committee of the House of Commons. He stated, during the course of his evidence, that owing to the absence of competition of railways in India, Indian Railway Companies were running very few trains whereas in England, the Railway Companies met competition by providing greater facilities by doubling or quadrupling the actual number required for the passengers carried. Then he compared the East Indian Railway with the London and North Western Railway and said that both of them carried an equally large amount of traffic, but that the East Indian Railway was running very few trains which were very full. He added that on an average the number of passengers in a train on the London and North Western Railway was not more than 50 while on the East Indian

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Railway it was 260 or 270. Nine years after, in the year 1908 Mr. Thomas Robertson said that the average number, 154 to 267, of passengers in a train in India is greater than that in any other country in the world and that the third-class carriages here are often much more crowded and for long journeys. So that there is no doubt that the chief remedy for reducing overcrowding in these trains lies in the multiplication of train services.

The next inconvenience, to which the third class passengers are subject, is the absence of provision for clean latrine accommodation. The greatest economy is practised in the space allotted for latrines in the third class carriages. The total space allotted is 3 to 4 feet square. Added to this, the cleaning is done at distant intervals and the supply of water in the water tanks is scanty and insufficient for washing purposes. There must be, at least, two men attached to each train attending to the cleaning and the keeping of the latrines in a sanitary condition. Unless this is done, the latrines, which are at present a perfect nuisance, will be worse than useless.

Coming next to the waiting halls, to which my Honourable friend Mr. Joshi referred, the third class passenger sheds provide accommodation far worse than what people are accustomed to in the poorest houses. In these sheds they have to sit on dusty and dirty floors even in the summer months and that too, under roofs covered with corrugated iron. This state of things calls for immediate relief.

Among other inconveniences to which these passengers are subjected may be mentioned the want of arrangements for meals and light refreshments at stations. In this connection I may state that the best arrangements are made on only one line in the whole country and that is on the South Indian Railway, where we find satisfactory refreshment room both for light refreshments and good meals and these are situated on the platform itself. I wish the example set by the South Indian Railway in this respect will be copied by other Railways.

Another great inconvenience is that which was referred to by my Honourable friend, Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh, with regard to the issue of tickets. It is absolutely necessary that some hours before the train arrives tickets should be issued. What happens generally is that the issue of tickets begins after the line clear is given and sometimes even later. And the result is that there is a rush at the ticket issuing window, passengers very often do not get tickets, sometimes they are unable to catch the train they want, and occasionally they are even deceived, (An Honourable Member: "That is quite true.") in the matter of fares that are really due.

The last, though not the least, of the inconveniences consists in the late admission of passengers to the platforms. This causes a good deal of inconvenience. It occasions great crush and rush for seats, especially at roadside stations where the trains stop for a very short time. These, Sir, are some of the grievances of the poor passengers and they are being brought to the notice of the authorities year after year and yet we find that the comforts and conveniences of third class passengers are not attended to though the third class passengers are admitted to be the backbone of the passenger traffic. Sir, I support the amendment.

Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas (Indian Merchants' Chamber: Indian Commerce): Sir, I want to say very few words on this. I rise to support the motion before the House, and I am sure that there will be very few in this House, I venture to think on either side, who can agree with Sir Abdul Qaiyum in the remarks which he made. Sir, the grievances of the third class passengers are many. But the most serious one is the one of overcrowding, and I venture to mention to the House the work which has been done on one railway in India in this connection. The Bombay, Baroda and Central India Railway had this question raised in the Local Advisory Committee about fifteen months ago. The Agent of the Bombay, Baroda and Central India Railway, whom I particularly wish to mention here with special appreciation, fell in line with the suggestions made by the non-official members of the Advisory Committee and surprise checks were agreed to by the Agent over the entire railway system. The members of the Local Advisory Committee there felt that the result of these surprise checks was instructive. In fact the Agent himself admitted that they were useful to the administration. These have been carried on both on the metre gauge and on the broad gauge sections of the Bombay, Baroda and Central India Railway and so useful have they been that these statements are being put before the Local Advisory Committee, I believe, once every three months, Sir. Wherever overcrowding has been perceived or if there are more passengers in a compartment than sanctioned under the Railway Act, either explanations are given or the Agent takes measures to see that it does not happen again. I will give you an instance, Sir. Where there are special fairs, not of the bigger magnitude that you have for Rameswaram or Hardwar, local fairs, they have been able to devise a better service. I cannot help feeling that of all the measures that could be suggested for checking of overcrowding, the one which would be found to be most effective would be a sharp lookout by the Local Advisory Committee in this connection. Although Local Advisory Committees have been run down as having no powers, I am confident that these Local Committees, which must be "advisory"—even the Ackworth Committee recommended that they cannot be anything but advisory: they cannot be given any executive powers—these Local Advisory Committees, if they followed up their work with a little energy will find that they are very powerful,—apart from their reflecting public opinion. I say powerful in the sense of bringing grievances to the notice of the Railway Board here, and, I venture to think, powerful in the sense that any grievances which could come up from Local Advisory Committees and with their endorsement the Railway Board would find it very difficult to brush aside. Such recommendations coming from Local Advisory Committees would enable the Railway Board even to force the hands of an Agent if he happens to be a particularly strong or wrong-headed person.

I particularly, Sir, wish to deal with one more subject, and that is the question of excess luggage found on passengers during travel and on running trains and the forfeiture of the free weight allowance when a little excess luggage has been found. This is a very serious matter and, if I am correct, this is an innovation. I sympathise with the railway administrations wishing to enforce their regulations strictly. I have always held, and we have had it practically accepted by the Bombay, Baroda and Central India Railway in Bombay, that they should do this only at the gates when passengers get into a station, but they should

[Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas.]

not worry passengers once they have got on to a train until the passenger gets out of the train and wishes to leave a station at destination. The railways have a tendency of not doing their work properly at the stations where passengers get in, either owing to inadequate space or inadequate staff—I will not say anything more—and they wish to put the travelling public to the great inconvenience of being disturbed at any hour of the day or night to enable the railway staff to check the luggage carried. I think this is a pernicious system and should not be tolerated. If it is tolerated or if it is allowed to continue, I believe the public would be quite justified in openly defying the railway staff.

(At this stage Mr. K. C. Neogy vacated the Chair which was resumed by Mr. President.)

I do not think any railway administration should disturb passengers while they are in railway precincts. If the administration want to do it, they must do it at one end or at the other; but the most serious part is that part, against which I wish to protest most emphatically, that when they do find a passenger carrying half a seer more, as my friend Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh said, the administration forfeit the free allowance. That, I am sure—I am not a lawyer—is illegal; if it is not illegal, it should be made illegal. Because a railway administration has no

adequate facilities at one end or the other of a passenger's journey to check his luggage, it should forfeit the free allowance which is available to him by law, is a new policy which should not be tolerated; and I do hope that the Railway Board will issue the strictest instructions and notify to the public also that a procedure like this does not meet with their approval. I hope that this motion will be carried because these are only two of the many grievances from which third class passengers suffer. These, Sir, are two of the most serious ones and I hope the Railway Board will be extra energetic in trying to see that they are remedied soonest.

Mr. B. Das: Sir, I wish to point out a very important grievance of the women third class passengers on the Bengal Nagpur Railway and also on other Railways. Sir, those of us who constantly travel on the Bengal Nagpur Railway find signboards and labels with the word "Females" on the intermediate and third class compartments of the Bengal Nagpur Railway. Sir, I know that certain Railways pass through jungles and barren countries, but that does not mean that the mentality of the management should also become jungly and barren. Such labels are not put on the intermediate and third class compartments for Anglo-Indian women.

Lieut.-Colonel H. A. J. Gidney: There is no such reservation now.

Mr. B. Das: There is, if not on the Bengal Nagpur Railway, on some other Railways. I have seen some compartments reserved for Anglo-Indian ladies. I fail to understand why the railways should put this word "Females". Sir, I have come across this word "Female" in cattle shows, where cattle are exhibited. The fact that compartments and latrines for human beings should during the reign of the British Government in India be labelled as "Females" is most objectionable to say the least of it.

Sir, my friends have already voiced the various grievances of the third class passengers. My Honourable friend Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas said that if the members of the Local Advisory Committees are strong and point out the grievances of the third class passengers, the Railway Board will take action. Sir, I happen to be a member of the Local Advisory Committee of the Bengal Nagpur Railway. The Bengal Nagpur Railway, as I have before pointed out in this House, is the most mismanaged railway in India, and it has so devised its Advisory Committees that there are only two non-official representatives on a Committee of 6 or 7 to voice the grievances of Indians and to pass resolutions. I do not know if the minutes of the Local Advisory Committee ever come before the Railway Board and if the Honourable the Financial Commissioner for Railways takes any action on them.

I have already suggested to the Bengal Nagpur Railway Local Advisory Committee and I suggest now to the House and to the Member for Railways and the Financial Commissioner for Railways that the one way of mitigating the grievances of the third class passengers is this, namely, that they should introduce passenger guards to look after the convenience of the third and intermediate class passengers. On the East Indian and Bengal Nagpur Railways there are passenger guards to look after the convenience and comforts of the second and first class passengers. At midnight if you come to a station and want a first class or second class berth, then it is the duty of the passenger guard to provide you with it. I raised this point in the Bengal Nagpur Advisory Committee and was told that this very passenger guard could also look after the convenience of the third class passengers. I pointed out in the Committee, and some of the Government representatives who were present there agreed with me, that the disadvantage in giving effect to this scheme would be that these passenger guards are Europeans and cannot talk the language of the third and intermediate class passengers. Usually numbers of second and first class compartments are bunched together and that engages all the attention of these passenger guards and therefore they have little time to go to the third class passengers and help them not to overcrowd one compartment and ask the passengers to go to other compartments. I take this opportunity of putting this suggestion with all the earnestness at my command before the Honourable Member for Railways. You derive the largest sum of money from the third class passengers. Why don't you introduce Indian passenger guards, whose work will be to look after the convenience of third class passengers? It does not cost the railway much. The Bengal Nagpur Railway Agent told me that they have got lots of ex-sepoy soldiers who look after the convenience of third class passengers. I very often pass through Kharagpur and see the soldiers looking very grand in their dress, but they never help the passengers. It is therefore high time that the Railway Department should look to the welfare of the third class travelling public by establishing a welfare department and as a first step let them introduce Indian passenger guards specially for the convenience of third and intermediate class passengers.

Lala Lajpat Rai (Jullundur Division: Non-Muhammadan): Sir, I just want to add one word. People have spoken of the grievances of third class passengers, and I want to draw the attention of the House to one particular matter, and that is the grievance of the third class female passengers (*Several Honourable Members*: "Women passengers,

[Lala Lajpat Rai.]

not female.") I don't mind women or females, but there is great necessity for doing something for them. I always find them walking about the railway platform without knowing how to go out or come in. In spite of the fact that in some stations there are lady ticket collectors who have been engaged, there is no one to guide these women passengers. The same complaint as that made by my friend, Mr. Das, as regards the employment of Anglo-Indian guards applies to their case also and I am strongly of opinion that something should be done to remove that complaint. A suggestion was once made to have ex-sepoys to guide third class passengers. I don't see them often. If I do see them I find them of no use to passengers. I endorse the remarks made by Mr. Das that some other class of people must be found to guide third class passengers, both men and women, on important stations.

The second thing I wish to say is this. Although we do not mention the Railways by name in this debate, I would like to say that these complaints are as common on the North Western as on any other system. I wish particularly to draw the attention of the railway administration to the fact that because nobody has made any complaint against the North Western Railway, it must not be assumed that that administration is perfect in any way. I acknowledge that something has been done to improve the lot of the third class passenger, but I must say that much remains to be done, and the serious attention of the railway administration is drawn to the necessity for looking after the convenience of third class passengers.

One remark was made about the provision of benches for third class passengers. I am sorry that the remark made by Nawab Sir Sahibzada Abdul Qaiyum is entirely out of place. Perhaps he found himself bound

Nawab Sir Sahibzada Abdul Qaiyum: On a point of personal explanation. The moment I made that remark I noticed that Lala Lajpat Rai and one or two other Members stood up to speak against what I had said. So I must admit at once that I am sorry I could not express myself so clearly as I should have done, because the Chair had called me to order or something of the sort. (Laughter.)

Mr. President: The Chair again calls the Honourable Member to order. (Laughter.) There is no occasion for a personal explanation.

Nawab Sir Sahibzada Abdul Qaiyum: All that I wish to say . . .

Mr. President: Order, order.

Lala Lajpat Rai: I don't want to make any strictures on the Honourable Member's speech. He thinks he is in duty bound to support the Government, in season and out of season, regardless of the merits of his remarks. Therefore his remarks are perfectly consistent with his general attitude

Nawab Sir Sahibzada Abdul Qaiyum: That is exactly the point on which I want to make a personal explanation, Sir; I did not say anything more than

Mr. President: Order, order. Lala Lajpat Rai.

Lala Lajpat Rai: I wanted to say that Mr. Joshi's proposal about benches is perfectly sound. The easiest test of the usefulness of these benches is that in important stations where benches are provided you will find that they are always occupied, you do not find an empty bench; there are very few stations where these benches are provided. But if Sir Abdul Qaiyum's principle were to be followed you will have to provide for squatting ground even in the railway carriages. We find that the present system is much more comfortable and much more convenient and gives more accommodation and to a certain extent more privacy. You find the defects of the squatting system in those coaches which are filled by a herd of third class passengers on the occasions of fairs; you find there is hardly room to move about or even to get out or get in. All these people are herded together just like cattle . . .

Nawab Sir Sahibzada Abdul Qaiyum: Do not give them comforts to which they are not accustomed in their homes. You may provide them with carpets and rugs if you like.

Lala Lajpat Rai: I do not think that question is at all relevant; carpets cannot be provided by the railway administration; and even if they were provided I do not think it will be any good. At home they have plenty of space to move about and to squat in; but in the railway carriages there is very little space to move about. If you do not provide benches in the railway carriages and allow them to squat it will add to the discomfort of the third class passengers. I wish to point out that the supply of benches in third class waiting rooms is a thing which ought to be looked into by the railway administration and steps should be taken to provide them; sometimes there are solitary women travelling alone without any guardians. They can very well stay on the benches and be more comfortable rather than squat on the ground.

It has already been pointed out that the arrangements about water supply are still inadequate and I want the railway administrations to take particular care to supply good drinking water. I have often found it very very difficult to get good water and I have heard third class passengers crying themselves hoarse from their different compartments for water and no water being supplied to them. I may point out that one of the reasons why water is inadequately supplied in most places is that these water carriers are used for other purposes than water supply alone; and that is the reason why they are not there to supply water when required. They are often used by station masters and others for private service and therefore particular care should be taken that this great necessity of life is properly supplied. Sometimes in the summer season it causes a great deal of hardship and inconvenience if one does not get water and therefore I say that the inspecting officers and others should see that the men who are appointed to supply water perform their duties properly and that they are not used for other purposes. More supervision is required and more strictness in this matter. The orders are there, but supervision is required to see that they are carried out.

Then, Sir, a point has been suggested to me by my friend, Mr. Jayakar, and that is with regard to the excess fare charged for children, and particularly for children travelling with women. Sometimes the travelling ticket inspectors are very strict; it is very difficult to fix the age of children and a woman sometimes believes *bona fide* that a child

[Lala Lajpat Rai.]

is under 12 when she takes him with her; but the inspector comes along and imposes penalties upon the child. I think there ought to be some discrimination in the treatment of these cases also on the same principles that have been enunciated by my friend Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas with regard to the excess fare on luggage. If you find there is a case of cheating and a child is really not below 12, then you are perfectly entitled to charge any excess, but no penalty should be charged. I do acknowledge that something has been done; but a great deal requires to be done and the reason for it is that the third class passenger cannot look after himself and so the administration and the officials have to look after him. Something ought to be done to guide these third class passengers in important stations and particularly on the occasion of fairs. I know that during the two fairs in Amritsar—Baisakhi and Diwali—a very big crowd of these people come. They wander about like cattle pushed this way and that way, and nobody looks after them to see that they are properly accommodated and put in their proper places. It should be somebody's duty to see that when a compartment is over-full, no more people are put in that compartment and that when it contains more persons than permitted by rules, the excess number are placed in another compartment. But that is not done; in fact not only are the excess people not taken out, but sometimes more are thrust in.

Lieut.-Colonel H. A. J. Gidney: Sir, my remarks will be very few on this matter. I need hardly say that I heartily support my friend Mr. Joshi in the motion he has just made. I do, however, consider, Sir, taking into account the fact that Railways derive the greatest revenue from third class passengers, that the third class travelling public should be given all possible comforts and conveniences. I have myself witnessed very many painful scenes from overcrowding in third class carriages—many a time there was scarcely room enough to move about. I must admit, however, that within the last year or two I have not witnessed such congestion which shows that the railway authorities are alive to this matter

Lala Lajpat Rai: That is due to the competition of motor cars.

Lieut.-Colonel H. A. J. Gidney: Perhaps it is. Sir, in my opinion some of the grievances which have been brought to the notice of this House are preventable, while others are encouraged; and I shall give the House an instance of one of encouragement. I do not say it is done with the connivance of the Railway Board, but certainly with the connivance of the railway administrations. I refer to the conduct of the travelling inspectors towards third class passengers. This is a matter, Sir, that really demands the serious attention of the Railway Board. I can quite understand how complex the problem is, but yet the matter certainly requires the serious attention of the Railway Board. This matter has been brought to my notice and I brought it to the notice of the offending Railway, the East Indian Railway. It was brought to my notice that certain travelling ticket inspectors were refused promotion and their annual increments unless and until they could show the railway administration that they had obtained a certain amount of excess fares from the travelling public. I believe every travelling ticket inspector has to show a certain collection in a stated period and his promotion and increment depend upon this. Now, Sir, I

brought this to the notice of the Agent, and the House will be interested to know what the Agent of the East Indian Railway wrote to me in reply. This is what he says:

"When the collections of particular travelling ticket inspectors are very low in comparison with those of other inspectors for one and the same period, it seems to be a fair inference that those who show much lower collections are slack in their work rather than that the others are dishonest. In considering the claims of travelling ticket inspectors for increment, their work during the previous year has to be considered as a whole, and one of the points taken into consideration is naturally the excess fare collections made by them as compared with those of the other inspectors."

He further said:

"The increments of 10 travelling ticket inspectors whose work has been unsatisfactory were withheld pending an improvement on their working and four having shown the necessary improvement have received their increments with back effect. Other cases are under consideration."

Now, Sir, when I asked why the promotions of travelling ticket inspectors should be thus influenced, I wrote:

"The inference to be drawn from the reasons given by you as to why promotions should be and are delayed to travelling ticket inspectors is that the honesty of the travelling public is rewarded in terms of the dishonesty of the employees and vice versa, principles which are against the fundamental laws relating to justice."

I am sure the House will agree with me that when an agency which administers a certain department such as the audit which controls travelling ticket inspectors makes the increments or promotions of a certain class of its employees dependent upon the honesty or dishonesty of the travelling public, especially to-day when fares are cheaper, and concessions more liberal, it is certainly giving a long rope to employees to exact as much as they can from the poor third class passengers. I do not think it is fair to the passengers. It is certainly encouraging an imposition, in short a temptation is placed in the hands of the travelling ticket inspectors to dishonestly extract from the third class passengers extra money, especially the poor illiterate villagers, who do not know anything at all about the rules, and so obtain the approval of their officials and qualify for increments in salary. The travelling ticket inspector in his uniform with notebook and pencil in hand looks an important person as he goes about the third class carriages and demands extra money from ignorant passengers so as to show good returns; that is some of them have two ways of doing this. With certain people whom he thinks will not complain—the illiterate villager—he pretends to write out something, extracts a certain amount of money, gives him no receipt and pockets the money. With another class whom he thinks is of a better class, he excesses him either from the last checking station or the station at which he examines the ticket, pocketing the difference himself. This, I say, Sir, is a very serious grievance of third class passengers and no doubt the money secured by this new class of railway servants has helped to swell the 60 odd lakhs of economy effected last year. The Railway Departments, I suppose, look upon such gain as well begotten and reflective of the economy effected in their administration.

Might I suggest, Sir, in connection with the request made by my friend Mr. Joshi to supply soft cushions and seats (not carpets) for third class passengers, that some of the money which has been used during the last year for increasing the pay of the higher officials of the Railways, i.e., about 15 lakhs increase in 1926-27, be utilised for that purpose? Looking at the

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figures supplied us, it seems as if the railway administration in the official branches has increased their salaries by 15 lakhs within one year. I think, Sir, this large amount of money might be used to give greater comforts to third class passengers.

The Honourable Sir George Rainy: I have listened with great interest, Mr. President, to the discussion we have had to-day upon this subject. It is likely, I think, to prove an exceedingly useful discussion, because practically all the speeches were made in a spirit of co-operation and of a desire to suggest practical methods of improving things for the third class passenger. My Honourable friend Mr. Joshi who moved the motion seemed to me to lay too much stress on the fact, or on his belief, that first and second class passengers were getting a great deal more proportionately for their money than the third class passenger was getting. I say he laid too much stress on that fact—if it be a fact—because the practical question is not whether proportionately the first and second class passengers are better off for the fares they pay, but whether it is not desirable to take steps to improve conditions for the third class passengers. If I could believe that it was possible to find a substantial sum of money for improvements in the third class by large increases in first and second class fares, that would be a matter fairly entitled to consideration. But what railway administrations have always to keep in view is that there is a limit beyond which you cannot raise first and second class fares because, if you do, your revenue at once falls off owing to the diminution in the number of passengers who travel in those classes. It is not possible, therefore, to work out a system of fares on any exact calculation of the amount which each class is paying and of the exact amount of accommodation which is provided in return for the fare paid. Nearly every speaker who has spoken to-day, Sir, admitted that in certain matters, such as water supply and overcrowding, there had been some improvement on the last three or four years. And the interpretation I put upon the speeches to which I have listened is this that, while the House generally is willing to admit that the Railway Board have been able to do something to ameliorate conditions, yet a great deal remains to be done, and that they are exceedingly anxious that we should not rest on our oars but should push on and endeavour to improve things still further. Quite obviously it would be most unreasonable if I were to complain of an attitude of that kind on the part of this House. It is perfectly right that attention should be called to this subject annually in the Railway Budget discussion, because the class of people who habitually travel third class have not a great many representatives in this House and it is therefore very important that their needs and their wants should be brought prominently to the notice of the Government of India and the Railway Board from time to time.

My Honourable friend Mr. Joshi made two alternative requests as to the action that might be taken. I am afraid I cannot promise him the roving committee which he was anxious to have, but I have already said—on Friday last, I think—that I was quite prepared to bring before the Advisory Council the question what are the steps which we can most usefully take to improve conditions for the third class passengers. From the discussion to which I have listened to-day it seems to me that a great many of the Honourable Members of this House think that the overcrowding

question is in some respects the most urgent, and I was particularly interested in what my Honourable friend Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas said as to the action taken in that matter on the Bombay, Baroda and Central India Railway by the Advisory Committee and the Agent acting together. I was not only interested to hear about it, but it seems to me that it supplies a model on which action can very usefully be taken on other Railways. Indeed it may be that, before the Central Advisory Council can come to any final decision about the matter, it might be useful for them to have before them the results of experiments made on the various railway systems together with the final opinion of the Local Advisory Committees. I think that might be a useful way of dealing with the question. However, that is a matter which we can discuss in the Central Advisory Council.

We have done a great deal in the last two years to discontinue the obviously objectionable practice by which a considerable number of third class passengers have sometimes to be conveyed in goods wagons. That is a practice we want to discontinue altogether, and I believe we are not very far from achieving that result. It is satisfactory, for instance, to note that at the last Kumb Mela at Hardwar it was possible to dispense with the use of goods wagons for the transport of passengers.

Another matter that was mentioned was the question of drinking water. It was admitted that there had been some improvement, but the speakers indicated that it was desirable to do a good deal more. That seems to me to be a matter on which, if the Central Advisory Council is advised, the Railways might concentrate and make an attempt to ensure that their arrangements for supplying drinking water were adequate. One Honourable Member, it may have been Lala Lajpat Rai but I am not sure, made the suggestion that we ought to make certain that the men who are employed to supply water on the platforms were not taken away by the station masters and used for other work. I entirely agree that we ought constantly to aim at that result, but that leads up to one of the difficulties which hamper us in providing for the comfort of the third class passenger. It is easy to issue orders up here and send round a circular to the Agents and for the Agents to pass them on to those below them, but it is not so easy to ensure that they are actually carried out in a matter of this kind. The same difficulty arises in connection with some of the other suggestions that were made. I do not mention difficulties as a reason why we should shrug our shoulders at headquarters and say we have done our part and there is no more to be done. Possibly we might get practical advice from non-officials on the Local and Central Advisory Councils as to the methods by which the difficulty of controlling a large subordinate staff scattered all over the country might perhaps be overcome.

Mr. B. Das: Have social welfare departments.

The Honourable Sir George Rainy: That would carry me far afield. Possibly a welfare officer might be used in that connection, although it seems to me that it would be a little out of the scope of his ordinary duties. However, I will not dwell on that.

As my Honourable friend Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh mentioned, Sir Charles Innes last year said that the suggestions made during the discussion would be considered, and action taken if possible and he wished to know what action had been taken as regards a suggestion of his about booking

[Sir George Rainy.]

facilities at stations. I find the position is this. In May 1926 a letter was addressed to the railway administrations directing their attention to the following points:

1. At certain stations, though first and second class passengers could get their tickets at any time, third class passengers could only get them at particular times;
2. The opening hours of booking offices should be notified by posters in the vernacular in front of the third class booking offices;
3. Station masters should be definitely instructed that it was their duty regularly to see that booking offices were opened at the right hours and that complaints were swiftly dealt with; and
4. At all pilgrim centres, and centres where there is a large crowd of passengers, there should be a number of booking offices not only at the station but inside the town, so that people could purchase tickets at their convenience throughout the day.

As regards these points, I think orders were definitely issued about the publication on posters as regards the hours at which booking offices were to be open.

Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh: That has not been complied with in many Railways.

The Honourable Sir George Rainy: I am indebted to the Honourable Member for drawing my attention to the point. There ought not to be any difficulty about that matter. As regards some other points I have mentioned, I think action was taken by some Railways, while others found some difficulty.

My friend Colonel Gidney drew special attention to the travelling ticket inspectors, and the temptations to which their position exposes them. I shall certainly be prepared to consider what he said, but the question is obviously a difficult one. On the one hand it is impossible for Railways to abandon the attempt to prevent people travelling without tickets, and unless there is some sort of travelling staff, it seems to me that it is going to be an uncommonly difficult matter to prevent people travelling without tickets. On the other hand, when the great body of the third class passengers are almost entirely illiterate, it is obvious that the travelling ticket inspector is in a position in which, if he is a dishonest man, he can resort to various practices which are highly objectionable. I am afraid that it is a matter in which we shall have to spend years of patient effort before we can bring things to a satisfactory state. (*An Honourable Member:* "What about his increments?") That again is a matter which I should be quite prepared to look into, but I regard that as a comparatively subordinate point, and I am anxious not to go too much into detail into questions of that kind in this discussion. But I can assure the House, as my predecessor Sir Charles Innes assured them last year, that particularly in this matter of the third class passengers, every suggestion made will be examined to see whether we can take action in the direction desired.

I do not think, Sir, it is necessary that I should detain the House longer. I should like once again to say that the Government of India fully

accept the tone of the discussion as indicating a strong desire on the part of a great many Members of this House that everything possible should be done to improve conditions for the third class passengers and we shall examine all the suggestions made from that point of view.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That the Demand under the head 'Working Expenses : Administration', be reduced by Rs. 1,000."

The motion was negatived.

Arrangements for Indian Refreshment Rooms and Restaurant Cars for Third Class Passengers.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: Sir, I move:

"That the Demand under the head 'Working Expenses : Administration', be reduced by Rs. 1,000."

The object of this motion is to draw the attention of the Railway Board to the fact that on most of the Railways there is no arrangement for supplying Indian food to passengers. At most of the large stations there are refreshment rooms supplying European food. But you will find that 95 per cent. of the passengers are Indians and if the convenience of the majority of passengers is to be looked to, the refreshment rooms at present supplying European food must be converted into refreshment rooms supplying Indian food. (*An Honourable Member:* "Why not mixed?") I do not mind if there is a mixed one, but I suggest that the Railway Board should insist that all the refreshment rooms should supply food prepared in Indian fashion, and the present contractors should either be changed or compelled to supply Indian and not European food. I do not mind if at some of the bigger stations arrangements are made for European food, but certainly at ordinary small towns if there are refreshment rooms they must supply Indian food.

Then there is another small suggestion which I want to make and that is about the restaurant cars and third class passengers. I have found several times that not only third class but intermediate class passengers are not allowed to take advantage of the restaurant cars. I want to know, Sir, whether the restaurant car is run only for the second class and first class passengers, and, if so, why. Why should a third class passenger, if he has the money to spend, be prevented from going into a restaurant car and taking food? I am not talking of a separate car at present. I am now talking of the right of the third class passenger to go to the restaurant car and take food. Secondly, I talk of the right of the intermediate class passenger to go to the restaurant car and take food. If such a passenger has not got the money, certainly he will not go, but if he has the money, he should be allowed to go. That is I think the case in Europe. I have seen even in England third class passengers taking food in the restaurant car, but, Sir, here in India the cars are reserved for first class and second class passengers. These classes of passengers do not even pay by their fares the price of what they enjoy. I was told that there would not be passengers if their fares were raised. Not only do they not pay their way but in addition to that they get a restaurant car for themselves. Is it fair that a restaurant car which can accommodate say 20 or 25 passengers or 50 passengers should be set aside in addition to the ordinary seating accommodation for passengers who do

[Mr. N. M. Joshi.]

not pay their way? I therefore insist, Sir, that any man, whether he is a third class passenger or intermediate class passenger should be allowed to go to the restaurant car and take his food there. Now, if that is not done, I shall make another alternative suggestion (Laughter), and that suggestion is this, that if any restaurant car is to be attached, it should be for third class passengers first. If, in addition, there is to be another restaurant car, let it be reserved for the second class and first class passenger, but there should certainly be arrangements for food for the largest number of people first; and then if you like you can make arrangements for a smaller number of people.

Sir, it is for this reason that I have moved my motion. I hope, Sir, the House will accept it.

The Revd. J. C. Chatterjee (Nominated: Indian Christians): Sir, I support Mr. Joshi in his request for more Indian refreshment rooms on the railway stations, and I also support him strongly in his claim that any one who wants to go into a restaurant car and can afford to pay for it, should be allowed to enter a restaurant car, whatever class of tickets he holds. But at the same time I cannot see how a third class restaurant car is within the limits of practical politics.

An Honourable Member: Why?

The Revd. J. C. Chatterjee: I will explain why it is not. The reason is that I do not know what the habits and customs of people, particularly from the part of the country from which Mr. Joshi comes are, but

Mr. N. M. Joshi: I come from Bombay which is a part of India and not from Europe.

The Revd. J. C. Chatterjee: I mean that so far as the parts round Delhi, North-West India and the Punjab are concerned, I cannot imagine a third class restaurant car ever getting any customers at all. In the first place

Rai Sahib Har Bilas Sarda: On the Jodhpur-Bikaner Railway there is a third class railway restaurant car, and it works well.

The Revd. J. C. Chatterjee: Restaurant cars for intermediate class passengers have been tried and I have been told that hardly any passengers come in.

Sir, it is well known that people in this part of the country have very strong caste prejudices. They are not going into a car to have food, where they are not sure how it has been cooked or by what people. In the second place, villagers, who make the real third class passengers, have never dreamt of going into a hotel or a restaurant at all. They take their food with them, and why should they not? For this is much cheaper. I cannot see how you will ever persuade these people to buy food from these cars where prices will have to be put up to a certain level. Then again it is very well known that the third class passenger does not, if he can possibly help it, want to move out of his carriage. He is mostly illiterate and he is always afraid that he will be left behind. I cannot for the life of me see—I am all for giving third class passengers as much comfort as possible,—

but I cannot really see how you will persuade the third class passenger to come and eat in a restaurant car. He will be frightened. Let us have as many refreshment rooms as possible for after all it is a question of supply and demand. If there is a real demand for Indian refreshment rooms, there will be capitalists always coming forward to provide those refreshment rooms. But at the present time I have found—I cannot swear to these statements—I have heard complaints from keepers of Indian refreshment rooms, on various stations on the North Western Railway, where I have been, that these refreshment rooms are very poorly patronised and that it is not a source of profit to run them. Some of them have had to be closed down because there were not enough customers. In the same way I maintain that the third class travelling public get what they want, in the way of food, from hawkers who are found in plenty on the large railway stations. Where the need really comes in, is this, that more supervision over these hawkers should be exercised and they should be made to supply better food. But to ask for a thing as a third class restaurant car in a country like India, where the habits of the people are so different, is, I think, bordering rather on the fantastic.

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons: Sir, Mr. Chatterjee has shown some of the difficulties with which the Railways are faced in dealing with this question. The chief difficulty is that we are not dealing with people who, all of them, like the same type of food; and even when the type of food is the same, the difficulty is that not everyone likes it cooked in the same way or by the same people. Where I am unable to agree with Mr. Joshi is when he says that any practical purpose would be served by throwing open all refreshment cars to intermediate and third class passengers. Mr. Chatterjee has mentioned some of the difficulties. I do not think Mr. Joshi is correct in suggesting that that is the practice in Europe or in my own country. I am not sure of that; I believe that he is not correct, and that there are separate third and first class refreshment cars. At the same time I do not want the House to think that we are not paying attention to this question, because I myself look upon improvement in the arrangements for feeding passengers on Indian Railways as a very good method of publicity, and as means of encouraging passengers to travel and therefore to the interests of the railway. Recently the Indian Railway Conference Association, which is the body largely concerned with these matters, appointed a Committee to go into the whole question of catering for, and the supply of, food and water to passengers, and I think it was in October 1927, that the report of that Committee came up before the Indian Railway Conference Association. At the same time we have been taking quite definite steps on various railways, largely, I admit, by way of experiment, to improve the catering arrangements. We have started Indian refreshment cars on several railways and there we come up immediately against the difficulty I have mentioned. Some of the Indian refreshment cars have been very successful and very popular; others not successful at all. There was one on the Bombay, Baroda and Central India Railway, that part of the country from which my Honourable friend Mr. Joshi comes, which had to be withdrawn very quickly, because it was not patronised. We are running buffet cars on the South Indian Railway and refreshment cars on the Madras and Southern Mahratta Railway. There are also some on the North Western Railway. This question of running refreshment cars for Indian passengers is, I think, still in the experimental stage, because we have not yet sufficient evidence that there is a large body of Indian passengers who

[Mr. A. A. L. Parsons.]

want such refreshment cars and are prepared to take in or from refreshment cars, food which they now obtain from the vendors on the station platforms.

There is one other point which I have not yet mentioned and that is the question of Indian refreshment rooms. We are increasing the number of refreshment rooms which supply Indian, as opposed to European food, and we shall continue to do so. It is a matter into which railway administrations are looking very carefully.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: May I, Sir, put a question to Mr. Parsons? He has asked what is the practical use in throwing open restaurant cars to third class passengers when they do not make use of them. May I, in return, ask him what is the practical difficulty in throwing open restaurant cars to third class passengers if there are some of them who can make use of them?

Mr. President: Order, order. The Honourable Member is making another speech.

The question is:

"That the Demand under the head 'Working Expenses : Administration' be reduced by Rs. 1,000."

The motion was negatived.

The Assembly then adjourned for Lunch till Three of the Clock.

The Assembly re-assembled after Lunch at Three of the Clock, Mr. President in the Chair.

Reduction of Railway Fares.

Mr. N. M. Joshi (Nominated : Labour Interests): Sir, I beg to move:

"That the Demand under the head 'Working Expenses : Administration' be reduced by Rs. 1,000."

The motion is intended to draw the attention of this House to the fact that the reduction of fares which have been made, or rather promised, by the Railway Board, is not quite adequate. Sir, the benefit of this reduction is given to those people who travel more than 50 miles, and the report of the Railway Board itself makes it quite clear that the average distance travelled by third class passengers is much less than 50 miles, so that the average third class passenger does not get the benefit of the reduction at all. It is only a very small section of the third class passengers that gets that benefit.

When we discuss the question of further reduction of fares it may be said that it is a question of ways and means. Fortunately the Railway Board cannot prove any justification for not reducing fares of all third class passengers even if we take into consideration the question of ways and means. The favourable monsoons and the exploitation of the third

class passenger, have now placed in the hands of the Railway Board 20 crores of rupees as a reserve fund.

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons: No.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: It may be 19, if it is not 20.

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons: No, 16.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: 16 and including the amount budgeted for I make it 20. We are considering the Budget; therefore, I include the figures which have been budgeted for in this Budget. So that the Railway Board will have at the end this year 20 crores of rupees as a reserve fund. (*An Honourable Member:* "What about the monsoon?") The monsoon is much better than we ourselves are. (Laughter.) The monsoon has been very favourable to all classes of people, and if the past monsoons were good, I think there is every reason why we should presume that the future ones will also be good. (Laughter.) I judge things by past events (*An Honourable Member:* "Really, always?") The Railway Board has got a reserve fund of 20 crores, and therefore, it would not have been difficult for them to take a bolder step than they have done. I feel that this House should give a positive direction to the Railway Board that they should during this year reduce the fare for third class passenger within the limit of 50 miles. I am quite sure that if this step is taken the Railway Board will not become insolvent. The passenger traffic will increase if the fares are reduced. You cannot now depend upon much increase in the passenger traffic simply because you are only benefiting a very small section, and if there is an increase on that small section the total increase will not be much. But if you give the benefit of the reduction of fares to the whole class of third class passengers, the traffic of third class passengers will increase; and even supposing that the traffic does not increase all of a sudden, I am quite sure if you reduce your rates the people will begin to travel more and at least in two or three years' time your losses will be wiped out. Moreover, we should not be afraid of any losses now because it is with that object that the reserve fund has been built up. What is the use of building up a reserve fund, if you are not going to follow a bolder policy? The motion which I have made will, I am quite sure, meet with the approval of the House.

Mr. M. K. Acharya (South Arcot *cum* Chingleput: Non-Muhammadian Rural): Sir, I wish to support the motion that has been so ably moved by my friend, Mr. Joshi, and I wish to appeal to the benches opposite to go farther than they have proposed to go in the matter of the reduction of third class fares. I know that with regard to the Railways managed by companies there is found even greater difficulty; and it is exactly with regard to those Railways that I wish to make a very strong appeal to the benches opposite. I am particularly concerned, Sir, representing my constituency, with the Railways of South India. And once again it is my very painful duty to point out to this House that the railway company which charges the highest rates of fares and makes the largest amount of profits is verily the company that provides the least amount of comforts and conveniences. I have been at some pains, Sir, to look into the figures; here are the rates of the South Indian Railway. They are 4½ and 4 pies per mile for the third class by mail trains. I do not see any other railway charging anything like 4½ and 4 pies; some railways charge 4 pies, but this is the only railway that charges 4½ pies—I am

[Mr. M. K. Acharya.]

referring to appendix 2 of this "Coaching Tariff of Indian Railways". I find the only railway that has got this great distinction of charging $4\frac{1}{2}$ pies per mile for the third class passenger is the South Indian Railway. The Madras and Southern Marhatta Railway charges 4 pies, $3\frac{1}{2}$ pies and 3 pies. But the South Indian Railway charges $4\frac{1}{2}$ pies and 4 pies by the mail trains and $3\frac{1}{2}$ and 3 pies by ordinary trains. I find that the Great Indian Peninsula Railway also has been charging 4 pies. Therefore, Sir, it is evident that it is very necessary to have some kind of uniformity if the passengers all over India—and practically the third class passengers all over India are drawn from the same class of people—are to get the benefit of the large earnings which the Indian Railways have made for many years and which are still being made, and from which they are able to make these large contributions to the general revenues. Now if the bulk of the people have to get the benefits of these large earnings, to which they themselves contribute, I very strongly urge that some kind of uniform relief must be given to the third class passenger all over India. And I repeat the point made by Mr. Joshi already that the railway third class passenger who travels up to 50 miles probably very often, needs it quite as much as the passenger who travels over long distances; and for this simple reason; it is not every day in his life that the ordinary villager takes it into his head to go to Benares or Rameshwaram from Lahore; or from Trichinopoly to Benares or Hardwar. He may do so probably once in his life time or once in the life time of many generations. Therefore this picture of the man from Howrah visiting Peshawar or the man from Peshawar visiting Rameshwaram at very greatly reduced rates is a fine picture, but it is not a thing that will be of any practical benefit to the ordinary man whether he lives in Bengal or in the Punjab. It is over short distances that the bulk of the people travel. Almost every man in my constituency—I can speak with some knowledge about my constituency—almost every one man out of ten in my part of the country every month travels 20 times over short distances from one place to another of over 40 to 50 miles, travels in other words altogether perhaps 1,000 miles in a month. If he travels short distances during 20 days at the rate of 50 miles each day, why should he be not given the benefit of what is called the larger distance rate? Therefore, Sir, I would urge upon the Railway Board that the distinction that has been made between fares for short distances and long distances should be done away with, because, after all, the men who travel over shorter distances are really the people who contribute far more revenues than those who travel over long distances. Some companies make a distinction in rates between places above 100 miles but below 150 miles, above 50 miles but below 100 miles, and so on. I really do not know how many different classifications the geniuses of these railwaymen are going to make! There are so many different classifications and so many different classes of rates! There is, for instance, in the Madras and Southern Marhatta Railway $3\frac{1}{2}$ pies, $3\frac{1}{2}$ pies and 3 pies per mile and so forth. Here in the Coaching Guide it is given that the $3\frac{1}{2}$ pies, $3\frac{1}{2}$ pies and 3 pies rates apply to distances over 100 miles, 150 miles and so on. Similarly on other Company-worked lines. Therefore, it is not enough that the proposed reductions are effected in the State Railways alone; similar reductions should be effected in the company-managed Railways as well. After all, whether a railway is managed by the South Indian

Railway, or by the Madras and Southern Mahratta Railway or by the Bengal Nagpur Railway, we take it that all the Railways as a whole belong to the Government. I must therefore appeal to the Railway Board to use all the power in their hands to force the hands of the company-managed administrations to do as much justice to their passengers as the State Railways do to theirs. Now, Sir, I read here what was stated by Sir George Rainy. He said:

"We also propose to discuss with Company managed Railways the desirability of effecting similar reductions in third class fares with a view to encouraging increased third class passenger traffic."

Certainly this is very fine language; "propose to discuss with Company-managed Railways", but it is so vague, so beautifully vague that probably nothing might come out of it during our lifetime! (Laughter.) That is the whole trouble. The proposal to discuss with Company-managed Railways will probably take some years before it takes shape; and after discussion it will take another few years to arrive at conclusions, and after these conclusions before effect is given to any definite proposal, probably some of us who are old, at least those who have long beards and must be called old, may not be in the land of the living to see the final reductions. Therefore, I wish to appeal to the Government that they must bring great pressure to bear upon the administrations concerned to reduce at once the third class fares and to give as much comfort as possible to the third class travelling public. I do not dispute the good intentions of the Government at all; but good intentions alone do not carry us far. For instance two or three years ago Sir Charles Innes said that every railway administration had been informed of the desire of this House that something must be done for the railway subordinate employees. But all the same, the House will see that men are still recruited in the Madras and Southern Mahratta Railway on the wonderful salary of Rs. 20, while on the South Indian Railway they are recruited on Rs. 20-8-0 a month. Sir Charles Innes said that the railway administrations had been informed of the desire of this House to do something for these men,—they had been informed of the wonderful discussions that have taken place in this House; and yet! the railway administrations, at least so far as the Madras and Southern Mahratta and the South Indian Railways are concerned, recruit men on Rs. 20-8-0 and Rs. 20-0-0 a month. Similarly, I fear when the Government of India simply intimate the desire of this House, or even send some instructions to reduce the fares of the third class passengers, somehow these instructions fall on deaf ears. I would like, Sir,—and I hope many on this side would like—to know how would Government propose to bring pressure on the Company-managed Railways to become reasonable? So far as some of these railways of South India to which I am referring are concerned, they make the largest profits and have the smallest expenditure by employing clerks on Rs. 25, guards on Rs. 60, and things of that kind. I do not want to go into details. But I repeat the lowest expenditure, the highest fares, the largest profits and the most meagre facilities are on the South Indian Railway. Most of it is metre gauge, not even standard gauge; trains there are always overcrowded and yield the largest amount of collections. Now how long is the Government of India going to rely simply on the plea that these Railways are Company-managed? I fear, Sir, if the same kind of squeezing out of the poor man's money does not exist on every Company-managed Railway. I do therefore appeal to the Railway Board

[Mr. M. K. Acharya.]

that they should bring strong pressure to bear upon the Company Administrations. I would suggest to Government if possible—we may not reach the item to-day—that they should simply cut out the surplus profits of these Company-managed Railways; and tell them that if they make unduly abnormal profits they will not get the surplus which may otherwise be falling due to them. I suppose that will be one way of bringing them to reason,—if they are told they will just get 40 lakhs or 50 lakhs, even if they make a crore of rupees as net profit—this may be the only way by which they can be brought to reason and made to realise that they cannot go on indulging in this system of taking away so very much from these poor third class passengers, and themselves taking all the profits.

Therefore, Sir, I strongly support the motion of my friend, Mr. Joshi, and I hope that for other railways, those who are more conversant with other railways and other parts of India will be able to bring other figures to the notice of the House which will demonstrate that the reduction proposed is equally necessary on other railways. I would like to have that all difference up to at least 150 miles should be done away with; and if possible all passengers should be charged between 2½ pies and 1½ pies as on the East Indian Railway. And I do appeal to the Commerce Member, whom I know to be very sympathetic by nature, I appeal to him to see that his sympathy becomes practical sympathy which will lead to practical results; so that before he lays down the robes of his office the poor third class passenger may have reason to congratulate him and hand his name down to his progeny as that of the good white man who reduced third class fares on all the railway lines of India.

Mr. Varahagiri Venkata Jogiah (Ganjam cum Vizagapatam: Non-Muhammadan Rural): Sir, the present third class rates are unquestionably high, regard being had to the conditions of this country. It is sometimes said that they are too low compared to the fares in the other countries. This is not a correct statement to make. Comparing what an Indian pays per mile with what people of other countries pay, I think the argument may look plausible enough, but that is not the right way to compare the rates. It looks all right if we merely look to the nominal value in the currencies of the countries. But let us take the buying power of the countries and see if the proportion paid by our country does not compare favourably with other countries? In this connection I may refer the House to what the Government Director wrote in the year 1829. He said:

“One result of the various fares which have been tried is this, that the smallest reduction at once increases, and the smallest addition diminishes the number of travellers. The rate of payment demanded from passengers should depend in the first instance upon the cost of transport, and secondly upon the power of the passenger to pay. The object should be to attract the largest numbers and yet leave a margin for profit between the cost of the conveyance and the amount received. We see that on some lines on which the lowest fares are in force, this margin is greater than where the highest fare is charged.”

He then cited the rates in England and in this country and stated that the rate in England of third class fares is 9.84 pies and that in this country 2.31 pies and he remarked as follows:

“The fares and rates charged in India, judged from the standpoint of the actual money payment made, are considerably lower than those charged in England; but

for a comparison to be of any value, consideration must be paid to the circumstances of the two countries. Taking the cost of construction and working in England and comparing them with the cost of construction and working in India, and, in every other respect, if like is compared with like, I think it will be found that the fares and rates in India should, broadly speaking, be only about one-sixth of those charged in England. Before, therefore, the fares and rates in India can be regarded relatively as equal to those in England the former would require to be lower than the rates now charged for passengers by about from 18 per cent. to 40 per cent."

Again, Sir, in 1890, Mr. Horace Bell, the Consulting Engineer to the Government of India on the East Indian Railway, discussed this question as to whether Indian Railways had generally reached the limit of fares at which the maximum net receipts may be received from the third class passengers and he advocated therein a fare of $1\frac{1}{2}$ pies per mile coupled with a rate of a pie per mile for women and children on all those railways which serve districts having a population averaging over 150 to the square mile.

Sir, you may remember that the Honourable the Commerce Member said in his budget speech:

"The new fares are actually lower than the pre-war fares, the difference at 900 miles being as much as 16 per cent."

But we find, Sir, that in the year 1894, the fares on certain Railways such as the East Coast Railway, the Madras Railway and the Kolar Gold Fields Railway was 1.5 pies per mile and 2 pies per mile on the Bengal Nagpur Railway, the Nizam's Guaranteed Railway, the South Indian Railway and some other Railways. This shows that the statement made by the Honourable the Commerce Member is not quite correct and that the present rates are more than the pre-war rates. It may be, Sir, within the memory of the Members of this House that in 1917 it was decided at a meeting of the Railway Board that on all the principal broad gauge Railways the third class fare should be advanced to the existing maximum and on others where the ordinary fare had been only $\frac{2}{3}$ of the maximum that it should be advanced by 25 per cent. The exigencies which necessitated the increase have disappeared long ago and yet we do not find the rates going back to those existing before the war.

For these reasons the rates of the third class passengers deserve to be considerably reduced and if they cannot be done for any reason, at least a flat rate may be given for all the distances without fixing any lower mileage for the reduced rates.

Mr. M. S. Aney: I wish only to bring one point to the notice of the Railway Board. In the speech which the Honourable the Commerce Member made he announced certain reduction of fares for third class passengers. He also promised that attempts are being made to persuade the companies to accept the same rates. I want to know whether the concessions he announced in his speech are applicable to company lines managed by the State at present. The Central Provinces railways are managed by the Great Indian Peninsula Railway at present. This Railway comprises a line from Elichpur to Yeotmal which is nearly 118 miles and a short branch line running from Pulgaon to Arvi which is nearly 20 or 25 miles. That railway is not a State Railway. For the purpose of management it was handed over to the Great Indian Peninsula Railway when the Great Indian Peninsula Railway was also a Company-managed Railway. The Great Indian Peninsula Railway has since then become a State Railway.

[Mr. M. S. Aney.]

This Railway has now thus come directly under the management of the State. I want to know whether the concessions announced by him as regards State lines, particularly on the Great Indian Peninsula Railway, will hold good as regards the company lines which are managed by the State at present, although they may not be owned by them. That is one point which I want to be explained by the Honourable the Commerce Member. There is another thing also. The fares on this small line are comparatively higher than the fares which obtain on the Great Indian Peninsula Railway. This whole line, as I have said, is only 118 miles, but it is divided into two sections. One section is 70 miles and the other is 48 miles and between these two sections there is the main line running through Berar and going to Nagpur. Thus the line is divided into two sections of which Murtijapur station is the centre. In the one section the distance is above 50 miles. In the other it terminates at the 48th mile. That is the difficulty. The rates prevailing on these lines are higher than the Great Indian Peninsula rates. That is a great injustice to the people who have to travel and I would like the Railway Board to consider their case. The injustice has been in existence unrequited for a number of years. There were only two classes on these lines, the upper and lower. Since last two years second class carriages are put on. But they are a mere mockery. The maximum upper class rate is 34 pies per mile and the lower, i.e., third class rate is 5½ pies. The minimum rates are different. But I think that the maximum rates have been in force and not the minimum. When there is an idea of making some concession to third class passengers I want the case of this railway to be considered independently and apart from any general scheme of creating a flat rate for third class passengers all over. I want the Honourable the Commerce Member to bear that in mind and find some solution to give relief to the third class passengers who have the misfortune to go to Bombay or Nagpur, via this line. Owing to the present condition of things, people find it better to go by motors. My friend Mr. Kunzru visited my place some time ago. But as he says in his interruption he avoided travelling by this line. Here is then a witness of an unimpeachable character also to corroborate my statement. Here is a specific case which I want the Railway Board to investigate.

As regards the point that the concessions cannot be introduced for a distance shorter than 50 miles, I see that the Honourable Member relies upon the apprehended reduction in income which is likely to take place for its sole justification. It has not been urged that the rates which obtain at present are such as the traffic can bear and are capable of being paid without any inconvenience by third class passengers. What is urged is that if a further reduction is to be made there is going to be a reduction in the total income which the Railway Board is not prepared to bear. But what I should like to ask the Railway Board is whether they have examined the figures of the average miles per third class passenger travelled per year during the past few years. If they do that they will find that the average capacity for travelling has consistently diminished. To-day it stands at 33.5 while 4 or 5 years ago it stood at 37. That shows that the prevalence of the present high rates for so many years has adversely affected the capacity for travel and we therefore find a regular reduction in the average mileage travelled by third class passengers per passenger per year. This is a point which they may well consider and if

they consider it properly they will find that there is a case not only for the reduction of fares over long distances but also for shorter distances; and whatever may be the loss apprehended I believe and almost feel certain that it will be made up by the increase in traffic which the reduced rates and better prospective conditions of commerce will bring in. That is a point which I wish the Railway Board to investigate further and I think before long they will be in a position to make concessions for third class passengers even for short distances.

Mr. H. G. Cocks (Bombay. European): Sir, I am very anxious to be sympathetic to-day and not to incur the wrath of my friends from Bombay, who at the moment possibly are not inclined to be stirred to wrath. (Laughter.) (The Members in question appeared to be sleeping.) Sir, I have very considerable sympathy with this motion and I am quite prepared to go in with Mr. Joshi against the Government. I sympathise with the person who habitually travels distances of from 30 to 40 miles and I have not been able to find any good reasons why fares have not been reduced for distances below 50 miles. I can quite understand why they should not be reduced for quite short distances covering, say, suburban areas. But the man who goes into a town 30 or 40 miles away, and perhaps does that journey several times a month, is undoubtedly handicapped as against the man who does perhaps one or two long distance journeys a year. I also of course have considerable sympathy for the many millions who never travel at all. I said on the general discussion of the Budget that I think it is an open question whether the whole community would not be better served by cutting out these reductions and making reductions on freight, on kerosene oil and other similar commodities, looking at the question from the broad point of view of benefiting the community as a whole. But naturally when there is a big surplus to be dealt with the third class passenger must in the fitness of things receive favourable consideration. I have not been able to discover to what extent people who make journeys during the year travel 50 miles and to what extent they travel more, whether it is half and half or whether it is 75 per cent. one way and 25 per cent. the other, and I should be interested to know if the Railway Board have any statistics of that nature to give us; it may be that the Railway Board have a wonderful office and it is quite possible that in some pigeon-hole these records may be available. In any case I hope the Railway Board in the course of the coming year, assuming Mr. Joshi and I do not win in our lobby, will look into this question with a view to seeing whether further reductions—which we all expect next year of course—could not be made by reducing the distance to, say, 20 miles.

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons (Financial Commissioner, Railways): Sir, I will first deal with a couple of points raised by Mr. Aney. I am afraid I cannot give Mr. Aney an answer about the Elichpur-Yeotmal Railway. I anticipate that the question whether the reductions we are making on the Great Indian Peninsula Railway will apply to that railway is a matter of the contract with the Company. I will have that point however looked up and also the second point which he mentioned. Mr. Aney then pointed out, and I think it is very relevant to this discussion, that in recent years the average mileage travelled by the third class passenger has shown a tendency to drop. I agree, and it is exactly for that reason that it is desirable that we should attempt to stimulate long-distance traffic, and it is exactly for that reason that the Railway Board

[Mr. A. A. L. Parsons.]

when they had to decide what should be done for third class passengers this year, recommended to the Government of India that our energies should be chiefly directed to the long-distance passenger. There are, I think, good grounds both from the point of view of the Railways and from the point of view of the individual passenger for such a course; for we must recognize that any reductions we could make in the fares for shorter distance journeys, say for journeys up to 50 miles, would only give a small benefit to the individual passenger of an anna or two, and at the same time owing to the large number of passengers, suburban and otherwise, who do travel these short distances would be extremely costly to railway revenues. In the result, the effect of making a reduction over a short distance of 30 or 40 or 50 miles is to give small benefit to the individual passenger and consequently not to stimulate the growth of traffic to any great extent; and at the same time to hit railway revenues very hard and to make it unlikely that those revenues will recover in as short a time as by making reductions for long-distance traffic. I have not got exact figures to give to the House, but we did examine the question whether we should attempt to make a reduction of a half a pie in the first 50 miles zone on the Great Indian Peninsula Railway. I was told that the cost on that railway alone would be in the neighbourhood of 50 lakhs. Mr. Joshi would argue against me here that as we are budgeting for a surplus of 3½ crores, we could have afforded that 50 lakhs in addition to the 122 lakhs. My answer to him is that we cannot declare dividends on hopes.

The last point I should like to deal with is the one which I think my Honourable friend, Mr. Acharya, raised, the position with regard to Company-managed Railways and more particularly in regard to the South Indian and the Madras and Southern Mahratta Railways. I can give him one grain of hope. The discussion is not going to start two or three or four years hence; it will start next month. More than that, I do not think I can say at the moment because anything now said would possibly prejudice the results of the discussion.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That the Demand under the head 'Working Expenses: Administration' be reduced by Rs. 1,000."

The Assembly divided:

AYES—34.

Abdullah Haji Kasim, Khan Bahadur Haji.

Acharya, Mr. M. K.

Aney, Mr. M. S.

Ayyangar, Mr. K. V. Rangaswami.

Ayyangar, Mr. M. S. Sesha.

Belvi, Mr. D. V.

Chetty, Mr. R. K. Shanmukham.

Cocke, Mr. H. G.

Dutt, Mr. Amar Nath.

Dutta, Mr. Srish Chandra.

Gour, Sir Hari Singh.

Gulab Singh, Sardar.

Iswar Saran, Munshi.

Iyengar, Mr. S. Srinivasa.

Jayakar, Mr. M. R.

Jogiah, Mr. Varahagiri Venkata.

Joshi, Mr. N. M.

Kelkar, Mr. N. C.

Kidwai, Mr. Rafi Ahmad.

Kunsru, Pandit Hirday Nath.

Lahiri Chaudhury, Mr. Dharendra Kanta.

Lajpat Rai, Lala.

Malaviya, Pandit Madan Mohan.

Mehta, Mr. Jannadas M.

Moonje, Dr. B. S.

Nehru, Pandit Motilal.

Neogy, Mr. K. C.

Purshotamdas Thakurdas, Sir.

Rao, Mr. G. Sarvotham.

Sarda, Rai Sahib Harbilas.

Sarfaraz Hussain Khan, Khaw Bahadur.

Singh, Mr. Gaya Prasad.

Sinha, Mr. R. P.

Tok Kyi, U.

NOES—41.

Abdul Aziz, Khan Bahadur Mian.
 Abdul Qaiyum, Nawab Sir Sahibzada.
 Ahmad, Khan Bahadur Nasir-ud-din.
 Alexander, Mr. William.
 Allison, Mr. F. W.
 Anwar-ul-Azim, Mr.
 Ashrafuddin Ahmad, Khan Bahadur
 Nawabzada Sayid.
 Ayangar, Mr. V. K. Aravamudha.
 Bajpai, Mr. G. S.
 Blackett, The Honourable Sir Basil.
 Bray, Sir Denys.
 Chatterjee, The Revd. J. C.
 Chatterji, Rai Bahadur B. M.
 Coatman, Mr. J.
 Cosgrave, Mr. W. A.
 Couper, Mr. T.
 Courtenay, Mr. R. H.
 Orerar, The Honourable Mr. J.
 Dalal, Sardar Sir Bomanji.
 Gidney, Lieut.-Colonel H. A. J.
 Graham, Mr. L.

Irwin, Mr. C. J.
 Jowahir Singh, Sardar Bahadur
 Sardar.
 Kabul Singh Bahadur, Captain.
 Keane, Mr. M.
 Lamb, Mr. W. S.
 Lindsay, Sir Darcy.
 Mitra, The Honourable Sir Bhupendra
 Nath.
 Mukherjee, Mr. S. C.
 Parsons, Mr. A. A. L.
 Rainy, The Honourable Sir George.
 Rajah, Rao Bahadur M. C.
 Rao, Mr. V. Pandurang.
 Roy, Mr. S. N.
 Sams, Mr. H. A.
 Shamaldhari Lall, Mr.
 Shillidy, Mr. J. A.
 Sykes, Mr. E. F.
 Taylor, Mr. E. Gawan.
 Yamin Khan, Mr. Muhammad.
 Zulfiqar Ali Khan, Nawab Sir.

The motion was negatived.

Advisory Councils.

Mr. K. O. Neogy: I beg to move:

"That the Demand under the head 'Working Expenses: Administration' be reduced by Rs. 100."

The House will remember that we had a very full debate on the question of the Advisory Councils, central as well as local, last year about this time. It is not my intention to repeat those arguments on the present occasion, but I will just remind the House that Sir Charles Innes on that occasions gave an undertaking that he would examine all the points that had emerged out of the debate and take whatever action was necessary. I wish to know what action has been taken on the various points with which we dealt with on the last occasion.

Rai Sahib Harbilas Sarda (Ajmer-Merwara: General): Sir, I wish to say just a word on this point. The Bombay, Baroda and Central India Railway has two systems, the broad gauge system and the metre gauge system. There is a Local Advisory Committee at Bombay for the broad gauge system but there is no Local Advisory Committee for the metre gauge system. The metre gauge system covers a very large tract of land. It used to be called in the old days the Rajputana Malwa Railway. Its administration has now been handed over to the Bombay, Baroda and Central India Railway, and, as there is no Local Advisory Committee for this metre gauge system, I would request Government to ask the Bombay, Baroda and Central India Railway authorities to have a Local Advisory Committee at Ajmer for the metre gauge system also, as it is very useful.

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons: Sir, we did go into the various points which were raised in the discussion last year. I have here a fairly long list of them. I think they are tabulated under 9 heads. I am not sure

[Mr. A. A. L. Parsons.]

whether the House at this late stage is in a mood to listen to each particular point which was raised. (*Several Honourable Members*: "Do not read them".) I am quite prepared to show the list to Mr. Neogy and I think that would meet the wishes of the House.

Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas: Why not place the statement on the table?

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons: I do not know whether it was to the Bombay, Baroda and Central India Railway that Mr. Harbilas Sarda was referring, when he said that there was not a Local Advisory Council for the metre gauge section.

Rai Sahib Harbilas Sarda: Yes.

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons: At the present moment, I am afraid, I do not know how the position stands. I will look into it. But when I say I will look into it, the Honourable Member must not understand that I mean necessarily that we shall make a Local Advisory Council for that section; it does not follow because you have two sections that a Local Advisory Council is required for both the metre and the broad gauge sections.

Rai Sahib Harbilas Sarda: The Local Advisory Council I think only concerns itself with the broad gauge.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: Will the Honourable Member kindly place this statement in the Library?

Mr. President: The question is:

"That the Demand under the head 'Working Expenses : Administration' be reduced by Rs. 100."

The motion was negatived.

Mr. President: Amendments No. 56 and 57 have already been covered.

No. 58, Maulvi Muhammad Yakub. (The Honourable Member was absent and did not move his amendment.)

Mr. President: No. 59. Mr. Joshi.

Third and Intermediate Class Carriages for the Great Indian Peninsula Railway Punjab Mail.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: I beg to move:

"That the Demand under the head 'Working Expenses : Administration' be reduced by Rs. 100."

The object of this motion is to suggest to the Railway Administration that at least one third class carriage should be attached to the Great Indian Peninsula Punjab Mail. Sir, there are hardly any trains on which there are no intermediate and third class carriages. The Punjab Mail is a very important train, but it is all reserved for first and second class passengers. Somebody here, on behalf of the Railway Board, said that there is a third class Express train. There may be a third class

Express train, but there is no harm in putting a carriage on the Punjab Mail also. The Express leaves Bombay in the evening at 9-30. The Mail leaves in the afternoon. Some people would like to travel during the day, and others at night. That depends upon the convenience of the traveller. There is no special reason why there should be no convenience for third class passengers to travel by this Mail. I hope that Government will accept my suggestion.

Rai Sahib Harbilas Sarda: In this connection I would also like to bring to the notice of Government that on this metre gauge railway managed by the Bombay, Baroda and Central India Railway there is no intermediate class. There used to be an intermediate class formerly, but for some years it has been stopped and people are very anxious that there should be an intermediate class on the metre gauge. There is an intermediate class on the broad gauge of the Bombay, Baroda and Central India Railway and also on the East Indian Railway, but there is no intermediate class on the metre gauge of the Bombay, Baroda and Central India Railway.

Mr. President: We are talking of the Great Indian Peninsula and not of the Bombay, Baroda and Central India Railway.

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons: I am glad, Sir, that I have not to deal with more than one railway and one train at once. My answer to Mr. Joshi is that he has selected a train, that is to say, the Punjab Mail, which is ordinarily well filled with first and second class passengers, and enables us to take quite a lot of money from those classes which he so much dislikes. So far as third class passengers are concerned, there is one express train and I understand that the Agent of the Great Indian Peninsula Railway is at present considering putting on another express train for their benefit.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That the Demand under the head 'Working Expenses : Administration' be reduced by Rs. 100."

The motion was negatived.

Subordinates officiating as Officials.

Lieut.-Colonel H. A. J. Gidney: Sir, am I right in thinking that the motion I am taking up now is No. 14, subordinates officiating as officials?

Mr. President: Yes.

Lieut.-Colonel H. A. J. Gidney: I move:

"That the Demand under the head 'Working Expenses : Administration' be reduced by Rs. 100."

Sir, I have very few remarks to make except to bring this to the notice of the Honourable Member. When we discussed this matter in connection with the local traffic service, I incidentally made some remarks in connection with officiating appointments. I tried to show to the House that the Indian Railways were being administered on an extraordinary system—effective no doubt from an economical point of view, but rather unfair, if I may use a harsh word, from the employee's point of view. I quoted figures from the books supplied to us which showed that between 50 and 60 per cent. of the official appointments in Indian Railways are filled

[Lieut.-Colonel H. A. J. Gidney.]

to-day by promoted subordinates—I refer chiefly to the Transportation and Engineering Departments—and that these officiating officials, some of whom have been officiating for years, were doing the duties of imported officials (with equal responsibilities and equal status but without any money to keep it up) at about one-third of their pay. I have already brought this to the notice of the Honourable Member and I am sure it is only necessary for me to repeat it on the floor of this House in connection with this motion to convince him that some remedy is urgently necessary. In connection with this, I may point out to the House that whereas on the one hand we have a railway administration more than half of whose official appointments are filled by promoted subordinates on a cheap scale of salaries but doing equally good work, we have, on the other hand, the rather extraordinary fact of 50 per cent. of higher officials of the railways—I mean those who are imported from England and who hold appointments drawing salaries three and four times more than the promoted subordinates. It is rather interesting information that I have extracted from the budget reports—I speak subject to correction—but it may interest the House to know that while the official department in the Bengal Nagpur Railway costs 29 lakhs in 1925-26, in 1927-28 there is a reduction of 2 lakhs. On the Bombay, Baroda and Central India Railway for the same period there was an increase of 3 lakhs. On the Eastern Bengal Railway there was an increase of 2 lakhs last year. On the East Indian Railway which is the biggest offender in this matter, there has been an increase of 5 lakhs. On the Great Indian Peninsula Railway there has been a decrease of 3 lakhs. The North Western Railway has an increase of 3 lakhs and the Madras and Southern Mahratta Railway of Rs. 37,000. The South Indian Railway has increased by 2 lakhs; and so one is tempted to ask whether this total increase of 15 lakhs for the salaries of officials employed on all the Railways in India in their higher administration is obtained from the cheaper paid promoted subordinates. In other words, do the poorer paid subordinate officials maintain the higher paid imported official? If that is so, I think it exposes a condition of things which really needs very sifting and careful inquiry. Indeed I think it is time that the Railways realised and adequately appraised the duties performed by these worthy promoted subordinates and the wonderful service that they have rendered to the Railways in India; men who certainly deserve more than the small wages given to them for doing as they do the same duties, carrying the same responsibilities; and what is expected of them, that they should live in the same style and keep up the same status as do the officials. I bring this matter to the serious notice of the Honourable Member for an early rectification.

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons (Financial Commissioner, Railways): Sir, I am very doubtful whether the numerous statistics my friend Colonel Gidney has given us have any relevance to the particular motion he has moved. I will not, and indeed I could not, go into them with him now. I will look into this matter of subordinates officiating as officials, as I have already undertaken to do on some earlier motion.

Mr. President: The question is

Lieut.-Colonel H. A. J. Gidney: Sir, in view of the reply given by the Honourable Member in charge of Railways, I ask your permission to withdraw the motion.

The motion was, by leave of the Assembly, withdrawn.

Covenanted Labour in State and Company-managed Railways.

Lieut.-Colonel H. A. J. Gidney: Sir, I beg to move the motion that stands in my name:

"That the Demand under the head 'Working Expenses : Administration' be reduced by Rs. 100."

Sir, this House clamours rather loudly for Indianization, but the Anglo-Indian community is not included in that cry and so occupies a position between the devil and the deep sea. I know that to certain Members Indianisation refers only to pure blooded Indian Indians, their desire being to exclude Anglo-Indians from any Indianisation scheme. Therefore, Sir, the employment of Anglo-Indians on Railways is anathema to them. By this motion I desire to bring to the notice of the Honourable Member the very marked preference that is given in the railway workshops to covenanted labour from England. In the workshops at Ajmer and Jamalpur it is not usual to find an Anglo-Indian or Indian as foreman in charge of the departments, and these workshops have been in existence for many years, and have for years brought out instructors from England to instruct mechanics in this country. In this connection, Sir, I recently had an example of the extent to which this covenanted labour can be operated. It happened last year. I brought to the notice of the Agent, Eastern Bengal Railway, that he had indented from England for one foreman and four chargemen fitters. A chargeman fitter is not a very important man. There are a large number of Anglo-Indian chargemen fitters in this country in the various railway workshops who carry out their duties with as much efficiency as the men imported from abroad. I wrote to the Agent of the Railway asking what were his reasons for importing such men from England, and why he could not obtain them from any of the State Railways in India. He wrote back and said that it was a question of the best man getting the job and that he could not find anybody suitable in his workshops. I then brought this matter to the notice of the Railway Board, from whom I got a letter to the effect that:

"The Agent has already informed you that appointments in that grade are made irrespective of nationality or creed and that he is unable to earmark any post for any member of a particular community."

So far so good. Continuing further, the Railway Board said:

"The Government of India entirely agree with the reply the Agent has given. As regards (b) I am to state that an indent is sent to England only after it is ascertained that a suitable candidate is not available in India."

Now, Sir, this means one of two things—either the thousands of mechanics who are being yearly trained in the four State Railway workshops are fools and are incapable of receiving any mechanical instructions or that the instructors who come out from England to give instruction in the workshops are incapable of instructing and are fools. But when an Agent, in a serious moment, writes in effect to say that in fifty years and more he can not produce a single capable chargeman fitter in his workshops and when the Railway Board agrees with the Agent's paltry excuse, it is, to say the least, the strongest condemnation of any railway administration. I consider, Sir, it is time that the State Railways stopped the recruitment at such high wages of inefficient instructors in these workshops. It is absolute bunkum for the Railway Board or any Agent to tell one that in the whole of India they have not got four capable Anglo-Indian or Indian chargemen fitters and therefore they must recruit such fitters from England at almost

[Lieut.-Colonel H. A. J. Gidney.]

twice the rate of pay given to Anglo-Indians besides paying for their passages to India and back and furlough expenses, etc. I say, Sir, it is the biggest insult to the men who are trained in State Railway workshops and to the country as a whole. I am aware, Sir, that this importation of covenanted labour is decreasing but there are certain Railways that still continue to import this kind of labour from England. In fact on the metre gauge section of the Bombay, Baroda and Central India Railway there are to be found more covenanted drivers than in all the other Indian Railways put together.

Now, Sir, I believe all Railways including Company-managed Railways have subscribed to the policy of Indianization. If that is so, it is a violation of their promise not to adhere to it and the Railway Board have every right to question this breach of promise. Can you imagine a railway fireman in this country who has not done any driving work, being employed as a driver and yet this, I understand, is being done with ordinary firemen who draw a few pounds a month in England, and who are brought out to this country as drivers and because they are covenanted from England they get higher rates of pay and allowances including special furlough and leave, besides free passages, notwithstanding the fact that they do just the same sort of work as any Anglo-Indian and in addition are unfit to stand the climate of this country? Sir, I think the time has come when the Railway Board should ask the various Agents to stop this importation of labour from England for such small appointments, and to avail themselves of local talent. I can readily understand that there are certain appointments, such as technical and highly skilled appointments, which for the present must be recruited abroad, and one is prepared to concede that these skilled labourers who are familiar with the latest machinery, are still necessary for our railway workshops, but for a Railway Board and an Agent to sit down and waste a sheet of paper in writing that they cannot find capable chargemen fitters in India is an insult to one's intelligence and discreditably reflects on their own administration. Sir, I therefore ask the Railway Member if he will be so kind as to stop this unnecessary and expensive recruitment from England.

Rai Sahib Harbilas Sarda (Ajmer-Merwara: General): Sir I rise to support the motion moved by my Honourable friend Colonel Gidney. The metre gauge system of the Bombay, Baroda and Central India Railway suffers from this importation of covenanted labour from England. In the large workshops at Ajmer there are about 39 foremen but not one of them is a Hindu or a Mussalman. There are two or three Anglo-Indians who have recently been appointed. Below these foremen are, assistant foremen, but not one of them is an Indian. Besides these foremen and assistant foremen there are chargemen, and there are two classes of them, head chargemen and ordinary chargemen. There is not one Indian head chargeman. There are some Anglo-Indians but even they are kept in the back ground. Whenever the appointment of a foreman falls vacant, as a rule a covenanted man is brought out from England or outside and many of these people are not properly trained and qualified to do the work which they are called upon to do in Ajmer. These assistant foremen and these head chargemen have sometimes to teach these new-comers the work which they are appointed to do. In these circumstances it is very unfair that those who have worked as chargemen or assistant foremen, and officiated as foremen, sometimes for a little while, should be superseded by people from England who have not

always been trained to do the work which they are called upon to do. And I wish to draw the attention of the Government to this anomaly and ask that in future arrangements should be made that those who have done the work as chargemen and assistant foremen and those Anglo-Indians, who have officiated for some time with credit and proved their efficiency, should not be superseded by people who are imported from England.

The Honourable Sir George Rainy: It appears, Sir, that the Railway Board got home heavily with the letter which has roused my friend Colonel Gidney to a certain display of indignation. Now, as regards this question of the importation of covenanted labour, there is no difference about the principle. The principle is that we do not bring labour from England unless a suitable candidate is not forthcoming in India. My Honourable friend's complaint is that in the particular case to which he drew attention, the policy had not been carried out, and his plea was that chargemen fitters were as common as blackberries and could be picked up on every side. (*Colonel H. A. J. Gidney:* "No, no.") That, I understood, was his line. I do not think the House can with advantage try to decide on its merits whether my Honourable friend Colonel Gidney is right on this particular occasion or whether the Agent of the Eastern Bengal Railway was right. But I should like to draw attention to one particular point which sometimes affects the matter, namely, that from time to time it is necessary to bring out from England some one with up-to-date knowledge of work of a particular kind, because improvements are effected in the European workshops, and unless a certain number of people with up-to-date knowledge are imported, the Indian workshops may fail to keep abreast of modern methods. That is a point that sometimes has to be taken into account when the question has to be decided whether an appointment should be filled in India or whether an officer must be imported from England. Whether it was so in this particular case I am not able to say.

Another matter which was referred to by both the speakers in the discussion was, as I understood it, the excessive importation of covenanted labour on the metre gauge section of the Bombay, Baroda and Central India Railway. That Railway is a Company-managed Railway and under our contract with the Company the appointment of the subordinate staff naturally rests with them.

I do not think, Mr. President I need add anything further, but I can promise my Honourable friend that if any instance on State-managed Railways comes to the notice of the Railway Board in which it seems to them that the Agent desires to import covenanted labour unnecessarily they will certainly take notice of it.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That the Demand under the head 'Working Expenses : Administration' be reduced by Rs. 100."

The motion was negatived.

Transfer of District Medical Officers from Company-managed Railways to State Railways.

Lieut.-Colonel H. A. J. Gidney: Sir, the motion that stands in my name reads thus:

"That the Demand under the head 'Working Expenses : Administration' be reduced by Rs. 100."

[Lieut.-Colonel H. A. J. Gidney.]

Sir, in this connection I have a very few remarks to make. My one desire is to point out to the Honourable Member the many pitfalls which his medical administration will encounter unless he is very careful at the outset. This House has got accustomed to hearing of a report that was made and submitted for approval. I refer to the Needham Report on medical administration on State Railways. We are still in the dark as to the nature of this report although one hears now and then that this report is about to operate or preparations are being made for it to operate, and other such rumours. The result is, Sir, that great uncertainty and uneasiness prevails among medical men in State Railways. For instance, I do not know whether the Honourable Member is aware that a certain senior medical officer, Dr. Clayton of the Bombay, Baroda and Central India Railway, has been transferred,—I speak subject to correction—to the North Western Railway, i.e., from a Company-managed to a State Railway. I believe this officer is the right hand of the Chief Medical Officer of the North Western Railway, and here again I speak subject to correction. I would like to know whether that officer is permanently attached to that Railway. It does not seem quite right to bring into a State Railway a senior doctor from a Company-managed Railway with such length of service and put him above those medical officers who have served that railway continuously and faithfully though not with so many years of service. It is a point I should like to bring to the notice of the Honourable Member in charge and to obtain from him either an acceptance or a denial of my statement. But whatever it be, Sir, there are certain points in connection with the medical administration in State Railways which I think require adjustment. There is no doubt that within a few years' time you will have more Railways under State control and I think it is high time that the medical service attached to the various State Railways were placed in one cadre and dealt with as a service and not as isolated and independent units as is being done to-day. Such a system would give the men some guarantee of promotion according to their length of service and security of service. The insecurity of to-day, the result of the uncertainty of the Needham Report, is creating a good deal of dissatisfaction among the medical officers. Another point which I should like to bring to the favourable consideration of Sir George Rainy is this. I think the time has come when, in response to the cry of Indianisation, most of the medical appointments in State Railways should be recruited from and filled in this country. Indenting from England should be the exception rather than the rule. State Railways are certainly getting very rapidly Indianised, too rapidly Indianised, if Sir George Rainy will not mind my saying so. In his speech the Honourable Member in charge seemed very pleased when he said that he had already effected 70 per cent. Indianisation in the superior railway services, i.e., within 5 or 6 years, though the Lee Commission recommended 75 per cent. being reached within about 25 years. Why this undue speed and with your engineering staff? If this be your policy then the Railways should increasingly indent on this country for their medical officers. In this connection it is only natural that I should plead the cause of my community the same as other Honourable Members plead the cause of their communities or constituencies. I would here offer a special plea for those members of the Indian Medical Department who have gone to England and obtained English qualifications and are to-day utilised as compounders and clerks in British military hospitals. I appeal to the Railway

Board to have one medical cadre for all State Railways and to see that this inclusion in State Railways of medical officers from Company-managed railways is not encouraged or entertained and that such officers do not interfere with the advancement and promotion of medical officers who have been in the permanent employ of State Railways.

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons: Sir, I am not sure that I follow the connection between a discussion on the medical organisation of State-managed Railways, Indianisation and so on, and the fact that one individual officer, a gentleman called, I think, Dr. Clayton, has for a period of one year been transferred from the Bombay, Baroda and Central India Railway to the North Western Railway. But I suppose at this hour of the evening we may just as well talk about that as anything else and I propose to make a few remarks. On the question of Indianisation, the matter is of course perfectly clear. If officers are taken into our superior medical services, their recruitment is governed by the 75:25 per cent. proportion between Indians and Europeans. We cannot accept the suggestion that we should not go to a Company-managed Railway for a good officer if we can get one there. Nor can we accept the suggestion that there should be guaranteed promotion—I think that is the phrase used by my Honourable friend—according to length of service. Promotion must in the Medical Department as in all other departments of Railways depend upon the merits and qualifications of the officers concerned. It must go by merit. And I must repeat that I cannot give the undertaking which I understand Colonel Gidney wants that we shall not transfer an officer of a Company-managed Railway to a State-managed Railway if he is a suitable man and the Board of Directors of the Company-managed Railway are prepared to spare him to us.

Mr. President: The question is:

“That the Demand under the head ‘Working Expenses : Administration’ be reduced by Rs. 100.”

The motion was negatived.

Attitude towards the Coal Trade.

Mr. K. O. Neogy: Sir, I beg to move.

“That the Demand under the head ‘Working Expenses : Administration’ be reduced by Rs. 100.”

It is my intention by this motion to draw the attention of the House to the unsympathetic attitude of the Railway Department to the coal trade. I had occasion to refer to this question in the general budget discussion, but unfortunately there was no opportunity for the Honourable Member in charge to reply. The Railways of India have been taking full advantage of the desperate condition of a primary industry of this country. In his capacity as the Commerce Member the Honourable Sir George Rainy is expected to lament the present unfavourable position of the trade, but in his capacity of Railway Member he is rejoicing over the lower coal prices. In his budget speech the Honourable Member did not make a reference to the fact that the lower coal bill was to a very large extent due to the lower coal prices. The diplomat in the Honourable Member perhaps dissuaded him from making reference to that fact; but the honest railway man in the other House frankly confessed that a good deal of the lower coal bill was due to the fact that the coal prices had gone down lower and lower.

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons: It was in the Memorandum.

Mr. K. O. Neogy: The Memorandum is not certainly the speech of the Honourable Member in charge. The Memorandum is signed, if I am not mistaken, by the Honourable the Financial Commissioner and also by the Chief Commissioner of Railways, and I say that the honest railway men have already confessed in the other House

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons: And also in this House.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: Well, that was not a statement made in this House at all. Sir, the Railway Department have been very unfavourable to the coal trade, particularly by their policy in regard to the railway collieries. I am not going to enter into any great details about the railway collieries. There is very little time for it, but I would remind the Honourable Member that whenever we have raised this question as to how far the railway collieries have proved economical, we have been met with the reply that it is always cheaper to have coal from the railway-owned collieries than from the market. But the Dickinson Committee for the first time reveals the fact that there are no commercial accounts kept in the railway collieries. They make certain specific recommendations for keeping proper commercial accounts in the railway collieries. We also have been repeating our demand that the railway collieries should keep commercial accounts; and until and unless commercial accounts are kept the Government can never be in a position to say whether it is cheaper to buy coal in the open market or to get their supplies of coal from the railway-owned collieries.

The next point to which I come is the railway rates policy with regard to coal. The trade has been asking for a general reduction of rates, and the Honourable Member's predecessor was kind enough to grant a 10 per cent. reduction in 1926. I should like to know whether the effect of that reduction has not been to stimulate traffic, and whether it is not a fact that that reduction has been more than justified by the increased returns which the railways have got. (*An Honourable Member:* "And exports".) It has encouraged exports too. And now, Sir, if that policy has been justified by experience, may I know why it is that the Railway Department is not considering further reductions which might stimulate further traffic. There was one more question apart from the general question of reduction of coal freights, which engaged the attention of the Honourable Member in charge since June last, and that was the question of a specific reduction in the case of domestic coal. A definite scheme was put forward by the trade for the popularising of coal as a domestic fuel, and the Honourable Member in charge assured the trade at one time that he would go into this question along with the question of general reduction of coal freights. Apart from the question of general reduction I would like to know whether the Railway Department is going to consider the question of coke freight especially with a view to encourage the popularization of soft coke as domestic fuel. I had to complain about the rather unsympathetic manner in which the Department has been treating the trade. Had we a national system of government and a truly nationalized system of railways, certainly the Department could not have taken up such an attitude of utter indifference. I very much hope that in view of the prosperous Budget the Honourable Member would consider once again the question of the reduction of the coal freights.

Sir Walter Willson (Associated Chambers of Commerce: Nominated Non-Official): Sir, I beg to support Mr. Neogy in the remarks which he has made. I think he has done very well to take this early opportunity of enlisting Sir George Rainy's sympathy since we now have him as a new Member in railway matters. I want to impress upon him that the coal trade is one which suffered most unduly at the hands of the Government during the War. The coal trade was controlled by the Government at that time and prices were kept down. The coal trade was never able to do as other trades did, to take advantage of the great demand and the country's needs at the time. Since the War, Sir, we have only had one or two reductions in coal freights, and one continues to hope that whenever there is a surplus in the Budget some further reduction in rates may be given. As Mr. Neogy pointed out, the last reduction of ten per cent. in 1926 has stimulated the demand and, as I reinforced him as he went along, it has also done much to assist the export trade. The railway rates policy, we think, should be directed towards the lowering of coal freights whenever opportunity permits. But more than that, Sir, we do strongly deprecate the policy which seems to actuate every member of Government in turn whoever comes to buy coal. His one idea is to get the prices down. In the Budget speech of the Railway Member I noticed he said:

"... the increase in traffic (operation expenses) very nearly off-setting a saving of fifteen lakhs we expect in our fuel bill."

so that he did say what he was hoping to get out of the reduction in the coal bill. You have to remember that the Government is the largest buyer of coal, and that it controls the prices, and that this policy of trying to squeeze down four annas every year is contributing very very largely towards the ruination of that primary industry of Bengal. I do, Sir, urge that the Government will adopt a very broad and liberal minded policy and will realize that to cut down the prices too much is to prevent coal companies from putting anything to reserve or doing anything to further develop the coal industry. It is not in the eventual interest of the coal trade nor of the country.

Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas: I wish, Sir, to utilise this occasion to seek a little information in connection with this subject. I understand that a Fuel Superintendent has been appointed for each railway on a pay of Rs. 2,000 per month *plus* establishment charges. I wish to know what would be the functions of the Fuel Superintendent. I understand that at each loco. shed there is a Loco. Foreman who checks the coal, inspects loading and does all detached work to be done in connection with coal. If there is a Fuel Superintendent in addition to this, may I ask if it is proposed to do away with the loco. foreman? Or is it that the loco. foreman has not been found to be capable of doing what the Fuel Superintendent is appointed to do? I understand, Sir, that there is a mining engineer who purchases coal for railways; there is a loco. foreman for each railway who checks coal and does the other work; and it is now proposed to have a Fuel Superintendent in addition to this. The question which has been asked or rather suggested to me, Sir, by an esteemed constituent of mine is: How many spokes is it proposed to put in the wheel of coal purchase and supply machineries of our railways?

Lieut.-Colonel H. A. J. Gidney: I have a few words on this motion with regard to the effect that State collieries have on the coal trade and

[Lieut.-Colonel H. A. Gidney.]

private collieries in India. In this connection I would like the Honourable Member to be so good as to let me know what is the total expenditure for each State-owned railway colliery inclusive of the purchase price and cost of development and what is the cost per ton of coal into wagons. It has recently come to my knowledge that a certain selected grade coal with a selling price of Rs. 5-4-0 per ton has been suddenly brought down to Rs. 4-0-0 per ton and classed as first grade coal. I refer to 17 and 18 seams of coal in Messrs. the Tata Iron and Steel Company's Jamadoba Colliery, a company that has been heavily subsidised by Government. I understand that the President of the Grading Board agreed to this reduction and I should like to know if he consulted the Committee of the Indian Grading Board before he agreed to this reduction in grade. It does not seem fair to the coal merchants and coal trade that they should suffer from such competition from a firm which has been so largely subsidised by Government, and I think it is time that the Railway Board thoroughly looked into this matter and protected the coal trade in India from unfair competition.

The Honourable Sir George Rainy: I shall endeavour, Sir, to deal with the various matters to which attention has been drawn without, at this late hour, delaying the House unduly. (*Sir Walter Willson:* "We do not mind".) My Honourable friend, Mr. Neogy, has twice made it a matter of complaint that I did not refer in my speech introducing the Budget to the fact that there was a reduction in coal prices this year. There was in fact one phrase in the speech, as Sir Walter Willson pointed out, which more or less implied it; so I really do not understand why the omission should be a matter of complaint; and certainly of all Members in this House Mr. Neogy has the least reason to complain, because I could certainly rely upon his industry to read carefully and attentively the Memorandum of the Railway Board and to satisfy himself as to the actual facts. I am sure he does not suggest that I was endeavouring to conceal facts from the House. Since the facts were printed broad on the face of the Railway Board's Memorandum, it would have been a perfectly futile proceeding to attempt to conceal them. Then the Honourable Member mentioned what the Dickinson Committee had said about the necessity of commercial accounts in the railway collieries, and he quite truly pointed out that without such accounts it was very difficult to make a comparison between the cost of the coal produced in the railway collieries and the coal purchased from private firms. I certainly do not propose to enter into any discussion to-day upon that subject, but it is a matter which is examined periodically so far as the materials make that possible. More important than either of these topics is of course the question of a further reduction in the freight on coal, and I fully expected that the matter would be raised in the course of this discussion if we were so fortunate, as we have been, to reach a motion on which it could be discussed. I have no doubt that freight on coal is a very important question and one which ought to be kept under close observation. Sir Walter Willson pressed it from the point of view of the coal industry itself, that a reduction in the railway freight might lead to a larger demand and so tend to keep prices up. There is also another point of view which is at least equally important and which I personally consider more important, namely, the desirability of supplying cheap coal to the industries all over India.

One of the disadvantages of India industrially is that most of the coal is located in one centre, whereas the industries are spread all over the country. Therefore it is undoubtedly important to bring down the cost of coal to the consumer as far as possible. The question was considered this year whether a reduction ought to be made in coal freights, and the conclusion at which the Government of India arrived was that there were other proposals which must for the moment have precedence. Therefore, it was decided that for the present a further reduction in coal freights must be postponed. I am having special measures taken, however, to examine the exact effect of the 1926 reductions on the traffic in coal. Our statistics do not give the traffic in quite sufficient detail and do not distribute the increases of traffic according to the distance. Apart from the export reduction, Honourable Members will remember that the 10 per cent. reduction in 1926 was on long distance coal, and what I should like to ascertain exactly is to what extent that particular reduction had affected the long distance traffic. We know, that part of the increase in the traffic is over short distances but part of it is not. When an opportunity next occurs of making any general reduction in freights, I can assure the House that the question of the coal freights will be fully considered.

Then, as regards the freight on soft coke to which my Honourable friend Mr. Neogy referred, it is a matter which is under consideration in connection with other proposals put forward by the Indian Mining Federation to encourage the trade in soft coke. It seems to me that it is a matter which ought to be dealt with in close connection with the proposal for a cess, and therefore it was not included in the reductions made this year.

My Honourable friend Sir Walter Willson suggested that the Government of India were responsible for forcing down prices and almost squeezing the coal trade out of existence. I do not know to what action of the Government of India he specially referred. I do not think it can be said that the fall in prices disclosed by the coal contracts made in January was due to any action on the part of the Government of India. This year we have reduced the total amount of coal that we propose to raise in our own collieries. Last year, I think, the proportions were about half purchased and half taken from the railway collieries but this year the quantity we propose to raise in the State collieries is distinctly less than the quantity we propose to be purchased. Therefore, I do not think it is fair to say that it is the action of the Government of India that has forced down the price.

Then my Honourable friend Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas wanted to know what the duties of the Fuel Superintendent were on the various railways. I think the best way in which I can explain it is by referring to what was said in the Railway Board's Memorandum, and also in my own speech, as to the importance of preventing the waste of fuel upon all railways. It is a very important matter and the action taken should lead to important economies. The main duties of the Fuel Superintendent are to prevent waste of all kinds and investigate the question what kinds of coal give the best results having regard to the type of engines used, and the nature of the traffic to be carried. If we continue to get the results we have already obtained as regards the economy of fuel on various railways, I can assure the House that the expenditure incurred on the Fuel Superintendent will be money very well spent. With regard to the loco. foreman—I think my Honourable friend Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas has

[Sir George Rainy.]

a more precise knowledge of their duties than I have; but whatever functions he may have performed as regards coal, he has other and more important duties and there is no danger of any clashing between him and the Fuel Superintendent.

My friend Colonel Gidney referred to the question of the competition of coal sold by the Tata Iron and Steel Company with the coal sold by other firms. My attention was drawn to that matter when I was in Calcutta recently, and I came to the conclusion that nothing had been done which called for any interference by the Government of India. The particular matter to which I think he referred was this, that this year the coal produced by the Jamadoba Colliery of the Tata Company was sold at a much lower price than last year. The reason was that the Coal Board have regarded Jamadoba coal, and reduced the classification from Selected Jharia to First class Jharia. The Tata Company tendered at the market price of first class Jharia and their tender was not the lowest that was received. It is not the case, therefore, that they in any way forced down the price of that particular kind of coal.

I think I have now dealt with all the points which were mentioned by previous speakers, and I would only like to say in conclusion that the importance to the industrial life of the country of cheap coal is so great that I can promise that on the next occasion when an opportunity of reducing freights occurs the question of coal will be very fully considered.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That the Demand under the head 'Working Expenses : Administration' be reduced by Rs. 100."

The motion was negatived.

1. *Great Detention at Itarsi of Passengers from Nagpur going to Delhi and up-country.*
2. *Improvements to the Itarsi Waiting Room by the addition of a Lavatory, and the Pavement of the Platform.*
3. *Project to construct a Railway Subordinates' School at Betul.*

Sir Hari Singh Gour (Central Provinces Hindi Divisions : Non-Muham-madan): Sir, I shall take a very few minutes for the redress of this grievance in connection with which this motion is tabled, namely:

"That the Demand under the head 'Working Expenses : Administration' be reduced by Rs. 100."

Honourable Members will find that there are two trains that connect the Central Provinces and Nagpur with the Punjab Mail and the Peshawar Express in Itarsi. They have the 12-40 and the 7 A.M., and the connecting service, that is to say, the Punjab Mail and the Peshawar Express start from Itarsi at 3-16 A.M. and 1-38 P.M., the result being that passengers from south going north are detained there for a period of four to six hours and what is more, as they have to change from one train to another, they have to keep walking the whole night strolling along the platform which is extremely dusty and which calls for a pavement at least, or to wait in the waiting room which is not provided with any lavatory at

all. I therefore, Sir, draw the attention of the Honourable Member in charge that so far as this undue detention is concerned, it must be rectified.

I pass on now to the third point. A year and a half or two years ago the Railway Board decided to open a railway subordinates' school at Betul and I understand that that project has since been abandoned. I wish to know why it has been abandoned when it was once decided in consultation with the Railway Advisory Council that the school should be located there.

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons: Sir, if I am right in thinking that the train to which the Honourable Sir Hari Singh Gour refers is one about which he wrote to the Railway Department some time in 1926, the facts are actually these, that if we attempted to alter the timing of that train, removing thereby his grievance, we should create a grievance for the passengers by a considerable number of other trains. That is to say, if we attempted to give him a closer connection, the passengers by three or four other trains would have to wait at Itarsi, by one train for eleven hours and by two for at least seven hours. That is our difficulty in giving this closer connection which he requires.

Sir Hari Singh Gour: Why not have a through carriage?

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons: I understand, Sir, that though the Honourable Sir Hari Singh Gour frequently makes a journey from that part of the country to Delhi, an examination which has been made of the probable traffic does not show that it is sufficient to justify a through carriage.

On the second point, I am afraid the only reply I can give is one which this House must be already tired of hearing from me. I will bring the matter to the notice of Agent; but the Agent must decide for himself in matters of this nature which stations should first of all be dealt with.

The third point deals with the proposed construction of a railway subordinates' school or area school at Betul. Betul was first selected as the site for the school by the Great Indian Peninsula Railway administration. It was subsequently found that the water supply there was very unsatisfactory and it is now more likely that the permanent school will be at Dhond. That is the only reason for the transfer; they found the water was not good there.

Sir Hari Singh Gour: I beg leave, Sir, to withdraw the motion.

Mr. President: Is the Honourable Member satisfied?

Sir Hari Singh Gour: No, not at all, but I don't want my motion to be defeated in this thin House.

The amendment was, by leave of the Assembly, withdrawn.

Treatment of the Cotton Trade.

Sir Victor Sassoon (Bombay Millowners' Association: Indian Commerce): Sir, I move.

"That the Demand under the head 'Working Expenses: Administration' be reduced by Rs. 100."

Sir, Mr. Joshi stated a little earlier in our discussion that the primary function of railways was to carry a number of apparently overcharged third

[Sir Victor Sassoon.]

class passengers and undercharged first class passengers. He pleaded—and I was sympathetic to a certain extent—for a reduction of fares of third class passengers and I was interested to see my friend Mr. Cocke support him. But, Sir, I would beg this House not to be led away by these two gentlemen and make a fetish of third class passengers. I would suggest that they should realise that the primary function of a railway is to move goods. It is to move goods, not only for the benefit of manufacturers and traders but also for the benefit of consumers. It is to move goods cheaply. And the more cheaply you move goods, the cheaper will the price of those goods become for those inhabitants of this country who cannot afford to travel even third class in trains. For that reason, as one of the classes of goods which is of great use to this country is the product of the industry which I have the honour to represent here, I wish to plead for a reduction in rates for not only our piece-goods, but also for the raw material, the cotton, out of which they are made. I must point out that fares have dropped from a maximum of 60 per cent. to in some cases below the pre-war rate. I now speak about the third class passengers, whereas for the goods which I refer to, the rate is something like 75 per cent. above pre-war. No doubt, we who are suffering from having to sell our finished products at a rate which has adjusted itself immediately to the new ratio and have to pay for our freight at rates which have not yet adjusted themselves to the 1s. 6d. ratio, know that in time that adjustment will take place. In fact, in the lobbies I understood from my friend Mr. Parsons, who told me in an expansive moment that he was considering it even now

Sir Walter Willson: Sir, is the Honourable Member in order in quoting a private conversation that took place outside?

Sir Victor Sassoon: Sir, I only wish to point out to the Honourable the Commerce Member that if that moment devoutly to be wished for does arrive, he should remember that the benefit of the lower rate for piece-goods would be of equal benefit to all piece-goods whether manufactured in this country or imported from abroad, whereas lower rates for cotton will benefit manufacturers of piece-goods in this country and only those imports which are made from Indian cotton. So if we cannot have lower rates in both cases, I now suggest that the lowering of rates should first be effected for raw cotton and afterwards for the finished products.

The Honourable Sir George Rainy : I desire to speak very briefly on this motion, Mr. President. The question of the reduction of freight on cotton and on piece-goods was considered at the time when the reductions were under consideration, but as far as we could see, they did not fully satisfy the criterion that the reduction in the rates must be likely to lead to a substantial and immediate increase in traffic. But I am quite willing to undertake that the matter will be kept under observation and that we will see, when opportunity offers, whether anything can be done. I am a little doubtful as to what may be found feasible, because my recollection is that it was found that from the railway point of view a reduction of freight on cotton and on piece-goods did not offer much prospect of an increase in traffic. Nevertheless, the matter will not be overlooked.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That the Demand under the head 'Working Expenses: Administration' be reduced by Rs. 100."

The motion was negatived.

Porters at Railway Stations.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: Sir, I move:

"That the Demand under the head 'Working Expenses: Administration' be reduced by Re. 1."

This motion is intended to draw the attention of this House to the very unjust and unfair practice that is being observed at the Delhi railway station. Each porter at the station in Delhi is charged a licensing fee of four annas per day and this fee of four annas per day per porter gets into the pockets of a retired station master. Sir, the practice of charging licensing fees to the workers is against the principle of sound and good treatment to any class of workers. (*An Honourable Member:* "Not at all.") It is so. The International Labour Conference, so far as the question of seamen goes, have passed a convention that no fee should be charged for finding employment for seamen. In the same way it is a wrong practice to charge 4 annas fee per day to the porter in order that he should get an opportunity of working at a station. It is quite possible, Sir, for Government to make their choice of porters and limit their number at the station without charging any fee. But the Government is anxious that there should be a contractor of labour in order that that contractor should make about Rs. 3,000 a month. Now, Sir, if the Government of India wants to give Rs. 3,000 a month to a retired station master, let them give it out of their pockets. I have no objection. But this money comes out of the pockets of the poor travellers. If the porters pay 4 annas a day they do not pay that out of their own pockets; they pay it from the money they get from the passengers. Naturally this means an extra fare on the passengers. Sir, the Government of India in my judgment has absolutely no justification for this practice. If they want that there should be some head porter appointed, they can certainly afford to appoint a head porter and pay him Rs. 100 a month or Rs. 200 a month or even Rs. 500 a month, or if they like they can pay him Rs. 3,000 a month. But, Sir, the difficulty is this, if the Government appoints a man to manage this department of porters, I am quite sure nobody would suggest a salary of Rs. 3,000 a month and nobody would perhaps sanction it. (*The Honourable Sir Basil Blackett:* "Why not?") The Finance Member, who asks me "Why not?", would not himself sanction Rs. 3,000 for a head porter. Therefore, Sir, the Government has found out this easy way of fleecing the passengers and putting Rs. 3,000 a month into the pockets of a retired station master. Sir, this is a matter to which the Government of India should give their serious attention.

The Revd. J. O. Chatterjee: Sir, this is a matter in which I am particularly interested because it is the cause of the poor man. I have been gathering certain statistics about this question of railway porters. I believe that my Honourable friend Mr. Joshi's figures are a little bit out of date. It is perfectly true, that a couple of years ago, the levy on the Delhi platform for porters was 4 annas per day per man but that fortunately has been reduced to 2 annas per day now.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: Your information is wrong.

The Revd. J. O. Chatterjee: That is what I got from the railway station. Very well, Sir, even then, there is something very wrong with the administrative control of these coolies. There are between 400 and 500 coolies working at the Delhi Station every day. If we take an average of 450 a day, even then the retired railway official who controls them gets something between Rs. 1,500 and Rs. 1,700 per mensem out of these coolies. All he does for them is that he employs 6 jamadars on Rs. 25 per mensem each to control them and to look after them. These jamadars also levy a certain amount of toll on the coolies whenever they can get it. But all that the superintendent does is that he pays Rs. 180 a month to the jamadars and pockets the remainder.

In conclusion, Sir, I will only say one thing, that these coolies be controlled by the railways themselves, who can charge a licensing fee of say Re. 1 per mensem from each porter.

Mr. President: Mr. Das, (Mr. Das, who had got up, sat down again on Members interjecting that there would be no time for a reply.)

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons (Financial Commissioner, Railways): I am sorry, Sir, that Mr. Das had no remarks to make. To start first with the slight difference between Mr. Joshi and Mr. Chatterjee, the fee at present is 2 annas a day. I am not sure when it was changed from 4 annas. It is applied I think, to a daily attendance of about 300 coolies and the contractor therefore gets something like Rs. 1,100 or Rs. 1,200

5 P.M. a month. Out of that he has to supply 2 overseers and is responsible for the uniforms and badges of the coolies. He agrees to indemnify the railway administration for any loss or damages to packages booked or unbooked being the property of a passenger, due to misconduct of the coolies, and also to indemnify the railway administration against all claims made by the coolies under the Workmen's Compensation Act

(It being then Five of the Clock).

Mr. President: Order, order.

The question is:

"That the Demand under the head 'Working Expenses : Administration' be reduced by Re. 1."

The motion was negatived.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 12,62,00,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1929, in respect of 'Working Expenses : Administration'."

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND NO. 5.—WORKING EXPENSES: REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE AND OPERATION.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 38,23,50,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1929, in respect of 'Working Expenses : Repairs and Maintenance and Operation'."

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 6.—COMPANIES AND INDIAN STATES' SHARE OF SURPLUS PROFITS AND NET EARNINGS.

Mr. President: The question is

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 1,82,00,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1929, in respect of 'Companies' and Indian States' share of surplus profits and net earnings'."

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 9.—APPROPRIATION TO DEPRECIATION FUND.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 11,95,00,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1929, in respect of 'Appropriation to Depreciation Fund'."

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 10.—APPROPRIATION FROM DEPRECIATION FUND.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 9,00,00,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1929, in respect of 'Appropriation from Depreciation Fund'."

The motion was adopted.

(At this stage some Honourable Members were noticed leaving the Chamber).

Sir Walter Willson: Have Honourable Members the right to leave the House while you are addressing it, Sir?

Mr. President: Order, order.

Mr. Jamnadas Mehta: Have they no right?

Mr. President: The Chair is very grateful to the Honourable Member (Sir Walter Willson) for having drawn its attention to the matter.

DEMAND No. 11.—MISCELLANEOUS.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 15,88,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1929, in respect of 'Miscellaneous'."

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 12.—APPROPRIATION TO THE RESERVE FUND.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 3,50,30,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1929, in respect of 'Appropriation to the Reserve Fund'."

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND NO. 14.—STRATEGIC LINES.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 1,44,95,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1929, in respect of 'Strategic Lines'."

The motion was adopted.

Expenditure charged to Capital.

DEMAND NO. 7.—NEW CONSTRUCTION.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 8,49,00,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1929, in respect of 'New Construction'."

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND NO. 8.—OPEN LINE WORKS.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 18,67,70,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1929, in respect of 'Open Line Works'."

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND NO. 15.—STRATEGIC LINES.

Mr. President: The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 75,60,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1929, in respect of 'Strategic Lines'."

The motion was adopted.

The Assembly then adjourned till Five of the Clock (Evening) on Wednesday, the 29th February, 1928.