

Thursday, 20th February, 1930

THE  
COUNCIL OF STATE DEBATES

VOLUME I, 1930

*(17th February to 3rd April, 1930.)*

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EIGHTH SESSION  
OF THE  
SECOND COUNCIL OF STATE, 1930



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1930

# **Council of State.**

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**THE HONOURABLE SAIYID MOHAMED PADSHAH SAHIB BAHADUR.**

**THE HONOURABLE SIR ARTHUR FROOM, KT.**

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**THE HONOURABLE SIR EBRAHIM HAROON JAFFER, KT.**

**THE HONOURABLE MR. P. C. DESIKA CHARI.**

**THE HONOURABLE SIR MANMOHANDAS RAMJI, KT.**

**THE HONOURABLE RAJA MOTI CHAND, C.I.E.**

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# COUNCIL OF STATE.

Thursday, 20th February, 1930.

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

## MEMBER SWORN.

The Honourable Mr. Suresh Chandra Pakrashi (East Bengal : Non-Muhammadan).

## MESSAGES FROM HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR GENERAL.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : I have Messages for the Council from His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor General.

### THE GENERAL BUDGET.

Firstly :

*" For the purposes of sub-section (1) of section 67A of the Government of India Act and in pursuance of rule 43 of the Indian Legislative Rules and of Standing Order 70 of the Council of State Standing Orders, I, Edward Frederick Lindley, Baron Irwin, hereby appoint Friday, the 28th February, at 5 p.m., for the presentation to the Council of State and Thursday, the 6th March, for the General Discussion in the Council of State of the statement of the estimated annual expenditure and revenue of the Governor General in Council in respect of subjects other than Railways.*

(Sd.) IRWIN,  
Viceroy and Governor General."

Secondly :

*" In pursuance of the provisions of sub-section (3) of section 67A of the Government of India Act, I hereby direct that the heads of expenditure specified in that sub-section shall be open to discussion by the Council of State when the Budget is under consideration.*

(Sd.) IRWIN,  
Viceroy and Governor General."

(The Messages were received by the Council standing.)

## GENERAL DISCUSSION OF THE RAILWAY BUDGET.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : The Council will now proceed with the General Discussion of the Budget, Part I.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS (Punjab : Non-Muhammadan) : Sir, it is a matter of gratification to find that the Railway Board after all has agreed to the increase in free allowance o

[Lala Ram Saran Das.]

luggage of second, intermediate and third class passengers. For this our thanks are due to the Railway Board. We are glad to find another point has received the approval of the Railway Board and that is "The Statement" which has been circulated to us regarding the particulars of meetings of Local Advisory Committees held during the half-year ending the 30th September, 1929. In this list, Sir, I find there is a most important column, No. 7: "If proposal is rejected, the reasons for rejection". I find this column a blank one. I have been, Sir, for a few years now a member of the Local Advisory Committee of the North Western Railway and at those meetings I know from my own personal knowledge that I moved several matters which were rejected and I do not find them on this list at all. I wish to draw the attention of the Honourable the Railway Member to the fact that all the proposals which are rejected by the Chairmen of the various Advisory Committees ought to be brought to the notice of the Railway Member and the Legislature in this useful blue-book. As an illustration, I will draw the attention of the Honourable the Railway Member to pages 104 and 105 of this Statement—where the question of food and water supply for Indian passengers was dealt with. I was the person who raised an objection, rather represented the grievances of the travelling public in the matter that although in the vendors' contracts in existence there was a clear clause of pure ghee being used, artificial ghee was invariably being used and the public were being charged the price for the article prepared from pure ghee. I pressed this point and I said that the travelling public ought not to be allowed to be cheated by these vendors and that the Railway Administration should not be a party to that. I was extremely sorry to find that the attitude of our Chairman, with due deference to him, was not at all satisfactory. He told me that he was not going to enter into a controversial matter and that he was not going ahead of the Imperial or the Provincial Governments in this matter. I said that this question did not concern any policy but it concerned the contracts. The agreements were there and the question was whether the clauses of these agreements were meant to be complied with or to be ignored. And I suggested that, in case the Chairman finds that it is difficult for the vendors to get pure ghee and that artificial ghee has, as a matter of necessity, to be used in the preparation of food-stuffs, it would be much better if in the agreement rates for articles prepared of artificial ghee should be given so that the travelling public may not be allowed to be cheated by these vendors. That point was rather important, and no mention of it has been made in these proceedings. I draw pointed attention to this, Sir, because it is a matter of principle. Agreements are agreements and ought to be complied with. While on this question of Railway Advisory Committees I would suggest to the Honourable the Railway Member the idea of convening an annual conference of these Advisory Committees at a central place to which the Central Advisory Committee should also be invited so that they may discuss matters of common interest and bring their grievances, if they have any, before the Railway Member or the Chief Commissioner of Railways, one of whom should preside at this meeting.

The third thing, Sir, for which our gratitude is due is that we agree in the gifted ability of Mr. Hayman, the Member of the Railway Board. We expect a lot of things from him as one naturally expects from a gifted person. One of the things on which we can easily congratulate him is that through him four Indians have been appointed to the Transportation Power Department and three to the Mechanical Engineering Department. In years past it was a common saying that among educated Indians, suitable mechanical people

could not be found. Where there is a will there is a way. When the Labour Member wanted to do it, there was material available and will always be available. As regards the recruitment to the railway mechanical services is concerned, I would draw the attention of the Honourable the Railway Member again to the point which I have been urging from year to year, and that is, the encouragement of Indian youths in mechanical training. We have several Mechanical Engineering Colleges in India. I requested the Government to guarantee some appointments to some of the successful candidates each year from these colleges, and I repeat this request again. As far as my information goes, the Maclagan Engineering College at Lahore, of which it was said some time back that its education and training were not up to the proper standard has, I believe, of late been brought up to the desired standard. The Punjab Government has invested over a million rupees in its buildings, and now incurs a recurring expenditure of over a lakh of rupees on its maintenance. It qualifies a certain number of pupils every year. Railways being the chief employers in the mechanical line ought to encourage students in their career by finding suitable appointments for those who deserve patronage. I believe, Sir, that when at the end of 1932 the apprentices for the officers' grade who have been now recruited are turned out from the central college, the demand upon other similar institutions will greatly decline. I would suggest in this connection that as far as railway officers for the mechanical services are concerned, they may be trained at the central college and that the subordinate services, the lower subordinate and the upper subordinate services ought to be recruited from other colleges. As far as the Maclagan College is concerned, the North Western Railway sends a few stipendiary apprentices to this college and at the end of their career of theoretical and practical training there is now under the new rules very little room for the employment of all the qualified apprentices. In years past I had been urging the patronage of all such apprentices and it was a pleasure to find that the then Chief Commissioner of Railways, Sir Clement Hindley, gave very sympathetic consideration to it. While on the one hand this patronage was extended to these qualified apprentices, on the other hand, this patronage was withdrawn indirectly by the creation of a cadre and the reduction thereby of the recruitment every year to the number of vacancies. This will greatly hamper the progress of the mechanical training so far given, and I would request the Honourable the Railway Member to see that at least those students who are sent for training to the Maclagan College or other colleges on railway stipends are, on the completion of their training and success in their examination, provided with posts.

Then, I come, Sir, to the many things that we expect in the way of the five principal heads to which the Honourable the Railway Member alluded in his speech the other day in the other place and which is printed at page 7 of his Memorandum. I come to the improvement in the service conditions of the subordinate staff generally and in particular of the lowest paid employees. As regards the hours of work, in connection with the Washington and Geneva Conventions and bringing of their recommendations into practical effect. I hear that the railway authorities will soon announce the manner and the extent to which they can translate those recommendations into practice, and I think Mr. Hayman has prepared a scheme, as he told me the other day, when I inquired of him that this matter was soon to be decided and brought into effect. Another important matter as regards the subordinates was their leave rules, their hours of work and period of rest. These are very important matters and I trust that we shall soon hear what the Railway Board has done in this respect.



[Lala Ram Saran Das.]

I am also glad to find, Sir, that now the recruitment of Indians to the full extent of 75 per cent. of the vacancies is being carried into effect and for this our congratulations are due to the Railway Board and the Labour Member. I am disappointed to find that on the Company-managed Railways Indianization amongst officers and subordinates is not moving at the pace set on the State-managed lines. I would request the Honourable the Commerce Member to urge on these Companies to move with the times and in accordance with the established policy of the Government of India.

As regards improvement of the lot of the lower subordinate staff, we find that at present promotion to the upper subordinate grade is seldom made. As the cost of living has gone up and general prices of labour have also gone up, it is time that the old and experienced lower subordinate staff should be given a better grading if not promotion to the upper subordinate grades. As regards other conveniences, such as residential accommodation for the running staff, I find that in big cities no housing accommodation is provided for the running staff, and these people have to pay high rents as well as meet the higher cost of living in big cities. In this connection I would suggest that until accommodation is provided for them they should be given special allowances for living in big cities in the same way as the Government of India does in the case of its clerks when they go to Simla.

I will now come to the matter of publicity. I find that in the year 1928-29 the expenditure was 11·56 lakhs ; the revised estimate for 1929-30 is 49·80 lakhs while the budget estimate for 1930-31 provides for 15·80 lakhs. Unlike other matters, we do not find the details of this expenditure in the statement of accounts or the Memorandum, and I would request that details should be given in future and the Legislature informed of the result in increased traffic which has resulted from this new Department. From the reports before me I find that the receipts from upper class passengers in the year 1928-29 were Rs. 4,35,61,638 ; the revised figure for 1929-30 is 4,21,00,000 or 15 lakhs less ; and, in 1930-31 the Budget provides for 4·31 lakhs. I am under the impression that this publicity is chiefly meant to invite more upper class traffic, but the figures before us are very disappointing and they show that *primâ facie* there has been no gain to the Railways as a commercial concern from this new Publicity Department. Millions of rupees are being spent on this, while I find that the more easy and popular forms of publicity are not being adopted. Take one example, Sir : the price of time-tables. The time-table is also an instrument of publicity. I find that on the North Western Railway a time-table without a map is being sold for three annas, while on the East Indian and other big railways time-tables with maps are sold for two annas. I brought this matter up in the Advisory Committee because it is not a matter requiring to be debated here, and the reply given to me was that funds did not permit. I was rather astonished. You spend millions of rupees on publicity and you cannot reduce an anna there. I could not understand it. So far as publicity is concerned, I think, Sir, that if more branch booking parcels and goods offices are opened, these conveniences afforded to the travelling public will bring in more traffic than advertisements in foreign countries.

I turn to another point, which is perhaps a small point, and that is that there is no uniformity of rules on all the State Railways in regard to the carriage of passengers, for instance in the matter of the reservation of upper class compartments. I brought that matter to the notice of the Advisory Committee, and I asked, if the East Indian Railway could reserve a compartment at the concession of one berth less than the sleeping berths of the big

compartments, why the North Western Railway could not do the same. If I mistake not, I was told that the North Western Railway does not like to have more upper class traffic as there is not much coaching stock available. But, on the other hand, if this publicity is practically meant to bring in more upper class passengers, that argument becomes inconsistent. I find from the memorandum :

“ Our reduced rates for long distance coal have certainly acted as a stimulus to the coal trade, and the lower fares for third class passengers have been accompanied by a growth in traffic.”

If more amenities had been given to third class passengers I think the deficit in expansion of traffic would not have taken place. When the railway had the sole monopoly to carry passengers, amenities to third class passengers were not of as great importance as they are now. But now, when there is a competing factor, railways ought to be more generous and more businesslike in giving amenities to third class passengers. We do not find in the statements before us what has been spent upon the raised platforms, what has been spent on waiting sheds, what has been spent upon the various other amenities for third class passengers. I beg to request the Honourable the Railway Member kindly to put in a separate head for such things, which will enable all of us to see how much is being spent in this direction. My own experience shows that as far as raised platforms and waiting sheds for passengers are concerned, the progress is very slow. I wish, Sir, that at all stations where electric current is available, electric fans could be provided in the third class waiting halls. This is a question of policy, and if it is adopted, it will result in more traffic.

I have been pressing, Sir, that on account of the indifference shown by the administration of the Bengal and North Western Railway, the Government of India ought to acquire that railway when its term of contract expires. We expected this year that something definite would be said about that, but I am sorry to say that nothing has been said at all and the people who are unfortunate to live in the areas served by that line are in a very bad plight as regards conveniences, as regards amenities and as regards other matters which concern the public.

Another little point which I want to bring to the notice of the Honourable the Railway Member is that in these days when unemployment is general and when people are running about for employment, the railways have found a new source of income ; they sell application forms, charging one rupee as the price of each form. That brings in thousands of rupees every year. For instance, at Lahore I know that thousands of these poor people hankering after appointments come ; they are charged one rupee each for the form and they spend the railway fare in addition, and after all this find that only a few men out of a couple of thousand are selected for appointments. I think such taxation ought to be stopped. People are now beginning to feel it and they say that it is not right for the Railways to adopt this sort of undesirable practice.

Another small matter to which the attention particularly of the North Western Railway is to be drawn is the matter of licensed coolies and the proportion of Muslims and non-Muslims. It is a small question, but I find, Sir, that it is now becoming a question of great necessity particularly to the ladies travelling with eatables and other sacred things. I brought this matter up in the Advisory Committee, but the answer was that communal considerations did not apply in this matter. I bring it up here again because there is a general cry and Hindu ladies in particular sometimes have to carry their own luggage, not finding a suitable person to carry it.

[Lala Ram Saran Das.]

I am glad to find, Sir, that the reduced rates of coal freight have resulted in better traffic. I have always been advocating that concessions in rates shown in the right direction will always bear good fruit. I would suggest, Sir, that the freight on cement, on stones and on stone *bajri* and shingle and cotton—which the Railway Member says has also resulted in a better return—ought to be reduced. At present there are reduced rates for the carriage of stone metal or *bajri* or shingle for the Government and for local bodies. Those rates are very low, but unfortunately these rates are not available to the ordinary consumer, I mean the public. But I submit, Sir, that these reduced rates ought to be made general and not confined only to local bodies and Government. Cement is now coming largely into use and the reduction in these articles will certainly bring better returns to the Railways. I hope the Honourable the Commerce Member will give some attention to this important point.

I will not take up the time of the Council further, because the figures are patent to all the Members, but I wish to press a few more points. The first is that the cessation of expansion of traffic is a serious aspect and should be seriously taken into consideration in the manner and in the method which I have suggested. I also find, Sir, that notwithstanding the growth of passenger traffic, the Railways have launched on a new policy of curtailment of trains ; and in particular they are curtailing fast trains. I think this policy is inconsistent with the statement before us when passenger traffic is growing and when the Railway Board want it to grow further ; and also when millions of rupees are being spent on publicity, it does not occur to me why passenger services should be curtailed. For instance, a useful train on the North Western Railway, a through train from Lahore to Howrah *via* Agra, is now being turned into a slow passenger train between Lahore and Delhi. I asked why this was being done and I was told it was due to the railway policy, that they could not afford to run so many fast trains. I think, Sir, that fast service is an attraction to bring more traffic and I cannot understand this policy of the curtailment of these trains in view of the fact that passenger traffic is on the increase ; I hope, Sir, that the Railway Board will certainly move in this matter.

As I do not like to take up the time of the Council any further, I will sit down after making two more remarks. In the Punjab, Sir, there has been a general cry that Indian refreshment cars for upper class passengers are badly required. The matter was fought in the Local Advisory Committee and after a couple of years fight we were informed that one Indian refreshment car was being constructed and I now learn that that car will be put on the service this month or the next. But, Sir, the provision of one car is not of much use, because, unless the passengers are certain that on a certain train they are certain to get a refreshment car, they will not avail themselves of that car. So one more car at least should be provided forthwith. In the estimates before me I find that there is no provision for another Indian car. I think it is a necessity and it ought to be put in there, because unless you have a regular service of these cars on certain trains, the facilities offered to the public thereby will be reduced to nothing. As regards the standardisation of carriages I would say, Sir, that second class coupés were very popular on the North Western Railway and other Railways and they were always being availed of by the public. In the new stock they are being taken out altogether. This, Sir, I think is a retrograde step. I believe there is more second class traffic than first class and the reduction of second class accommodation cannot be understood. One more thing, and that is there is a

rumour that the heavy class of locomotive engines which have been imported for the North Western Railway are found to be unusable owing to track or other requirements not being fulfilled. We should like to know how far this rumour is correct and how many engines of the XC & XG class are not being put into use.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. C. DESIKA CHARI (Burma : General) : Sir, in the Railway Budget there is nothing to enthuse over. On the other hand, I find it rather depressing. The capital outlay on constructions has had to be curtailed considerably and I believe the financial arrangement under which railway finance has been separated from general finance has not been working satisfactorily. Otherwise, if there had been a proper arrangement, it ought to have been possible for the Railways to borrow money for railway purposes to put through necessary construction programmes. I find that many projects which have been going on and which are likely to result in good profit have been held up. I find it may not be possible for me even to hope in the near future for the Indo-Burma Railway connection which I have been urging on the Railway Board year after year. When other projects are started or put into effect, there is not a chance of even asking for a programme of railway construction for India and Burma in the near future. I hope the Railway Member will give us some information as to when it may be possible to commence this programme of railway construction of connecting Burma and India. I am very sorry that more important projects like the Dacca-Aricha line, for which people have been agitating for the last half a century, had to be given up. I hope the Railway Board has not given it up altogether. There is a very urgent demand and I hope when projects are sanctioned in the next Budget this line will be taken up. And I would also make a suggestion that in that part of Bengal the railway company may run some steamer service to co-operate with existing railway lines ; and in course of time it is bound to be very profitable and it would be a source of very great advantage to the people of the country.

I find in the Budget of the last few years considerable attention has been paid to the cry of the commercial public and freights have been reduced on commercial products and industrial products like coal and petrol. But we do not find any corresponding reduction to help the agriculturists and it is necessary that inter-provincial trade should be facilitated and freights on agricultural produce should be reduced. No doubt it may mean a loss of revenue for some time but railways ought to exist for the greatest good of the greatest number, and agriculture being the mainstay of the population it goes without saying that the first consideration of the State Railways ought to be to encourage and to help as far as possible the largest number of people employed in agriculture.

Then coming to the question of Railway expenditure I would suggest that the extravagant schemes of remodelling, which are costing the Railways tons of money, may very well be spent on more important items of expenditure which will bring in larger revenue. This remodelling of various stations may be postponed for a future occasion and in the meanwhile, when there is a stringency for money, the money spent on remodelling may be better utilised in proper constructions, at least in feeder lines.

Then, coming to the question of labour, I am glad that after the appointment of the Labour Member to the Railway Board, labour conditions have considerably improved though we have strikes on the Great Indian Peninsula

[Mr. P. C. Desika Chari.]

Railway ; but I would urge upon the railway administration a more sympathetic outlook towards the constitutional trade unions which are led by men like Joshi. They are quite within the constitutional limits and if greater sympathy, tact and consideration is shown towards these labour movements, as is done in England, I think this broader outlook is bound to result in greater benefit not only to the labourers but to the general public also.

Coming to the services, I find racial discrimination still persists even after the Railways have been taken over by the State. It ought to be a cardinal principle that for the same kind of work turned out by an individual, the rates of pay ought not to be different whether the post is held by a European, by an Anglo-Indian or by an Indian. I think the policy has been to some extent to reduce this racial discrimination, but I think the policy has not been pushed through, and I hope that before long this racial discrimination, which is an eye-sore, will be absolutely done away with in the near future. As regards the services in Burma, the Burma Railways have come under State control only recently and we have been promised by the Railway Member that after the Burma Railways are taken over by the State, Indianisation in Burma would be put through. I find there has not been very much advance and I find also that in the matter of recruitment to the services Indians, domiciled and Burman, are absolutely regarded as foreigners. The Indian domiciled community ought to be regarded as part of the Burman community and they ought not to suffer in the matter of recruitment. I find in the provincial service they are nowhere because they are treated as Indians for purposes of recruitment and in India they are nowhere because their home is in Burma. I hope the Railway Board will seriously take this into account and see that the domiciled Indian community in Burma does not suffer in the matter of recruitment to the services. As regards the lower subordinate staff, we have got a railway school in Insein. A lot of people are turned out there—Indians and Burmans—but only the Anglo-Indians are taken and trained as apprentices later on, and the Indians and Burmans, who are trained there, are merely used as superior coolies, like fitters, and no encouragement is given to them. I hope that the railway administration here would urge upon the Burma Railways to give facilities of employment to Indians and Burmans who are trained in the Insein School. Now, as it is, they are trained and they are only taken as skilled labourers, as fitters and for inferior menial work.

As regards the reduction of fares, the third class passengers who contribute the largest share of the revenue do not get any material advantage from the reduction of fares. The figures show that these third class passengers mostly travel under 50 miles, and unless the fares are reduced for distances under 50 miles the vast majority of the population will not get any benefit. My Honourable friend Rai Bahadur Lala Ram Saran Das has been alluding to various amenities which ought to be provided. I put forward this plea for reduction of fares and for providing greater amenities for third class passengers as a business proposition. Motor cars are competing now everywhere and unless the amenities are increased and unless the fares are reduced, the traffic is bound to go down and the railway profits are bound to go down too. If the fares are reduced, I dare say there will be a large increase in the traffic and Railways would become a better State property in the hands of the railway administration.

I find that in the matter of general management the public are not properly consulted in larger matters. For instance, the Central Committee as well as the Committees in the various provinces are doing little or no work

and if at all they do any work, it is of a routine character. I believe it will be a source of very great advantage both to the administration and to the public if a Central Committee consisting of Members of the Central Legislature and some representatives from the Provincial Legislatures and from the various important commercial bodies were formed. If such a committee is formed and if it is consulted on matters of policy and on important administrative matters, then the Railway Board is likely to command universal respect. Till this is done, the Railway Board, whatever it may do, will be regarded as an Imperial autocratic body. I hope that this suggestion of mine will be seriously considered and that the Railway Board will take into its confidence the representatives of the people in the matter of railway policy also.

**THE HONOURABLE SIR JAHANGIR COOVERJEE COYAJEE** (Bengal : Nominated Official): Sir, the progress achieved by the Indian railway system during the past quinquennium is a very apt illustration of the well-known economic dictum that Railways are an industry of increasing returns. Whether we look at the financial statistics or at the operating statistics we find that the year 1927-28 was the acme of a great crescendo and progressive movement. On the one hand, the net return to capital at charge, the net gain and the amount carried to Railway Reserves continued to grow apace. At the same time, we have the growth of economies and any way on that side, there has been a continuity of progress ever since 1927-28. Attempting now to analyse the causes of the more recent slackening of railway earnings, there are indications that the main cause of this phenomenon is not to be sought for in the internal economic circumstances of the country but in a great measure in the world conditions of the day. In this connection, several of the Railway statistics of last year are of a significant and reassuring character. Thus, we find even an increase in the number both of passenger miles and tons originating. In fact, Sir, it is a case of a mere temporary retardation of the growth of traffic and not a symptom of any serious decline.

For this reduction of earnings in 1929-30 there have been several causes. The most important cause has already been emphasised by the Honourable the Chief Commissioner of Railways when he drew attention to the trade depression caused by the gradual fall of prices. But it might be added that the effects of that trade depression have been largely aggravated during the last year by financial and other economic troubles abroad—troubles which originated in America but which have spread gradually over the whole world and in many countries they have led to important recessions and diminution of production. The effects of this decline of production abroad upon the Indian railway system cannot be exaggerated. The reaction of such world-wide conditions on the Indian economic system is usually very quick and decisive. As yet, Sir, there is a difference of opinion among the economic authorities of the day whether this reduction of production in a mere short period phenomenon or is to continue for a long period. An additional factor in the situation has also been suggested. The response to railway improvements and to reductions of freight is always slow, as railway statisticians have shown. But in an eminently conservative country like India, the slowness of the response is apt to be exaggerated, and this is a sort of proof that improvements and reductions of rates should only be carried on continuously by tentative experiments as in the past.

Sir, countries which are more generously and fortunately endowed with capital resources would find little cause in our present

12 Noon. state of railway revenues and returns to lead them to introduce any limitation of capital expenditure on Railways. To them the return

[Sir Jahangir Cooverjee Coyajee.]

of, say, 5½ per cent. per annum on the total capital, the maintenance of a reserve fund at about 18 crores, the payment of a steady contribution to the general revenues, the growing depreciation fund, besides the expansion of railway facilities might even seem to be arguments rather for keeping up the capital expenditure. But in the case of a country with more slender capital resources like India there are other considerations which have to be taken into account : and a compromise has to be made between the claims to capital on behalf of Railways and on the part of other industries. In fact, there is, as one would say, an optimum amount of capital expenditure at any particular time to be undertaken on the Railways according to conditions prevailing. As regards the principle which has been adopted in the matter of limitation of expenditure few would find any sort of complaint about it. That principle might be described as that of the concentration of available resources upon projects in hand which will produce early returns, both to the Railways and to the public. In all business, whether public or private, the effect of a rise of the general rate of interest is always to enforce the adoption of such a policy.

Looking, Sir, to the great and growing importance of labour problems in the economic sphere, we must welcome, both in the interests of the Railways and of their employees, the steps taken for the improvement in the service conditions of the staff generally and, in particular, of the lowest paid employees. The importance of a contented and efficient establishment for our Railways cannot be exaggerated ; and in the speech of the Honourable the Chief Commissioner of Railways an equal emphasis has been very properly placed upon efficiency and upon contentment. In this matter, as well as in the matter of additions to the staff necessitated by the shorter hours of work, we are only following in the footsteps and going according to the precedents recently set by the more advanced countries. Problems relating to labour are in those countries forming a more and more important part of the sphere of railway administration, and each large railway centre has a special and highly placed official responsible for all staff and labour questions. It is, if I might say so, very satisfactory to find that in all these matters our railway administration has been coming into line with the administrative developments in the most progressive countries.

THE HONOURABLE SIR ARTHUR FROOM (Bombay Chamber of Commerce) : Sir, if we find the Railway Budget this year a dull one, and if we find the speeches of the Honourable Member and of the Chief Commissioner somewhat lacking in exhilaration, I do not think that we can justly blame either the Honourable Member for Railways or the Chief Commissioner or even the Railway Board which is often greatly criticised. And if, Sir, the debate in this Council on the Railway Budget this year falls rather flat, I do not think we should ascribe that altogether to the absence of a considerable number of our Members who have not attended this Session and who when they have been here have generally livened up our proceedings, but rather the whole atmosphere of dullness surrounding the Railway Budget should be attributed to the world-wide depression of trade, a depression in which India has had her share. Indeed I think that India has had and is having more than her full share of this world-wide trade depression, and why ? Political unrest in this country and various political speeches throughout this country have brought about a feeling of insecurity. You have only to study the quotations in the market to see that India's financial credit to-day is not what it has been in recent years. The higher rate of interest she has to pay for her borrowings is

a sure index of the feeling in the world's financial markets of India's credit; and when there is a feeling of uneasiness, when there is a feeling of insecurity, trade suffers at once. When I passed through Bombay a few months ago I had an interesting conversation with some of the leading merchants there, and they told me that no one would operate ahead but only did business for immediate requirements. Well, that is not trade. The stifling of trade throughout the past year is largely responsible for the position of the Railway Budget to-day.

I have heard criticisms in one or two quarters that the Railway Board should be blamed for turning to the Reserve to balance their Budget for the current year. Well, what is a reserve for? Is a reserve to be piled up just to look at and see how pretty it is? A reserve surely is to meet a situation like the one we are going through to-day, and that, in the existing circumstances, the railway authorities have only had to turn to the reserve to the extent of, I think, 86 lakhs is a matter for congratulation and not one for despondency. Like the Honourable Member for Railways I find the most interesting part of his speech is that concerned with the service conditions of the lowest paid railway servants. This has already been referred to by the speaker immediately before me and it is a great satisfaction for us to know that the work which Mr. Hayman is doing is sound and that we may hope to see the results very shortly. I have not got any immediate criticism to make in respect of the wages of these lowest paid railway servants and their privileges, but what I should like to point out is that although it may take a long time to consider this vital question, although the work of investigation may be carried on under the highest pressure, in nearly every such inquiry there is always room for hurrying up a little more. I think it is of the greatest importance that when the lower paid railway servants have grievances and when their conditions do want ameliorating and their privileges want considering, all these matters should be settled at the earliest possible moment. It is far better to offer privileges than to wait until they are demanded under the guise of strikes.

Sir, when I read the speech of the Honourable the Railway Member, I telegraphed to my constituency to ask if they had any remarks to make on it. I have received a reply and they have only one question which they would like me to put. They ask me to comment on the absence of any reference in the Railway Budget to the Bombay-Sind connection. My constituency, the Bombay Chamber, goes on to say that they fully realise the financial situation, but they would welcome some assurance that the Government is alive to the importance of this scheme to the Bombay Presidency in view of the approaching completion of the Barrage projects. I hope that the Honourable the Railway Member will be able to give me some information on that point.

I have no further criticisms—I would not describe them as criticisms—I have no further remarks to make on the Railway Budget, Sir, except that I hope that the forecast for 1930-31 will be realised. It certainly is a matter for regret that the capital expenditure has had to be curtailed. I think it was a wise action to take, although it is a matter for regret. At the same time working expenditure should be looked into closer and closer. When you are working a big concern like Railways during years of depression, the closest examination into current expenditure becomes of even greater importance than it is in more prosperous years.

**\*THE HONOURABLE MR. NARAYAN PRASAD ASTHANA** (United Provinces Northern : Non-Muhammadan): Sir, I congratulate the Honourable Mr. Russell on his maiden speech which has placed the railway case before us

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\* Speech not corrected by the Honourable Member.



[Mr. Narayan Prasad Asthana.]

in such a lucid manner. He comes to this Council with a reputation for technical knowledge, but I hope that he will justify his membership to this Council by a broad-minded sympathy, sympathy for the depressed third class passengers and sympathy at least for Indian aspirations. No doubt the present Budget has a depressing effect and it is a hard lot to begin with a Budget like this at the very outset of one's career as Chief Commissioner of Railways ; but I hope that good luck will favour him in future years.

As has already been remarked by the Honourable Sir Jahangir Coyajee and also by the Honourable Sir Arthur Froom, the deficit in the Railway Budget is due more to world causes than to any inherent defect in the railway administration. But the very fact that the world causes are beyond our control necessitates a very minute watching and it throws a grave responsibility upon the railway administrations to watch their current expenditure. We had to draw about Rs. 86 lakhs from our reserves and the Honourable Sir Arthur Froom says that reserves exist for this purpose. The fact is that we have a top-heavy administration in the Railways and the expenditure has not been scrutinised in the same cautious manner as in the other Departments of the Government and therefore we have had to fall back upon our reserves for the purpose of meeting the Budget. I hope that in future years the Finance Department will keep a watchful eye upon the expenditure of the Railways and that the Railway Board will help the Finance Department in discharging this onerous duty. I am glad to find therefore that it is now proposed that the railway expenditure will be scrutinised twice a year and that due watchfulness will be kept by the Finance Department upon the growing expenditure.

As to the Indianisation of the services, my friend the Honourable Mr. Desika Chari has already referred to it ; but I have only to submit that Indianisation of the services is not proceeding with the same speed as we desire, especially in the higher ranks of the railway administration. There is no doubt that technical skill or technical qualifications are required for those higher services, but if proper facilities for education and for acquiring technical knowledge are afforded to Indians, there will not be a dearth among Indian young men to come forward and take up those duties. My Honourable friend, Lala Ram Saran Das, has put forward his proposals regarding expenditure in the Publicity Department, and I have nothing more to say upon that subject. But I have to bring forward one complaint in regard to my part of the province and it is against the Bengal and North Western Railway and its working. I hope that when the time comes for the expiry of the contract of the Bengal and North Western Railway, the Government will not be pleased to renew it but will take the line under its direct management.

As Vice-Chancellor of a University which extends from Gorakhpur to Jodhpur and from Meerut to Indore, I have to make just one request and that is that students should be given some concession on railways while travelling for their examinations and also while on inspection tours for purposes of education. As to the arrangement of the various time-tables, I have to make one complaint so far as such an important town as Allahabad is concerned. We have been representing time and again that there are no trains from Allahabad in the afternoon towards Lucknow, Shahjahanpur, Bareilly and that side, and the representations have not been heeded up to this time. Allahabad is the centre of all the litigants coming from that side and it is rather troublesome for those people not to have any evening trains to travel back by.

In conclusion, I hope that in future years the Chief Commissioner of Railways will find that his task is made easy by prosperity in trade and by having a surplus Budget next year.

**THE HONOURABLE SIR GEORGE RAINY** (Commerce and Railway Member): Mr. President, during the course of the discussion I caught the word "depressing" from time to time, but I was glad to hear from Sir Arthur Froom, although the word seemed to slip into his mouth also, that on the whole he was of opinion that the Council ought not to be depressed. Now, that is, I think, a reasonable conclusion to draw from the facts of the case. We cannot expect that every year should be a bumper year when we can reduce rates and fares. You cannot expect that trade will always be booming. From time to time bad periods come when trade is slack and goods move slowly and traffic falls off. It was precisely for that reason that the Reserve Fund was created so that the Railways might have no difficulty in meeting their obligations, and particularly their contribution to general revenues, during these worse years. The fact that we have had to draw on our reserve is not really a cause for despondency at all. If we never had to draw on our reserve, people might very naturally put the question whether there was any need for a reserve at all. I will not enlarge further on that subject because really all that was in my mind has been said already, and better said than I could put it, by Sir Jahangir Coyajee and Sir Arthur Froom.

Perhaps I might turn now to what was said by the first speaker, my Honourable friend Lala Ram Saran Das. I am glad to hear that he is pleased by the concessions we have made in the matter of the free allowance of luggage for the lower class passengers and by our new publication containing a statement of the work done by the Local Advisory Committees. He gave us several instances in which he had not found the administration of the Railways quite so amenable to the Local Advisory Committees and to his own exertions as he should have liked to see them. Some of his points struck me as rather small. It would be difficult, I think, to decide at headquarters at Delhi what is the price at which each Railway in India should sell its time-table. That is a matter which must be left to local discretion. On the other hand, there were one or two matters mentioned which seemed to me of some importance. For instance, he referred to the curtailment of train services on the North Western Railway, and gave an instance of a particular train which had been discontinued. That raises a question which may often be reviewed with advantage from headquarters. What we have been trying to do on many of the railway systems in India is to ascertain by periodical censuses on what trains overcrowding is apt to take place, and where it is found that there is overcrowding, the number of trains is increased. On the other hand, it is quite possible that a railway administration, after ascertaining the number of passengers who usually travel by a particular train, may find that their services are more than adequate and that some of their trains are running half empty. In such cases it may be necessary to withdraw trains. But I agree with what the Honourable Member said, that it is the fast train that very often draws traffic, and where the curtailment takes the form of the substitution of a slower train for a faster train that seems to me a matter that we might look into.

As regards another matter to which he referred, namely, the question of Indian refreshment cars, I do not know what the precise circumstances are on the North Western Railway, but one of the reasons why very rapid progress is not made in this matter is that, where these cars are put on, they are sometimes used only to a very small extent. My Honourable friend the Chief Commissioner

[Sir George Rainy.]

has told me that on the railway of which he was formerly in charge, it was found that, in the case of the Indian refreshment car which they were running, when they counted up the number of meals served at the end of the year it came to an average of one a day. Clearly that meant that there was no public need to be served if the number of meals was so small.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS : That is not the case on the North Western Railway. On the other hand there is an ample demand for it.

THE HONOURABLE SIR GEORGE RAINY : In that case I have very little doubt that the railway administration will see the advisability of meeting that demand. I know that in this matter conditions vary in different parts of India. In some parts of India there is a demand, but in others that demand does not exist.

I do not think it is possible for me to refer to all the points taken by my Honourable friend. I was a little surprised to find that the question of artificial ghee was brought up. That does not seem to me a matter primarily for the railways but rather for local bodies and the Local Government. I understand that a Pure Food Act has recently been passed by the Local Government, and of course it will be incumbent on railways to see that the law is observed so far as vendors on the railways are concerned. But I honestly do not see that this is the special business of the railways, or that they can go out of their way to deal with a subject of that kind.

Another matter to which my Honourable friend referred was the encouragement of mechanical training on the railways. We have a scheme as part of the Indianisation scheme for the superior services, by which we take 12 apprentices every year to be trained for future employment in the Transportation (Power) and Mechanical Engineering branches. The first batch of apprentices will be ripe for employment about the year 1932. And from that time onwards that is the source from which we shall mainly draw our Indian recruits for these services. In this connection my Honourable friend brought up the question of the recognition of the MacLagan Engineering College for the purposes of recruitment to the railway services. That is a matter which was specially brought to my notice by Mr. Jogendra Singh, the Minister for Agriculture in the Punjab, at Simla and was very fully discussed. I found there were certain difficulties which seemed to me could be got over and certain inquiries are now proceeding. I regret that I cannot give fuller information to my Honourable friend but the facts are not clearly in my mind. Naturally, of course, I did not know beforehand that this question was likely to be raised.

Another matter mentioned was the desirability of giving fuller details of publicity expenditure, and information as to the extent to which it is believed that such expenditure has been fruitful in increasing traffic. I think this is an important point, because, as it is always unwise to keep a cat which catches no mice, a publicity department which did not attract any passengers would be an expensive luxury. I hope that the Railway Publicity Department is not a cat of that kind. But I would like to point out that it is sometimes difficult to be sure over a short period what precisely the results of an advertising campaign are. It is only over a fairly long period that we can be certain whether the money spent on advertisement is money well spent. But I think this might be said that the experience of railway administrations everywhere has shown in recent years that publicity is a very important means of attracting

passengers, and the railway administrations of all the countries in the world are spending a good deal of money for purposes of that kind. I should be quite prepared to look into it and see how far we can ascertain the results of the publicity campaign on the part of the Indian railways, but I am not at all sure that we shall be able to get precise facts and figures which could be confidently put forward.

I should like to turn now to what was said by my Honourable friend Mr. Chari. His particular cause for finding the Budget depressing was that he saw the Indo-Burma connection fading away into the distance and he felt that it was a cause for despondency. There can be no doubt at all that a number of important construction projects have had to be postponed, but I should like to point out to him that, so far as the connection which I think he favours, that is, the line through Manipur, is concerned, he had not succeeded before the cutting down of the programme in convincing the Government of India that this was a line that they could possibly afford to construct in any period with which we are immediately concerned, and therefore I do not know that in respect of that particular line the cutting down of the programme has made any particular difference.

He mentioned another matter which I am glad to have an opportunity of saying something about. He said he welcomed the reduction made in previous years in the rates on petrol, kerosene, coal and so on, but he expressed regret that we have not been able to take similar action in the case of agricultural produce. The view he urged upon us was that the railways ought to strive after the greatest good of the greatest number and the greatest number in India was clearly the agriculturist. Now, there is a particular point about a lower rate for coal which is of great importance to the railways. Cheap coal means more industries, more industries mean more traffic, so that a lower rate for coal not only means that you carry more coal but also that you carry a great many other things as well. This is a point the railways have always kept in view. In the case of agriculture, there is a particular commodity which is in very much the same position, namely, manure. If you reduce your rates for manure as low as you can, then it means that not only do you get larger traffic in manure but you get also larger traffic in agricultural produce, and we have already, last year, I think it was, or the year before, made a substantial reduction in railway rates on manure. For the rest, we should all be glad if it were possible to reduce the rates at which we carry agricultural produce. But the financial position at the moment is difficult. If we did make a substantial reduction, it would be a considerable time before the increase in traffic put us back in the same financial position as we were in before, and the inevitable result is that either we should have to raise the rates on other commodities or the general revenues would have to subsidise the railways. In the latter event we must remember that the general tax-payer in India is the cultivator again, and what he may gain through the reduction in railway rates, he will lose through the additional taxation he has to pay. I mention this because it is not quite so simple as it looks to make substantial reductions in rates and fares even though they are reductions which one would welcome.

I have noted what he said about the position of Indians on the Burma railways. It is not a matter, I think, to which my attention has been specially called before, and I will certainly look into the matter and see what information we have on the subject.

Then, my Honourable friend Sir Arthur Froom mentioned that his constituents would like to have information about the Bombay-Sind connection. It was not mentioned in the Budget speech for this reason. I did mention

[Sir George Rainy.]

two lines we should like to have seen commenced in the coming year, but were unable to commence. I did not include the Bombay-Sind connection because I do not believe that, however we might wish to do so, we were in a position to start work next year. I am very doubtful whether we should have included any provision in next year's Budget even if the programme had not been curtailed. But the Government of India and the Railway Board fully recognize the importance of this line, and they have given a great deal of attention to it in recent years. I understand that there is provision in the Budget for making the final survey and the preparation of detailed estimates during the coming year. As soon as we find ourselves in a position to initiate important new construction projects, the Bombay-Sind connection will undoubtedly be one of the first we should consider.

My Honourable friend Mr. Asthana asked that we should consider whether we could not make some concession in passenger fares to students travelling on their way to examinations. That is rather a new idea to me, but there may be precedents. We usually make concessions of that kind on the ground that if we reduce the rates we shall get more passengers. But I am not quite clear whether that would produce this result in this case, whether, that is, there would be a larger entry for examinations if we reduced the fares. However, we will see whether there is anything to be made out of the idea.

Then another matter he mentioned—it was mentioned by other speakers also—was the purchase of the Bengal and North Western Railway. The position about that is that the whole matter is being considered now. It is very difficult and very important, but we do not have to give notice of our intention until the 31st December 1931—I think that is the latest date. I cannot make any statement about it just now, but I should like to point out how difficult under existing financial conditions the operation might be, because the sum involved is something like 12 millions sterling, and when we have had to cut down our whole capital expenditure to 16½ crores this year, 12 millions sterling, which is 16 crores, is a very formidable figure to have to contemplate.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS : But it is a paying proposition.

THE HONOURABLE SIR GEORGE RAINY : That is quite true. We bought the Southern Punjab Railway, which is a paying proposition. But then the trouble is that you may not have any money to buy it with. That was the difficulty to which I was referring.

One other point I had meant to mention, raised by the Honourable Lala Ram Saran Das, and that was his point as to the charging of a fee for application forms. I take the fact that people are willing to pay this fee as a very gratifying proof of the popularity of railway service, because unless they were very anxious to enter the service they would not be ready to pay for the application forms. It is a very small point but we will look into what the Honourable Member has said on the subject.

I do not think it will be necessary for me, Mr. President, to speak at greater length to-day. I have listened with great interest to what all the speakers have said, and, if I may say so, I have listened with very particular interest to the lucid and clear exposition of the subject given by my Honourable friend Sir Jahangir Coyajee, because it struck me as the most interesting and valuable speech. But I am grateful to all the speakers and for the suggestions they have made and for the very kind attitude they have taken towards myself and towards the Railway Budget.

## STATEMENT OF BUSINESS.

THE HONOURABLE KHAN BAHADUR SIR MUHAMMAD HABIBULLAH (Leader of the House): Sir, with your permission I should like to make a statement regarding the probable course of business for the next week. On Monday, the 24th February, the Council will meet to transact Government business, when motions will be made for the election of a panel in connection with the Central Advisory Council for Railways and for the election of a member to sit on the Governing Body of the Indian Research Fund Association *vice* Dr. Rama Rau who has ceased to be a Member of this Council. The House will then be asked to take into consideration and to pass the following two Bills as passed by the Legislative Assembly, copies of which were laid on the table of the Council on Monday, the 17th February, namely, the Indian Patents and Designs (Amendment) Bill and the Dangerous Drugs Bill.

Motions will also be made to take into consideration and to pass the following three Bills which were introduced on the 17th February, namely,

the Special Marriage (Amendment) Bill,

the Repealing and Amending Bill, and

the Prisons (Amendment) Bill.

Tuesday, the 25th, was allotted for non-official business, but as there is no business, the Council will not sit on that day. Thursday, the 27th, will be devoted to non-official business.

On Friday, the 28th, the Council will meet at 5 P. M., when, as Honourable Members are already aware, the General Budget will be presented.

The Council then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Monday, the 24th February, 1930.