

17th February 1930

THE

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY DEBATES

(Official Report)

Volume I, 1930

(20th January to 24th February, 1930)

SIXTH SESSION

OF THE

THIRD LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, 1930

~~Chamber suggested...~~ 18-X-73



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1930

Legislative Assembly.

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THE HONOURABLE MR V. J. PATEL.

Deputy President :

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MR. S. C. GUPTA, BAR.-AT-LAW.

Assistant of the Secretary :

RAI SAHIB D. DUTT.

Marshal :

CAPTAIN SURAJ SINGH BAHADUR, I.O.M.

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Monday, 17th February, 1930.

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

MEMBERS SWORN:

Sheikh Mushir Husajn Kidwai, M.L.A. (Cities of the United Provinces : Muhammadan Urban); Mr. Adit Prasad Singh, M.L.A. (Darbhanga *cum* Saran : Non-Muhammadan); Mr. Satyendra Chandra Mitra, M.L.A. (Chittagong and Rajshahi Divisions : Non-Muhammadan Rural); Mr. Hari Prasad Lal, M.L.A. (Gaya *cum* Monghyr : Non-Muhammadan); and Mr. Albert Melville Hayman, O.B.E., M.L.A. (Railway Board : Nominated Official).

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS ON THE " AZAN " QUESTION IN ZAFARWAL.

298. ***Mr. Anwar-ul-Azim**: Has the attention of Government been drawn to the order of the Commissioner, Lahore Division, about the 'Azan matter in Zafarwal in the Punjab? Is that consistent with Government's policy of neutrality in matters of religion? Have Government realised the fact that it has created consternation amongst the Muslims all over India?

The Honourable Sir James Orerar: The Government of India have ascertained from the Local Government that the Commissioner of the Lahore Division has issued no order of any kind relating to the dispute in village Zafarwal regarding the calling of the *Azan*. The policy of the Local Government has been to obtain a settlement of the dispute which will leave behind no ill-feeling either among Muhammadans or among Sikhs. It was in accordance with this policy that the Commissioner of the Lahore Division gave advice to both parties when he visited the village on the 17th of January, 1930. The advice actually given is stated in his letter to the *Muslim Outlook* which was published in the issue of that paper dated the 23rd of January, 1930. The Government of India understand that the dispute has now been settled.

ACCIDENT ON THE BENGAL NAGPUR RAILWAY.

299. ***Khan Bahadur Sarfaraz Hussain Khan**: (a) Will Government be pleased to state if their attention has been drawn to the paragraph published in the *Bengalee* of the 1st February, 1930, under the heading "Three Killed, Bengal Nagpur Railway Collision Tragedy, Several Injured"?

(b) If so, will they please state if the report is correct?

(c) If correct, will they please state who were responsible for the accident and what steps Government are going to take against them?

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons: (a) and (b). Yes.

(c) The Government Inspector of Railways reported that he was holding an inquiry into the cause of the accident on the 3rd February. His report is awaited.

RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION IN INDIA.

300. ***Khan Bahadur Sarfaraz Hussain Khan:** (a) Has the attention of Government been drawn to the report published in the *Statesman* of January 31, 1930, under the heading "Rail Construction Check, Retarding Progress of India"?

(b) If so, will Government please state if the report is correct?

(c) If correct, will they please state the reasons for the rail construction check?

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons: (a) Yes.

(b) It is correct to say that the Government have decided that the time has come to make a pause in the rate of capital expenditure on railway development. Such capital expenditure, excluding sums spent on the purchase of railways, during the past five years, has averaged 22½ crores per annum. At present, it is considered that it is of great importance to restrict Government borrowings while it is, for other reasons also, a suitable time to pause and take stock of the position on the railways. This is only a normal phase in the execution of the general policy of the Government which will continue to be, as it has been hitherto, a policy of taking up the construction of extensions of the railway system that appear likely to be remunerative when money can be made available for them consistently with the needs of financing other forms of development, and at reasonable rates of interest.

(c) The conditions affecting the issue of loans for capital expenditure on railways at present and the increase in the rate of interest which must be offered to attract money to such loans.

Mr. K. O. Neogy: Is it a fact that in the case of one sanctioned scheme, namely, the Dacca-Aricha Railway, the check is really due to the anxiety on the part of the Government to placate the *Statesman* itself and the Bengal Chamber of Commerce?

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons: The answer is in the negative.

Mr. K. O. Neogy: With reference to the letter which the Government have lately addressed to the Bengal Chamber of Commerce on the subject, is it a fact that it is in the nature of a diplomatic document intended to give a decent burial to this scheme?

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons: No, Sir. I believe the Honourable the Railway Member is going to lay a copy of that letter on the table of the House very shortly,—today, I think,—and Honourable Members will be able to judge from the terms of that letter whether it justifies the description the Honourable Member has given of it.

Mr. K. O. Neogy: Is it not a fact that, although the Honourable Member promised to lay copies of the correspondence on the table in September last, the reply to the Bengal Chamber of Commerce has already been published in the Press?

The Honourable Sir George Rainy: Yes, Sir. I regret that this should have happened. It ought not to have been published in the Press until the day on which it was laid on the table of this House, and I desire to apologise to the House for the mistake.

APPOINTMENTS IN THE POSTAL DEPARTMENT.

301. ***Khan Bahadur Haji Abdullah Haji Kasim:** (a) Will Government be pleased to state whether it is a fact that there was a system of engaging men to learn work in the post office, with a view to employing them as vacancies arose in the Postal Department?

(b) If so, how many candidates were so selected in the Madras Presidency during the years 1928-29 and 1929-30?

(c) How many of them were directed to furnish security and how many did actually furnish security?

(d) How many of them did actually work as clerks during the said period?

(e) Are Government aware that the Postmaster General, Madras, abruptly cancelled the system of candidates on the "Waiting List" as per circular No. AX-7, dated the 16th September, 1920?

(f) If so, how many of them were thrown out of work thereby?

(g) Is it a fact that the subsequent vacancies in the Postal Department were filled up from men who were untrained strangers, ignoring the claims and protests of the candidates who had duly furnished security, who had worked in the post offices for months together without any remuneration and temporarily acted as clerks?

(h) If the replies to parts (a), (e), and (g) are in the affirmative, will Government be pleased to state what steps they propose to take in the matter, and whether, in making future appointments, preference will be given now at least to those who are out of work?

Mr. H. A. Sams: (a) The fact is as stated by the Honourable Member.

(b) to (h). If the year 1920 given in the Honourable Member's question is correct Government regret that they cannot undertake the compilation of information extending over the last ten years, as the labour and expense involved thereby will not in their opinion be commensurate with the value of the information to the public. I shall, however, inquire of the Postmaster General concerned whether there is any genuine grievance requiring remedy.

THROUGH BOOKING ON THE ASSAM BENGAL RAILWAY.

302. ***Mr. Anwar-ul-Azim:** (a) Will Government be pleased to state if it is a fact that special facilities for through booking from all stations of the Assam Bengal Railway to Rangoon and Akyat have been conceded to the British India Steam Navigation Company Limited, with a special van for the passengers while the application of the Bengal Burma Steam Navigation Company, Limited, for similar facilities has been denied by the Assam Bengal Railway although a promise was held out by the former Agent, Mr. Izat?

(b) If the answer to part (a) be in the affirmative, will Government be pleased to state the reasons therefor?

(c) Is it a fact that at the last meeting of the Assam Bengal Railway Local Advisory Committee held on the 16th January last the Indian members strongly recommended the grant of similar facilities to the Bengal Burma Steam Navigation Company?

(d) Will Government be pleased to state whether they intend to request the Assam Bengal Railway Company to grant the similar facilities to the Bengal Burma Steam Navigation Company?

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons: (a) Yes.

(b) In 1926, the Assam Bengal Railway came to an agreement with the British India Steam Navigation Company for through booking from certain stations on the Assam Bengal Railway to Rangoon by British India steamers. At that time there were no competitors for the traffic. In November 1928, through booking was also made applicable to the Port of Akyab. In December 1928, the Bengal Burma Steam Navigation Company applied for similar through booking to Rangoon and Akyab by their steamers and this was agreed to by the Agent of the Assam Bengal Railway, but it was subsequently found that the rates by the Bengal Burma Steam Navigation Company were higher than those by the British India Steam Navigation Company and the former company were told that through booking would be possible if they charged the same fares as the British India Steam Navigation Company. The Agent considered that different fares to the same place by the same route were open to objection and might lead to fraud.

(c) The matter was discussed at the meeting of the Assam Bengal Railway Local Advisory Committee on 16th January and the Agent explained the reasons which had led to his refusing to meet the request of the Bengal Burma Steam Navigation Company.

(d) I am asking the Agent for further particulars as to the difficulty he foresees in having through booking at two different fares and to further consider whether through booking with the Bengal Burma Steam Navigation Company could not be introduced.

Mr. Sarabhai Nemchand Haji: May I know, Sir, if the action of the Agent does not indicate one of the many directions in which the Government of India help non-Indian and British monopolies in this country?

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons: No, Sir. The action of the Agent was taken for the reason I have given, namely, that he considered that different fares to the same place by the same route were open to objection as facilitating fraud. But I am not sure that there may not be other ways of overcoming that objection, and it is for this reason that we are asking the Agent to reconsider the matter, and to see whether he cannot allow through booking by the Burma Steam Navigation Company.

Mr. Sarabhai Nemchand Haji: Why then is it, Sir, that the Government of India are helping one of the parties to the rate war, namely, the British India Company, who themselves have started a rate war against a genuine Indian concern?

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons: I should like to explain, Sir, that the Honourable Member's question is, I believe, the first intimation which the Government of India or the Railway Board have had of this matter. I have no reason to believe that the Agent's action in the matter has anything to do with the rate war which the Honourable Member states to be in progress.

Mr. Sarabhai Nemchand Haji: Do I understand the Honourable Member to say that the Agent did not know the existence of the rate war when, as the result of it, the rate was reduced from 14 to 4?

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons: No, Sir, nothing of the sort. I said that, as far as I am aware, the Honourable Member's question is the first intimation we had had of the matter. I was merely correcting the suggestion that the action of the Agent had anything to do with the Government of India.

PAY AND DUTIES OF EXTRA-DEPARTMENTAL AGENTS.

308. ***Mr. Anwar-ul-Azim:** (a) Are Government aware that regular attendance hours are now prescribed for the Extra-Departmental Agents of the Postal Department, and that they get no time available for taking up other sources of income?

(b) If the reply to part (a) be in the negative, do Government propose to inquire into the matter?

(c) Is it a fact that the Postal Inquiry Committee recommended a slight increase in the emoluments of the Extra-Departmental Agents, but that in the subsequent revision of pay of all classes of employees the case of the Extra-Departmental Agents was entirely overlooked?

(d) Have Government included in the Budget of this year an adequate amount for the revision of the emoluments of the Extra-Departmental Agents, including the allowances for contingencies?

Mr. H. A. Sams: (a) Regular attendance hours, that is to say, the hours during which an office is open for business, have always been prescribed for Extra-Departmental Agents of the Postal Department. Government are not aware that the Extra-Departmental Agents get no time for their ordinary business. In fact Government are under the impression that this is not the case. If, however, in any particular instance it is so, it is open to the Extra-Departmental Agent to resign.

(b) No.

(c) No. The attention of the Honourable Member is invited to my reply to parts (c) and (d) of Mr. S. C. Mitra's starred question No. 1006 in the Legislative Assembly on the 11th March, 1929.

(d) In view of the reference I have just given, this point does not arise.

PAY OF MAIL RUNNERS.

804. ***Mr. Anwar-ul-Azim:** (a) Are Government aware that the mail-runners are paid barely Rs. 18—19 per month?

(b) Are Government aware that the divisional administrative heads of the Postal Department are of opinion that the present pay of the runners is hopelessly inadequate? If Government have no information, what steps have Government taken to ascertain it?

(c) Have Government considered the question of increasing the pay of the mail-runners as proposed by the All-India Postal and Railway Mail Service Union? If not, why not?

The Honourable Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra: (a) The facts are not as stated by the Honourable Member. There are different scales of pay in force for runners in different Circles, but nowhere is their pay less than Rs. 13/- per mensem, while in a few cases it is as high as Rs. 80/- per mensem.

(b) Government have not received representations to the effect stated and do not consider it necessary to institute inquiries. The pay of runners was last revised in 1928.

(c) Yes. The attention of the Honourable Member is invited to paragraph 8, Volume VIII of the proceedings of the Meeting of the Standing Finance Committee held on the 31st January, 1928.

PAY OF MAIL GUARDS.

305. ***Mr. Anwar-ul-Azim:** (a) Is it a fact that, before the introduction of the time-scale of pay the salary of the mail guards was fixed at Rs. 15 and Rs. 20 and that the salary of the branch postmasters was fixed at Rs. 15 only?

(b) Is it a fact that, under the rules, the mail guards have to write their work papers in English and have to use code messages?

(c) Is it a fact that the Postal Inquiry Committee, after a thorough examination of the conditions of service, recommended the pay of the branch postmasters to be Rs. 20—32 and that of the mail guards to be Rs. 20—3/5—35?

(d) Is it a fact that, despite those recommendations, the present pay of the branch postmasters and mail guards is fixed at Rs. 40—80 and Rs. 20—40, respectively?

(e) Have Government considered the question of revising the pay of the mail guards on the lines of the Committee's recommendations, and have Government provided in the Budget for this year the necessary funds? If the reply be in the negative, will Government be pleased to state the reasons?

The Honourable Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra: (a) The facts are not as stated by the Honourable Member. The salaries drawn by mail guards and branch postmasters before the introduction of the time scales of pay will be found on pages 25 to 33 of the Report of the Postal Committee of 1920, to which the Honourable Member's attention is invited.

(b) Yes.

(c) No. The recommendations of the Committee will be found in their Report at the pages mentioned at (a) above.

(d) The existing scales of pay for departmental branch postmasters and mail guards vary in different localities and are not exactly those stated by the Honourable Member. The lowest time scale for branch postmasters is Rs. 35—4—75 and the highest Rs. 70—4—110. For mail guards the lowest and highest time scales are Rs. 18—1—38, and Rs. 30—1—50, respectively.

(e) The pay of mail guards was revised in 1920 on the recommendations of the Postal Committee. After reviewing the position, revised scales were introduced for them in May 1928, by which they were placed on an equal

footing with postmen at all stations. Government do not propose to effect any further revision of their pay; they have not therefore provided any funds in the Budget for this year. The reasons are stated in part (e) of my reply to Mr. G. Sarvotham Rao's question No. 347 on the 7th March, 1928.

APPOINTMENTS AND PROMOTIONS IN THE POSTAL DEPARTMENT.

306. ***Mr. Anwar-ul-Azim:** (a) Will Government be pleased to state the policy under which probationers in the Postal Department were recruited and the promotion of the officials to higher grades were made before the introduction of the examination for the confirmation of reserve clerks and the promotion to selection grades?

(b) Will Government be pleased to state the defects in the system for which the present system of examination has been introduced?

(c) Will Government be pleased to state the number of reserve clerks that have been turned out of the Department for failure in the test at the second time in the Bengal and Assam Circle during the last two years?

(d) Will Government be pleased to state the number of candidates that appeared in India for the selection grade examination held on the 16th and 17th December, 1929, and what amount has been received by Government from the sale proceeds of the copies of postal publications purchased by the examinees?

(e) Is it a fact that the General Secretary, All-India Postal and Railway Mail Service Union had an interview with the Director General of Posts and Telegraphs on the 19th November, 1929, and pointed out to that officer that the candidates did not receive in time the Initial Account Code and also represented to him certain other inconveniences and requested him to change the date but that the date was not changed?

(f) Is it a fact that since the creation of the Post Office Department in India eligibility for promotion was determined by seniority coupled with efficiency?

(g) Will Government be pleased to state the number of unsuccessful candidates in the Bengal and Assam Circle against whom there is nothing on record to pass them over for promotion to selection grades?

(h) Is it a fact that many junior time-scale clerks have been promoted to the selection grade as Town Inspectors without any examination merely on consideration that they were acting in that capacity for some time? If so, will Government be pleased to state why this consideration cannot be applied in case of time-scale Postmasters for promotion to the selection grade appointments?

The Honourable Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra: (a) The system of recruitment before the introduction of the confirmation examination was the same as it is now, *viz.*, that except in certain backward provinces, candidates were required to possess certain minimum educational qualifications and to pass an examination conducted by gazetted officers. Promotion to the higher grades before the introduction of the lowest selection grade examination was made by seniority coupled with fitness as judged by the officials' past record and by the personal knowledge of the officer ordering the promotion.

(b) Before the introduction of the confirmation examination, probationers, after their first appointment, were often found to take too little

interest in their work and to fail to acquaint themselves with the ordinary rules and regulations of the Department, knowledge of which is necessary for the efficient discharge of their duties. The introduction of the confirmation examination considerably lessened this tendency and its effect has been very salutary. The previous system of promotion to the selection grade did not provide a uniform and safe guide; selection by examination was therefore introduced.

(c) Information is being obtained and will be furnished to the Honourable Member in due course.

(d) 2652 candidates sat for the examination. The amount derived from the sale of departmental publications to examinees is being ascertained and will be intimated to the Honourable Member later on.

(e) Yes. The date was not changed as the difficulties pointed out were not considered to be insurmountable.

(f) Yes, but it does not follow that there was no scope for further improvement.

(g) Assuming that the Honourable Member refers to the lowest selection grade examination, I would observe that the results of the examination have not yet been published.

(h) The Honourable Member's attention is invited to the reply to part (f) of question No. 1834, dated the 2nd April, 1929, in the Legislative Assembly.

Mr. Anwar-ul-Azim: Will the Honourable Member kindly place the information with regard to part (c) of my question on the table of the House?

The Honourable Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra: The usual practice in these cases, Sir, is to place a copy of the reply in the Library of the House. This is done to avoid adding to the bulk, and the printing charges, of the proceedings of this House.

Mr. Anwar-ul-Azim: When the Government of India are in a position to spend crores of rupees on many other things, can they not also bear the expenses of this printing, Sir?

The Honourable Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra: Sir, the decision about the practice to which I referred was arrived at after due consideration of the circumstances of the case. If a copy of the reply is placed in the Library of the House, it will be equally available to any Honourable Member of the House who wants to get himself acquainted with the information.

Dr. A. Suhrawardy: May I inquire whether it will be available to Members of Parliament who would not have access to information which forms part of the proceedings of this House if such information is placed only in the Library of the House?

The Honourable Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra: The information in this particular case is not of a nature which will interest any Member of the Houses of Parliament.

Dr. A. Suhrawardy: That is a matter of opinion.

EXAMINATIONS FOR POSTAL OFFICIALS.

307. ***Mr. Anwar-ul-Azim:** (a) Will Government be pleased to state whether in the Postal Department the administrative officers have to appear at any examination for higher grades and appointments? If not, why are the officials in the time-scale required to undergo an examination?

(b) Is it a fact that the departure from the old practice is due to loss of efficiency of the administrative officers in selecting able and efficient senior hands for promotion? If not, will Government be pleased to state the reasons for the introduction of the examination?

(c) Will Government be pleased to state the number of candidates that appeared for the examination in India, the number required for employment and the number turned out as unsuccessful and the amount recovered as fees for the examination and medical certificates and the purpose for which the fees for examination and medical certificates have been realised and for what purpose the amount will be utilised?

(d) Is it a fact that under the existing rule the officials on first appointment have to produce a health certificate from a competent medical authority without which pay cannot be drawn, and if so, why a fee of Rs. 16 has been recovered from them? Is any fee, at all, recovered from the new recruits into the Post Office for a certificate of health?

The Honourable Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra: (a) No. In reply to the second part of the question, the Honourable Member is referred to the reply to (b) of his previous question.

(b) No. The reply to the second part of the question is given in my reply to (b) of the previous question.

(c) No information can be given unless the Honourable Member will please state definitely the examination or examinations he has in view.

(d) The reply to the first part of the question is in the affirmative. The second part cannot be answered unless the appointments which the Honourable Member has in view are specified. The reply to the third part is in the negative.

MR. HARDY'S REPORT ON COTTON PIECE-GOODS DUTIES.

308. ***Mr. B. Das:** (a) Has the attention of Government been drawn to the reply given by Mr. Wedgwood Benn to a question of Major Graham Pole in the House of Commons concerning Mr. Hardy's Report on the question of substituting specific duties for *ad valorem* duties on imported cotton piece-goods to India?

(b) Will Government be pleased to state what will be the increase or loss of revenue by adopting Mr. Hardy's method of charging specific duties on imported cotton piece-goods?

(c) Will Government be pleased to state the proposals they wish the House to adopt on the recommendations of the Hardy Report?

(d) Do Government propose to bring forward a specific motion in the Legislative Assembly to discuss the Hardy recommendations? If so, when?

The Honourable Sir George Rainy: (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The revenue effect of a change to specific duties must depend upon the rates of duty as well as the method of charging duty adopted. Mr. Hardy's Report made suggestions as to method only and the question cannot therefore be answered.

(c) and (d). Mr. Hardy's Report contains no recommendations.

TRADE DEPRESSION IN COTTON MILLS.

309. ***Mr. B. Das:** Are Government aware that only the Bombay group of cotton mills suffer from trade depression and is it a fact that all agitation for compassion and help proceeded only from the Bombay Mill-owners' Association?

The Honourable Sir George Rainy: Reports which Government have received indicate that cotton mills at other centres than Bombay are also suffering in varying degrees for lack of demand for their goods.

Requests made for assistance to the cotton mill industry have not been confined to the Bombay Millowners' Association.

TRADE DEPRESSION IN COTTON MILLS.

310. ***Mr. B. Das:** (a) Will Government be pleased to state if they received any representation from mills situated at Ahmedabad, Delhi, Bengal, Cawnpore and the Punjab regarding external competition and consequent trade depression?

(b) What is the finding of Mr. Hardy regarding trade depression in those places?

The Honourable Sir George Rainy: (a) Representations have been received recently from the cotton mill industry at Ahmedabad, Delhi and Cawnpore and in Bengal.

(b) I would refer the Honourable Member to the Report.

ENHANCEMENT OF DUTY ON IMPORTED COTTON YARN.

311. ***Mr. B. Das:** Will Government be pleased to state the amount of revenue accruing to Government from the additional levy of duty on imported cotton yarn on the recommendations of the Tariff Board Inquiry (Cotton Textile Industry Inquiry) during:

(1) 1927-28:

(2) 1928-29: and

(3) 1929-30?

The Honourable Sir George Schuster: On the quantities actually imported since the new duty on cotton yarn came into force in October, 1927, the amounts by which actual collections of duty exceeded what would have been collected at the former rate have been:

	Lakhs.
(1) 1927-28 (October to March)	5.9
(2) 1928-29	10.8
(3) 1929-30 (nine months)	7.9

This calculation, however, does not allow for the reduction of imports consequent upon the restrictive effect of the new duty, and it would be more correct to compare actual collections with the duty at the old rate on an estimate of the quantities that would have been imported if that

rate had remained in force; on this basis, the additional revenue secured is calculated to be as follows:

	Lakhs.
(1) 1927-28 (October to March)	2½
(2) 1928-29	7½
(3) 1929-30 (nine months)	5

ENHANCEMENT OF DUTY ON IMPORTED COTTON YARN.

312. ***Mr. B. Das:** (a) Will Government be pleased to state to what extent the Bombay millowners derived assistance to meet, (i) external competition, (ii) internal competition from India by such enhancement of duty on imported cotton yarn?

(b) Will Government be pleased to state whether Mr. Hardy was instructed to inquire into this aspect of the question, and if so, what are his conclusions?

(c) Is it not a fact that the Bombay millowners were the only party that cried for this protection in 1927?

The Honourable Sir George Rainy: (a) I would refer the Honourable Member to my reply to Mr. Duraiswamy Aiyangar's question No. 84, dated the 20th January, 1930.

(b) Mr. Hardy was not so instructed.

(c) No.

OVER-CAPITALISATION OF THE BOMBAY COTTON MILLS.

313. ***Mr. B. Das:** (a) With reference to paragraph 89 of the Tariff Board's Report (Cotton Textile Industry Enquiry, 1927) on over-capitalisation of the Bombay group of mills, will Government be pleased to state if Mr. Hardy was instructed to inquire whether the Bombay group of mills had taken any steps to reduce their war boom capitalisation, and if so, what is the conclusion of Mr. Hardy on the subject?

(b) Is it not a fact that the tendency of over-capitalisation was only observed in the Bombay group of mills?

(c) Is it a fact that the Tariff Board found the following abnormal conditions in the Bombay mills?

	Ahmedabad.	Bombay.
No. of Mills	54	54
Spindles	1,311,939	3,456,233
Looms	28,507	72,266
Paid up capital	Rs 3.25 crores.	Rs. 19.21 crores.
Ratio of looms and spindles of Ahmedabad/Bombay		3 times.
Do. paid up capital		6 times.

The Honourable Sir George Rainy: (a) Mr. Hardy was not so instructed.

(b) The conclusion stated by the Tariff Board in its Report on the Cotton Textile Industry Inquiry was that the tendency to over-capitalisation in the boom period was much more marked in Bombay than elsewhere.

(c) The figures quoted by the Honourable Member are as given by the Tariff Board, except that the number of mills in Bombay quoted by him should be 79 instead of 54.

Mr. H. P. Mody: Has the Honourable Member recently received statements showing that, whatever over-capitalisation took place during the boom period, in recent years a very considerable reduction of capital has been effected in the Bombay mills?

The Honourable Sir George Rainy: That is so, Sir; but I wish to make it clear that I was merely stating what the view expressed by the Tariff Board was: I was not expressing any view on behalf of the Government.

Mr. H. P. Mody: I quite recognise that, Sir.

FINANCES OF BOMBAY COTTON MILLS.

314. ***Mr. B. Das:** (a) Are Government aware that the Tariff Board reached the conclusion in paragraph 40 of their Report that the dividends paid during the boom years (by Bombay mills) were unduly high?

(b) Is it also stated in that paragraph that the Bombay group of mills did not provide sufficient funds for depreciation (*vide* paragraph 40 of the Report) as given below:

				Bombay.	Japan.
(Depreciation allowed in per cent.)					
Buildings	..	..	..	2½%	} 10 to 15% average being 13·6%
Machinery	..	..	..	5 %	

The Honourable Sir George Rainy: (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Board's statement was that Japanese mills had shown greater foresight than the Bombay mills in regard to amounts written off to depreciation.

HARDSHIPS OF HANDLOOM WEAVERS.

315. ***Mr. B. Das:** (a) Will Government be pleased to state if they made any inquiry as to the extent to which the handloom weavers suffered in their income due to the levy of additional duty on imported cotton yarn?

(b) Will Government be pleased to state if they are aware that the prices of handloom woven cloth have remained stationary and in some places gone down since 1927?

(c) Are Government aware of the hardship to handloom weavers all over the country owing to the increased price of yarn, both imported and indigenous?

(d) Is it a fact that the Directors of Industries of provinces with a majority of handloom weavers drew the attention of Government to this hardship?

(e) Did Government address any inquiry to the provinces, after the yarn duties were raised, as to the loss of trade and income to the handloom weavers?

(f) Is it a fact that the Indian millowners raised the prices of their yarn after the increment of duty on imported cotton yarn.

(g) Are Government prepared to consider the question of abolishing the duty on imported cotton yarn?

The Honourable Sir George Rainy: (a), (b), (c) and (e). Government have made two inquiries into the effect of the duty on handloom weavers. Copies of the replies received from the Local Governments to the first inquiry, and the replies so far received to the second inquiry have been placed in the Library. The replies do not indicate that the interests of handloom weavers have been seriously affected by the duty.

(d) No.

(f) The exact effect of the duty on the price of cotton yarn is difficult to trace, but presumably it must have operated to keep the price at a higher level than it would otherwise have reached.

(g) Government will announce their intentions at an early date.

Mr. B. Das: May I inquire, Sir, whether from the reports received by the Government of India in reply to their inquiry, any Provincial Government has pointed out that there has been no increment in the price of handloom woven goods?

The Honourable Sir George Rainy: I must ask for notice of that.

Mr. N. C. Kelkar: May I put the questions on behalf of Rai Sahib Harbilas Sarda?

Mr. President: Mr. Kelkar.

RELICS OF BUDDHA.

316. ***Mr. N. C. Kelkar** (on behalf of Rai Sahib Harbilas Sarda): (a) Has the attention of Government been drawn to the news published in the *Hindustan Times* of the 31st January, 1930, that a bone relic of Buddha has been discovered during the excavation on Nagarjunikonda in the Palnad Taluk of the Guntur District?

(b) Are Government aware that great dissatisfaction and resentment was produced amongst the Hindus in India by the removal by Government a few years ago of Buddha relics found near Peshawar to places in Burma and Ceylon?

(c) Are Government aware that Buddha is worshipped by Hindus as one of the ten incarnations of God?

(d) Are Government aware that Hindus strongly resent the removal from India of any part of the remains of the greatest man that India has produced?

(e) Will Government give reasons why these relics are removed from stupas reverently built by ancient Indians as sacred places?

(f) What steps do Government propose to take to preserve in India this bone relic of Buddha, which is one of the greatest and most sacred heirlooms of India?

Sir Frank Noyce: (a) Yes. The information referred to by the Honourable Member was published with the approval of the Government of India.

(b) The Buddha relics found in a stupa near Peshawar in 1908-09 were presented to the Buddhists of Burma, which is a province of India. No portion of these relics was sent to Ceylon. Applications were received from certain Hindu Associations and individuals requesting the retention of these relics in India proper, as distinct from Burma, but in view of the

much larger population of Buddhists in that province, the relics were presented to it to be preserved in a special pagoda at Mandalay.

(c) Yes.

(d) and (e). I have already explained to the Honourable Member the reasons for the removal to another province of India of the relics discovered near Peshawar. I can assure him that it is not the policy either of Government or of the Archaeological Department unnecessarily to disturb or to export sacred objects that come into their possession. Where legitimate archaeological activity puts them in possession of such relics, their one object is to utilise them in such a manner as to enhance their accessibility to all who may be interested in them.

(f) Presumably the Honourable Member is referring to the relic recently unearthed at Nagarjunikonda. The question of its disposal is under consideration.

BIRTH AND DEATH RATES IN THE TOWNS OF BEAWAR AND AJMER.

817. *Mr. N. O. Kelkar (on behalf of Rai Sahib Harbilas Sarda): With reference to the answer given to me on the 11th September, 1929, to my question No. 385, regarding figures for birth and death rates, that information was being collected and would be supplied to me, will Government state if the information has been collected now that four months have passed? In view of the grave nature of the matter will Government supply me this information within the next ten days?

Sir Frank Noyce: The information has recently been communicated to the Honourable Member. I must express my regret that it was not possible to supply him with it earlier.

BIRTH AND DEATH RATES IN THE TOWNS OF BEAWAR AND AJMER.

818. *Mr. N. O. Kelkar (on behalf of Rai Sahib Harbilas Sarda): (a) Has the attention of Government been drawn to the fact that while the average mortality of children below 10 years of age in the town of Beawar during the years 1921 to 1928 was 662.11 per thousand and the infantile mortality during the first year of birth 408.04, the child mortality under 10 years has arisen from 539.9 in 1928 A.D. to 573.82 in 1929 A.D.?

(b) Is it a fact that in 1929 the total number of births in Beawar with a population of 22,362 was 705 and the total number of deaths 955, showing a ratio of 135.4 deaths for every 100 births and that while the birth rate per thousand was only 31.52 the death-rate was 42.70?

(c) In view of the above facts and the statement made regarding the unsatisfactory sanitary conditions obtaining in and the consequent abnormal death rate prevailing in Ajmer and Beawar in the book "*Beawar, ki Bheeshna Mritiu Sankhya*" published last year, do Government propose to make an inquiry into the causes of this grave state of affairs or to take any other action in the matter?

(d) Is it a fact that lack of money alone stands in the way of the Local Government of Ajmer-Merwara improving the sanitation of Ajmer and Beawar? If so, do Government propose to give financial assistance to the Local Government to enable it to take measures to reduce the appalling death-rate in Ajmer and Beawar?

Sir Frank Noyce: (a) and (b). Official figures for births and deaths for 1929 are not yet available and the necessary information, which has been called for, will be supplied to the Honourable Member on receipt.

(c) and (d). Schemes for the improvement of sanitary arrangements at Ajmer and Beawar are under the consideration of the local Municipal Committees. The Government of India are also alive to the necessity for removing the existing defects and deficiencies. The programme of medical and public health improvement in areas directly administered by the Government of India recently approved by the Standing Finance Committee provides for a grant-in-aid from Central revenues of Rs. 1,55,000 and Rs. 70,000 for the improvement of sanitation in Ajmer and Beawar, respectively. The total cost of the schemes is estimated at Rs. 3 lakhs in Ajmer and Rs. one lakh in Beawar. The Government grant can be paid only after plans and estimates have been approved by the Government of India and an assurance is given that the local body is able to meet the balance either from its existing funds or by raising a loan. I regret, however, to add that, owing to the severe financial stringency prevailing at present, Government have not found it possible to make any provision in the next year's Budget for these schemes.

Mr. B. Das: Will it not be better for the Government to wait till they see the effects of Rai Sahib Harbilas Sarda's Child Marriage Act before they give further assistance to any measures he proposes?

(Mr. President called the next question.)

AMENDMENT OF THE PRESIDENCY-TOWNS INSOLVENCY ACT.

319. ***Mr. Lalchand Navalrai:** With reference to my starred question No. 3, asked on the 2nd September, 1929, with regard to the amendment of the Presidency-towns Insolvency Act, section 55, and the Provincial Insolvency Act, section 53, will Government be pleased to state if they have by now considered the matter and whether they propose to introduce a Bill amending the same during this Session? If not, when is it likely to be introduced?

The Honourable Sir James Orerar: Government propose to introduce tomorrow a Bill to make certain amendments in the Insolvency Law.

BOAT HIRE OF POSTMEN IN THE DACCA DISTRICT.

320. ***Mr. Anwar-ul-Azim:** (a) With reference to Government's reply to unstarred question No. 119 in the Legislative Assembly on the 2nd September, 1929, will Government be pleased to state the result of the inquiry held in 1927 by Rai H. K. Raha Bahadur, the late Postmaster General, Bengal and Assam Circle?

(b) Is it a fact that he recommended an increase of boat hire to a sum not less than Rs. 4 a month to all postmen who have to travel by boats in the Dacca District and the engagement of rowers?

(c) Are Government aware that Mr. F. T. deMonte, the present Postmaster General, Bengal and Assam Circle, in an interview with the General Secretary, All-India Postal and Railway Mail Service Union, Bengal and Assam Provincial Branch, on the 10th May, 1929, stated that the question of increasing instead of curtailing the monsoon charge is under consideration?

(d) Has the attention of Government been drawn to letter No. 5431, dated the 5th September, 1927, and letter No. 4531, dated the 27th August, 1927, respectively, from the District Magistrate and District Judge, Dacca, stating that they pay Rs. 25 a month to their menials for a single *dingi* boat and boatman copies of which have been forwarded by the Secretary of the Dacca Postal and Railway Mail Service Union to the Director General of Posts and Telegraphs and the Honourable Member, Industries and Labour, and the remarks made by the Sub-Divisional Officer, Manikganj, in presiding at the annual meeting of the Dacca Branch Postal and Railway Mail Service Union on the 4th August, 1929, and published in the *Samitee*, a registered organ of the Dacca Union in its issue of August, 1929?

(e) Will Government be pleased to state the amount of reduction, if any, made in the year 1929-30 in the monsoon charges in the Dacca Division and other divisions within the Dacca Range and what were the grounds for the reduction?

(f) Are Government aware that the postmen in rural post offices have to travel in several places in Bengal at their own expense? If not, have Government investigated the matter, and if so, what steps do they propose to take in the matter?

(g) What steps do Government propose to take in order to increase the boat hire and rowers' allowance with effect from 1930-31? If it is not proposed to take any action in the matter, will Government be pleased to quote the enactment under which Government can compel the postmen and runners to pay the taxes imposed on them in the shape of monsoon charges?

The Honourable Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra: (a), (b) and (g). Government are not prepared to disclose or discuss the recommendations of particular officers. I would, however, inform the Honourable Member that orders have already been issued revising the rates of boat hire and rowers' allowance at certain stations in the Bengal and Assam Circle, where justified, after considering the advice of Rai Bahadur H. K. Raha and others.

(c), (e) and (f). Inquiries are being made and the Honourable Member will be informed in due course.

(d) Government have seen the remarks of the Sub-Divisional Officer, Manikganj, and copies of the letters referred to. The latter do not however contain the statements alleged by the Honourable Member.

ABOLITION OF THE RANGE OFFICE AT DACCA.

321. ***Mr. Anwar-ul-Azim:** (a) Will Government be pleased to state the result of the inquiry regarding the abolition of the Range Office at Dacca in the charge of a Deputy Postmaster General? (*Vide* Government reply to the starred question No. 82 on the 3rd September, 1929)?

(b) Will Government be pleased to state whether there are any more Range Offices in any province in India? If not, what really justifies the retention of the office at Dacca?

(c) Will Government be pleased to state what is the monthly cost of establishment, including the Range Officer's travelling allowance and other relevant expenditure of maintaining the Range Office at Dacca?

(d) What delays so long the abolition of the Range Office, which was strongly recommended by the Inchcape Committee long ago?

(e) Will Government be pleased to state when the Range Office is expected to be abolished?

The Honourable Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra: (a) The inquiry is not yet complete.

(b) There is another Range Office in Assam. The latter part of the question does not arise.

(c) The information is being collected and will be supplied to the Honourable Member in due course.

(d) I would invite the attention of the Honourable Member to the reply given to part (b) of his unstarred question No. 82 in the Legislative Assembly on the 3rd September, 1929.

(e) In view of the reply to part (a) above, Government are not in a position to give the information asked for by the Honourable Member.

APPOINTMENTS IN THE POSTAL DEPARTMENT.

322. ***Mr. Anwar-ul-Azim:** (a) With reference to Government's reply to starred question No. 310 in the Legislative Assembly on the 27th February, 1928, will Government be pleased to state whether they have arrived at any decision on the question of the reservation of a certain percentage of vacancies for the sons and relatives of departmental officials?

(b) Are Government aware that the Divisional Superintendents and first class Postmasters take in recruitment their own nominees, superseding the claims of the sons and relatives of the departmental officials, although their nominees are not superior to them in educational or other qualifications?

The Honourable Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra: (a) I understand that the question refers to the recruitment of upper division clerks in the post offices. It is hoped soon to issue revised recruitment regulations in which provision will be made for preference to be given to a reasonable extent to relations of departmental officials.

(b) No. The officers referred to have full discretion to recruit the best candidates available, with due regard to the interests and claims of relatives of departmental employees.

RESIDENCE AND OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT OF POST OFFICES, DACCA DIVISION.

323. ***Mr. Anwar-ul-Azim:** (a) With reference to Government's reply to starred question No. 357 on the 14th September, 1927, will Government be pleased to state the result of the inquiries?

(b) Is it a fact that after that reply, the office of the Superintendent of Post Offices, Dacca Division, has been shifted twice?

(c) Is it a fact that on receipt of information to the effect that Mr. N. Banerjee, the then Superintendent of Post Offices, Dacca Division, was looking out for a house to shift the office to suit his personal interest and comfortable residence, the Secretary, Postal and Railway Mail Service Union, Dacca Branch, in his communication No. P. R.-22/18, dated the 7th November, 1928, requested the Deputy Postmaster General, Dacca Range, to put a stop to the proposal and that the latter did not take any action?

(d) Is it a fact that Mr. F. T. deMonte, Postmaster General, Bengal and Assam Circle, during his visit to Dacca, found the office on the ground floor and the Superintendent's residential quarter on the first floor, for which he has to pay less rent than the office and the office has also to pay the entire municipal tax?

(e) Is it a fact that the Secretary, Postal and Railway Mail Service Union, Bengal and Assam Provincial Branch, in his letter No. P. R.-5/S. B., dated the 8th July, 1929, requested him to prohibit the joint tenancy of the house, but that on a representation of the fact that no house was available at a rent of Rs. 40 only for the office, the Postmaster General was not inclined to take action on the suggestion although the Secretary of the Dacca Branch Union assured him that a house could be hired for the office at a rent of Rs. 40?

(f) Is it a fact that the officials are not only compelled to occupy the inferior portion of the building but are also made to work under disadvantages arising from extreme heat and the absence of the orderly peon from the office on the plea of the domestic work of the Superintendent?

The Honourable Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra: (a) It is presumed that the Honourable Member is referring to question No. 357 of the 14th February, 1927. If so, the result of the inquiries was communicated to Khan Bahadur Sarfaraz Hussain Khan in reply to his starred question No. 301 of the 25th August, 1927, in the Director General's letter dated the 6th December, 1927, a copy of which has been placed in the Library of the House.

(b) to (f). Government have no information, but inquiries are being made and the result will be communicated to the Honourable Member in due course.

FREE COMMUNICATIONS ON POSTAL SERVICE BY EMPLOYEES OF THE POST OFFICE.

324. ***Mr. Anwar-ul-Asim:** (a) With reference to Government's reply to unstarred question No. 211 on the 28th September, 1929, will Government be pleased to state whether Postmasters can communicate free of charge in the following cases:

- (1) In case of their illness asking for relief with a view to keep the office in working order instead of closing the office.
- (2) In case of casual leave which is treated under the rules of the department as on duty.
- (3) In case of an application for an advance of pay or travelling allowance on transfer in the interests of the public service.
- (4) In case of reference to rectify a shortness, or overdraw of pay or the non-receipt of a salary bill on due date.
- (5) In case of a shortness or overdraw of leave allowance and the non-receipt of leave allowance in time.
- (6) In case of the deduction of a subscription or retrenchment made from the pay bill without knowledge of the payee.

(b) Is it a fact that subordinate employees of all offices have to communicate free on postal service through the postmasters?

(c) Is it a fact that the Government reply to the aforesaid question (e) has been given on wrong information and the fact is that Mr. N. N. Banerjee, the Superintendent, infringed the rule and took advantage of free service?

(d) Is it a fact that the Secretary, Dacca Postal and Railway Mail Service Union, in his letter No. P. R.-10, dated the 5th November, 1928, requested the Deputy Postmaster General, Dacca Range, to take action to relax the rule in case of employees in active service but that he has not even acknowledged the letter?

(e) Have Government considered the question of relaxing the rule in the cases mentioned in items (1) to (6) of part (a) of this question?

Mr. H. A. Sams: (a) No, except in the case of a single-handed office where, owing to serious illness, the Postmaster has to ask for relief to avoid closing the office.

(b) Yes.

(c) No.

(d) No. The Deputy Postmaster General, Dacca, received no such representation.

(e) No. Government do not propose to relax the existing rule on the subject.

CONSOLIDATION OF THE INDIAN ARBITRATION LAW.

325. ***Mr. Lalchand Navalrai:** (a) Will Government be pleased to state whether their attention has been drawn to the ruling in Indian Law Reports, 56, Calcutta, at page 761 where Mr. Justice Williams has remarked that the law on section 19 of the Indian Arbitration Act, 1899, (IX of 1899), is very conflicting and that many other sections of the Act are loosely drawn and are difficult to be reconciled and construed?

(b) Are Government aware that the late Mr. Harchandrai Vishindas sought to introduce in this House a Bill to consolidate the arbitration law in India, and is it a fact that Government was then inclined to introduce a Government Bill to consolidate the Indian arbitration law?

(c) Do Government propose to introduce such a Bill during this Session of the Assembly or at any other early date?

The Honourable Sir James Orerar: (a) Yes.

(b) and (c). Before his death, the late Mr. Harchandrai Vishindas desired to re-introduce a Bill regarding the law of arbitration in India which had been circulated for opinion under the orders of the Legislative Assembly in 1926, but had lapsed. At that time the Government of India were considering the question of consolidating and amending the law with special reference to the recommendations of the Civil Justice Committee. Before proceeding with the proposed revision, the Government of India have decided to await any legislation which may be undertaken in England as a result of the recommendations of the recent Committee on the English Law of Arbitration.

INTRODUCTION OF AN EXAMINATION TEST IN THE POSTS AND TELEGRAPHS DEPARTMENT.

326. ***Mr. Lalchand Navalrai:** (a) Will Government be pleased to state whether they have introduced an examination test in the Postal and Telegraph Department for the promotion of officials from the time scale pay to the selection grade posts of Rs. 160—250, *vide* Director General, Posts and Telegraphs, G. O. No. 5, dated the 19th July, 1927, as amended by his Special General Circular No. 22, dated the 16th October, 1929?

(b) How was promotion to these selection grade appointments previously regulated?

(c) Was the necessity for the examination pressed by the Director General or any Postmaster General, and if so, how many of the Postmasters General pressed for it and for what reasons?

(d) Is it a fact that the Director General has not made any reference in his Annual Report of the Posts and Telegraph Department about the loss of efficiency and about the necessity for such an examination to improve the efficiency?

(e) Is it a fact that the public have generally expressed their praise about the efficiency of the Postal Department?

The Honourable Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra: (a) Yes.

(b) By selection made by the Head of the Circle on the basis of past records and his personal knowledge of the official's capabilities.

(c) The suggestion did not come from the Postmasters General, but from the Director General, who was of opinion, in which the Government of India agreed, that it was imperative to have an examination in order to secure that the best men should fill the selection grades, the pay of which had been considerably increased. The Heads of Postal Circles did however, in their Conference of 1926, express the opinion that promotion to the selection grades was far too easy.

(d) Yes.

(e) Yes.

APPOINTMENTS AND PROMOTIONS IN THE POSTAL DEPARTMENT.

327. ***Mr. Lalchand Navalrai:** (a) Is it a fact that generally no one is entertained in the clerical rank in the Postal Department unless he has passed the entrance examination of any of the recognised Universities in India and Burma?

(b) Is it a fact that no postal official is allowed to draw the first increment in the time scale until he has passed an oral and written examination test?

(c) Is it a fact that before an official reaches the maximum in the time scale of pay he has to pass two efficiency bars, to cross which the supervising officer of the official has to testify that the official has a thorough knowledge of the work of all the departments and that he has efficiently managed a department and a sub-office?

The Honourable Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra: (a) Yes, generally speaking.

(b) Yes.

(c) Yes. The facts stated by the Honourable Member are substantially correct.

EXAMINATION TEST IN THE POSTS AND TELEGRAPHS DEPARTMENT.

328. ***Mr. Lalchand Navalrai:** (a) What is the necessity to introduce the examination test in the Postal and Telegraph Department for the promotion of officials from the time scale pay to the selection grade posts of Rs. 160 to Rs. 250?

(b) Is it a fact that the Government of India, in their Resolution No. 4863, dated the 4th December, 1891, have laid down that whenever there is a change of procedure, the new conditions should not be made to operate harshly on officials affected by the change?

(c) Is it a fact that, when some conditions of service were changed in the Telegraph Department as a result of the recommendations of some departmental committees, such as the Ryan Committee, the existing telegraphists were told that the new changes would not apply to the existing men?

The Honourable Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra: (a) The examination has been introduced with the concurrence of the Standing Finance Committee in the interests of efficiency and to provide a uniform and safe-guide for making selections for promotion beyond the time scale of pay.

(b) Yes.

(c) A pledge safeguarding the prospects of the existing members of the staff was given in the specific case mentioned. This has no bearing on the present case, which relates to the introduction of a test to ensure that the most suitable men shall be promoted to posts the pay of which has been improved. The prospects of the staff have not been impaired.

EXAMINATION TEST IN THE POSTS AND TELEGRAPHS DEPARTMENT.

329. ***Mr. Lalchand Navalrai:** (a) Is it a fact that numerous telegrams were received by H. E. the Viceroy, the Honourable Member in charge of the Department of Industries and Labour and the Director General from officials over 35 years of age from all over India and Burma asking for exemption from the examination referred to in part (a) of my immediate preceding question, and if so, what action was taken on them?

(b) Is it a fact that when the system of examination was first introduced in the Audit Office for promotion to higher grades, Sir Frederic Gauntlett, the then Auditor-General, exempted officials of over forty years of age from such examination?

(c) Is it a fact that when an examination test was introduced in the Customs Department, the Collector of Customs, Madras, under instructions from the Central Board of Revenue, exempted officials of over 40 years from the examination?

(d) Have the Government exempted recently some junior Inspectors of Post Offices from the examination, and if so, why? And why was not similar treatment accorded to officials who acted for three years in the selection grade?

(e) Have Government perused the numerous contributions that have appeared in the various newspapers, pointing out the serious injustice done to senior postal officials by introducing the examination test?

(f) Have Government perused the editorial articles in the *Statesman* (Calcutta), dated the 28th August, 1929; *Basumati* (Calcutta), dated the 25th August, 1929; *Amrita Bazar Patrika* (Calcutta), dated the 18th September, 1929; *Swarajya* (Madras); dated the 4th December, 1929, and *Justice*

(Madras), dated the 7th December, 1929, pointing out the hardship involved to the senior officials of advanced age to memorise rules and regulations and answer theoretical questions on audit, the grave dissatisfaction prevailing among the members of the service and sympathising with their lot and appealing to the Government to repeal the order?

(g) Are Government prepared to cancel the examination or at most make it applicable to the new recruits only? If not, why not?

The Honourable Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra: (a) Yes. No action was taken on them, because the telegrams did not disclose any new facts justifying a reconsideration of the decision already reached.

(b) and (c). Yes, but the examination was not one of promotion from the time scale of pay to selection grade posts.

(d) By "junior Inspectors", the Honourable Member perhaps means Town Inspectors attached to first class Head Offices. If so, his attention is invited to the reply to part (f) of the question No. 1834, dated the 2nd April, 1929.

(e) and (f). Yes, Government have read some of the newspapers mentioned.

(g) No. The examination was introduced after very careful consideration of all the points that could be urged against it. Nor are Government prepared to exempt *ad hoc* officials over 40 years of age. An official, who knows his work and is suitable for the selection grade, should have no difficulty in passing the examination, even if he be over 40 years of age.

CLERICAL POSTS IN OFFICES OF SUPERINTENDENTS OF POST OFFICES.

330. ***Mr. Anwar-ul-Azim:** (a) Will Government be pleased to state whether the views of the Director General of Posts and Telegraphs in connection with Mr. G. V. Bewoor's report have since been received? (*Vide* Government reply to starred question No. 137 on the 12th September, 1929)? If the reply be in the negative, have Government requested the Director General to hasten the submission of his views?

(b) Will Government be pleased to state the principle which is followed in the revision of the clerical posts in the offices of the Superintendents of Post Offices?

The Honourable Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra: (a) The reply to the first part is in the affirmative. The second part does not arise.

(b) The clerical staff in the offices of Superintendents of Post Offices is fixed by the Head of the Circle concerned after a careful consideration in each case of the amount of work to be done.

SUNDAY AND HOLIDAY ALLOWANCE FOR POSTAL EMPLOYEES.

331. ***Mr. Anwar-ul-Azim:** (a) Will Government be pleased to state if any statistics were called for in respect of Sunday and holiday allowance? If the reply be in the affirmative, will Government be pleased to state the year for which the statistics were called for?

(b) Is it a fact that this was a matter considered by the deputation of Postal and Railway Mail Service employees that waited upon the Honourable Member in charge of the Department of Industries and Labour and

the Director General of Posts and Telegraphs and that the representatives were assured of consideration?

(c) Will Government be pleased to state who has been deputed to examine the question and with what result? If no decision has yet been arrived at, why has the consideration of this matter been postponed so long?

The Honourable Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra: (a) No.

(b) The attention of the Honourable Member is invited to item 8 (b) of Part I of the statement of grievances represented by the deputation of the All-India Postal and Railway Mail Service Union and of the conclusions arrived at thereon, as laid on the table of this House on the 4th March, 1926.

(c) Government have reviewed the position and have come to the conclusion that it is not possible to introduce, in the immediate future, any measure of relief involving additional expenditure.

LEAVE AND PENSIONS FOR INFERIOR SERVANTS OF THE POSTS AND TELEGRAPHS SERVICE.

332. ***Mr. Anwar-ul-Azim:** (a) Is it a fact that the Post Office employees have to work for a much longer period in a year than the employees of other Departments of the Government for want of holidays in the Posts and Telegraphs Department?

(b) Is it a fact that, in consideration of this, Government was pleased to raise the status of the postmen and grant them the benefit of leave and pension?

(c) Do Government intend to extend this concession to the case of the menials of the Posts and Telegraphs service? If the reply be in the negative, will Government be pleased to state the reasons, and do Government propose to take any other alternative measure?

The Honourable Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra: (a) It is a fact that postal employees enjoy fewer holidays than Government servants in some other Departments of Government, but this has been recognised both in fixing the pay and in the grant to them of certain other concessions, e.g., 20 days' casual leave?

(b) No. Postmen have been graded as superior servants purely on account of the nature and responsibilities of their work.

(c) The reply to the first part is in the negative; as regards the second part, the Honourable Member's attention is invited to item 14 of Part I of the statement of grievances represented by the deputation of the All-India Postal and Railway Mail Service Union, to the conclusions arrived at, and to the action taken thereon, as laid on the table of this House on the 4th March, 1926.

OUTSTATION ALLOWANCES OF RAILWAY MAIL SERVICE EMPLOYEES.

333. ***Mr. Anwar-ul-Azim:** (a) Has the attention of Government been drawn to the resolution No. 80, passed at the All-India (including Burma) Postal and Railway Mail Service Conference held at Peshawar on the 10th November, 1929?

(b) Is it a fact that at present a low rate of outstation allowance is granted to the Railway Mail Service employees in case they are required

to stay out of headquarters for 12 hours or more, viz., 0-4-0 to the sorters, 0-2-0 to the mail guards and 0-1-0 to the van peons? Is it paid for their extra expenditure required for meals and tiffins outside the headquarters? Are Government prepared to increase these rates?

Mr. H. A. Sams: (a) Yes.

(b) For absence from headquarters in excess of 12 hours, but not exceeding 24, the rates are as stated by the Honourable Member, but as the allowances are paid merely as a contribution towards the extra expenditure which has to be incurred in taking meals away from home. Government do not consider that the existing rates are inadequate and are not therefore prepared to increase them.

APPOINTMENTS IN THE NARAYANGANJ RECORD AND SORTING MAIL OFFICES.

334. ***Mr. Anwar-ul-Azim:** (a) Will Government be pleased to state whether the Postal Inquiry Committee recommended that where there are seven sorters there should be a selection grade appointment?

(b) If the reply to part (a) be in the affirmative, is it a fact that the Narayanganj sorting mail office has to work with eight sorters and the sub-record clerk has six sorters, daily for the office work?

(c) Is it a fact that in the Manual of Appointment and Allowances of Officers of the Indian Posts and Telegraphs Department three selection grade appointments have been shown for the "S" Division, whereas only one accountant at Silchar and one sub-record clerk at Barisal in the selection grade have been shown?

(d) Is it a fact that the Barisal Sub-Record Office has to work with a smaller number of sorters than the Narayanganj Sub-Record Office and in comparison of the selection grade appointments in the Post Office the number of selection grade appointments in the "S" Division is small?

(e) Are Government prepared to sanction two selection grade appointments for the Narayanganj record and sorting mail offices?

The Honourable Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra: (a) The Postal Inquiry Committee recommended that Head Sorters of stationary mail offices with seven or more sorters and Head Sorters of travelling sets consisting of six or more sorters should be in the selection grade.

(b) and (d). Government have no information but inquiries are being made and the result will be communicated to the Honourable Member in due course.

(c) No, four selection grade appointments have been shown in the Manual referred to but this is incorrect, as there are actually only three, namely, two on Rs. 160—250 and one on Rs. 250—350. Steps have already been taken to have the Manual corrected.

(e) The matter is within the competence of the Director General, Posts and Telegraphs, who, I understand, will consider the question when the information referred to in my reply to parts (b) and (d) above has been received.

HOURS OF DUTY IN RAILWAY MAIL SERVICE OFFICES.

335. ***Mr. Anwar-ul-Azim:** (a) Are Government aware that in the Railway Mail Service stationary offices at Barisal and Narayanganj, the officials have to work from 8 P.M. to 6 A.M. each alternate day?

(b) Will Government be pleased to state the working hours of night and day sorters of the officials of the Railway Mail Service stationary offices?

Mr. H. A. Sams: (a) Yes. The working hours of the offices in question are as stated by the Honourable Member.

(b) 85 and 49 hours per week per sorter, respectively.

GRANT OF HOUSE RENT FOR OFFICES OF RAILWAY MAIL SERVICE INSPECTORS.

336. ***Mr. Anwar-ul-Azim:** (a) Are Government aware that the Railway Mail Service Inspectors have to maintain their records and that they are in need of a house for their office?

(b) Is it a fact that the Post Office Inspectors have been granted house allowance for the purpose of locating their offices?

(c) Have Government considered the question of sanctioning a house allowance to the Railway Mail Service Inspectors?

Mr. H. A. Sams: (a) The answer to the first part of the question is in the affirmative and to the second part in the negative.

(b) In places where no provision for office accommodation exists and at which Sub-Divisional Inspectors of Post Offices have consequently to make their own arrangements, they are granted house rent allowance.

(c) Yes, and it was decided that such an allowance is not necessary in the case of Railway Mail Service Inspectors, as they are required to work at their headquarters in the Railway Mail Service offices located at railway stations.

SUNDAY AND HOLIDAY ALLOWANCE FOR POSTAL OFFICIALS.

337. ***Mr. Anwar-ul-Azim:** (a) With reference to Government's reply to unstarred question No. 120 in the Legislative Assembly on the 2nd September, 1929, will Government be pleased to state if they have since come to any decision regarding the grant of Sunday and holiday allowance to Post Office and Railway Mail Service employees?

(b) If so, will they please state what their decision is, and if not, when the decision is expected to be reached?

The Honourable Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra: (a) and (b). The Honourable Member's attention is invited to part (c) of the reply which I have just given to his starred question No. 331.

QUARTERS, ALLOWANCES AND DUTIES IN THE BENGAL AND ASSAM POSTAL CIRCLE.

338. ***Mr. Anwar-ul-Azim:** (a) With reference to Government's reply to unstarred question No. 61 in the Legislative Assembly on the 15th February, 1928, will Government be pleased to state the places where residential quarters have been provided in the vicinity of the Post Office in the Bengal and Assam Circle during the last two years?

(b) What are the particulars of conveyance allowance sanctioned in that circle?

(c) What is the number of additional staff sanctioned and the number of places where such staff have been sanctioned in the Assam and Bengal Circle?

(d) Are Government aware that in many towns of the Bengal and Assam Circle the split duty system tells upon the health of the employees? If so, what redressive measure has been taken?

The Honourable Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra: (a) to (d). Information is being collected and will be supplied to the Honourable Member in due course.

APPOINTMENT OF MUSLIM PEONS IN CERTAIN OFFICES.

339. ***Mr. Anwar-ul-Azim:** (a) Is it a fact that there are no Muslim peons employed in some of the offices of Army Headquarters, the offices of the Financial Adviser, Military Finance and the Military Accountant General?

(b) If the reply to part (a) is in the affirmative, are Government prepared to issue orders to appoint Muslims in future permanent and temporary appointments unless the number of this minority community is fully represented in this service? If not, why not?

Mr. G. M. Young: (a) Yes.

(b) No, Sir, the deficiency is due to a lack of applicants.

APPOINTMENT OF MUSLIM POSTAL SUPERINTENDENTS IN THE MADRAS PRESIDENCY.

340. ***Mr. Abdul Latif Sahib Farookhi:** Will Government be pleased to state the number of Postal Superintendents in the Madras Presidency? How many of them are Muslims?

The Honourable Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra: There are in the Madras Circle 28 Superintendents of Post Offices and Railway Mail Service. Of this total number, three are Muslims.

Maulvi Sayyid Murtuza Saheb Bahadur: Is it a fact that for the last ten years or so there has not been recruited even a single Muslim to this service?

The Honourable Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra: No, that is not correct. I know, for instance, that in the year 1929, we recruited three Muslims.

Maulvi Sayyid Murtuza Saheb Bahadur: Were the Muslims from the Madras Presidency?

An Honourable Member: What, as peons?

The Honourable Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra: It is not possible to confine recruitment to Mussalmans of any Presidency. We follow the standard rules under which one-third of the vacancies are filled from among the minority communities as a whole.

Mr. B. Das: Is the Honourable Member aware that he has neglected the interests of the people of Orissa always whenever the question of minorities has been concerned?

Mr. Abdul Latif Sahib Farookhi: Out of these three Muslims when was the last Muslim appointed?

The Honourable Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra: I cannot say, Sir, because I have not got the list with me.

GRANT OF OVERTIME ALLOWANCES TO POSTAL OFFICIALS.

841. ***Mr. Anwar-ul-Azim:** (a) Has the attention of Government been drawn to letter No. P. R.-19, dated the 3rd October, 1929, from the Secretary, Dacca Postal and Railway Mail Service Union, to the General Secretary, All-India Postal and Railway Mail Service Union, Bengal and Assam Provincial Branch, published in the *Samites*, an organ of that Union, in its issue of November, 1929, and a copy of which has been forwarded to the Postmaster-General, Bengal and Assam Circle, in which it has been stated that under the *bonâ fide* orders of Mr. N. N. Banerjee, the then Superintendent of Post Offices, Dacca Division, officials under him were frequently compelled to work over-time on account of working short-handed and that an over-time allowance of Rs. 1,359-6-0 should be paid to them?

(b) Are Government aware that, owing to a compulsory order of the Deputy Postmaster-General, Dacca Range, and the Postmaster, the Dacca delivery of the Calcutta mails is made at unusually late hours due to the late arrival of the Calcutta mails during the winter season and that the officials attached to the delivery, sorting, registration, and parcel branches have to work over-time?

(c) Is it a fact that, under rule 283 of the Posts and Telegraphs Initial Account Code, certain officials except those of the Post Office get over-time allowance, and the same is also paid to the postal officials working in the Presidency towns on foreign mail days?

(d) Is it a fact that over-time allowance for the telegraphists is calculated at a higher rate under rule 221 of the Telegraph Manual, Vol. IV (old edition), while the same for the postal signallers is calculated at a much lesser rate?

(e) Are Government aware that post office officials are always required to work over-time on account of the irregular arrival of mails, and sudden increase of work, and are compelled to work short-handed, but in no case are they paid over-time allowance?

(f) Do Government propose to grant to the postal officials over-time allowance and to issue uniform rules on the subject? If the reply be in the negative, what are the reasons?

The Honourable Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra: (a) No. Government have not seen the letter referred to.

(b) Government are not aware of the fact, but will inquire into the matter.

(c) No. The rule in question merely lays down in what form overtime allowance bills should be drawn.

(d) No. Overtime allowances paid to departmental telegraphists and postal signallers are calculated at the same rates on the basis of pay.

(e) and (f). No. The grant of overtime allowance to postal officials working in some offices is already provided for by certain definite rules, while in other cases the special orders of Government are obtained from time to time as required.

The conditions of service in the postal and telegraph branches of the Department are not uniform, and Government do not therefore consider that it is necessary to lay down uniform rules for the grant of overtime allowances to both branches.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: Will the Honourable Member kindly explain his answer with reference to (b)? Am I to understand that the Government are not aware that mails are sometimes delivered very late at Dacca, or is it the position of the Honourable Member that the extra work entailed on the officers happens as a result of a compulsory order of the superior officer?

The Honourable Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra: Sir, I am not aware of either of those facts.

CAUSE OF THE STRIKE ON THE GREAT INDIAN PENINSULA RAILWAY.

342. *Khan Bahadur Sarfaraz Hussain Khan: (a) Has the attention of Government been drawn to the report published in the *Hindustan Times* of the 6th February, 1980, on page 1, column 1, under the heading "Strike on the Great Indian Peninsula Railway, Bombay Suburban Trains almost empty"?

(b) If so, will they please state if the report is correct?

(c) If correct, will they please state the cause of the strike?

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons: (a) Yes, by the Honourable Member's question.

(b) The statement that the Bombay suburban trains were almost empty is not correct. Rather more than half the usual number of passengers were carried on that day.

(c) Does not arise.

"SATTA" GAMBLING IN DELHI.

343. *Lala Rang Behari Lal: (a) Are Government aware that in the city of Delhi *Satta* gambling shops have been opened in different quarters, specially in Sabzimandi, and that *Satta* gambling is going on in broad daylight?

(b) If the answer to part (a) be in the affirmative, what immediate steps, if any, do Government propose to take to stop the said gambling?

The Honourable Sir James Orerar: (a) *Satta* gambling shops are started from time to time in Delhi.

(b) Five prosecutions were launched last month and this has had a noticeably deterrent effect.

GOVERNMENT EXAMINER OF QUESTIONED DOCUMENTS.

344. *Lala Rang Behari Lal: (a) Will Government be pleased to state if the Government Examiner of Questioned Documents, Mr. R. Stott, and his Assistant, Mr. Hodgson, examine documents and give expert opinion in private, civil and criminal cases?

(b) If the answer to part (a) is in the affirmative, will Government be pleased to state the amount of fees charged for such opinion?

(c) Will Government be pleased to state if such fees go to the credit of Government or not?

(d) Will Government be pleased to state if there is any circular order to presiding Judges and Magistrates directing that disputed documents must be sent to the said Government Examiner for examination and opinion in preference to other experts whose names are suggested to the trying Courts by litigants?

(e) Will Government be pleased to state if private persons who are litigants are bound to obtain the opinion of the Government Examiner of Questioned Documents at a cost of Rs. 200 when there are other experts who undertake the work at a lesser charge?

(f) Will Government be pleased to state the amount of income of fees from private cases as compared with the income from provincial police Government cases for the last five years, and, if there is any surplus after paying for the annual upkeep of the Department, how the said surplus is utilised?

The Honourable Sir James Orerar: (a) The Government Examiner of Questioned Documents and his assistant give opinions only when asked to do so by civil or criminal courts, or by the police or other departments of Government.

(b) An inclusive fee of Rs. 200 covering the examination of documents, the cost of photographs, the opinion, and the giving of evidence, when necessary, is charged in civil cases, but an additional fee of Rs. 150 is charged for each day's attendance in court after the first day if the officer is detained for more than one day. In criminal cases a fee of Rs. 150 exclusive of cost of photographs is charged in each case.

(c) Yes. All fees are credited to Government.

(d) No.

(e) No.

(f) Prior to 1926, fees in civil cases were not credited to Government. The total amount of fees derived from civil cases for the three financial years ending March, 1929, was Rs. 22,000 and the total of fees realised in criminal cases during the five years ending March, 1929, was Rs. 1,55,947. The cost of the upkeep of the establishment of the Government Examiner of Questioned Documents for the last five years was Rs. 1,88,871. During the whole period, there was, therefore, a net deficit of Rs. 10,424; but in any particular year, when there was a surplus of income over expenditure, the surplus was credited to Government.

NUMBER OF CASES SENT TO THE GOVERNMENT EXAMINER OF QUESTIONED DOCUMENTS.

345. *Lala Rang Behari Lal: (a) Will Government be pleased to state separately for each province the number of cases, both private and Provincial Government, for the last five years received by the Government Examiner of Questioned Documents annually?

(b) Will Government be pleased to state whether the Provincial Governments are bound to seek the opinions of the Government Examiner of Questioned Documents?

(c) If the answer to part (b) is in the affirmative, will Government be pleased to state why?

The Honourable Sir James Orerar: (a) The information is not available.

(b) No.

(c) The question does not arise.

CIRCULAR ORDERS RELATING TO THE GOVERNMENT EXAMINER OF QUESTIONED DOCUMENTS.

346. *Lala Rang Behari Lal: Will Government be pleased to place on the table all the circular orders relating to the office of the Government Examiner of Questioned Documents since its inception, and state the period of services of each successive examiner and the reasons for his severance or retirement from service?

The Honourable Sir James Orerar: I am afraid I cannot undertake to lay on the table all the orders relating to the office of the Government Examiner of Questioned Documents, but if the Honourable Member will let me know what particular point he is interested in, I will see whether the information can be supplied. Mr. Hardless was Handwriting Expert from February, 1904, and he retired in August, 1917. Mr. Brewster held the post from August, 1915, to June, 1926. Mr. Hardless retired after completing 30 years' service. Mr. Brewster was allowed by Government to resign, after pleading guilty to several grave charges in connection with his private practice, involving systematic disobedience of standing orders.

APPOINTMENT OF ASSISTANT GOVERNMENT EXAMINER OF QUESTIONED DOCUMENTS.

347. *Lala Rang Behari Lal: (a) Will Government be pleased to state the manner of appointment of the present Assistant Government Examiner of Questioned Documents, viz., Mr. Hodgson, in London?

(b) Did the said Mr. Hodgson qualify himself before entering the service or did he qualify himself after joining in India, and if so, how long did Mr. Hodgson take to qualify himself and how before giving evidence as an expert in court?

The Honourable Sir James Orerar: (a) Attention is invited to the answer which I gave to the questions by Mr. Mukhtar Singh on this subject on the 1st February, 1928.

(b) Mr. Hodgson joined his appointment in March, 1928, and gave evidence in Court for the first time in May, 1929.

METHOD OF REMUNERATION OF THE GOVERNMENT EXAMINER AND ASSISTANT EXAMINER OF QUESTIONED DOCUMENTS.

348. *Lala Rang Behari Lal: Will Government be pleased to describe the method of remuneration of the Government Examiner of Questioned Documents and his Assistant, that is to say whether they are paid on the basis of a percentage of the income of the Department or by monthly salaries and allowances?

The Honourable Sir James Orerar: The Examiner and his Assistant receive monthly salaries on scales sanctioned for their posts.

SERVICE AND QUALIFICATIONS OF THE GOVERNMENT EXAMINER OF QUESTIONED DOCUMENTS.

349. *Lala Rang Behari Lal: (a) Will Government be pleased to state the date of joining service of the present Government Examiner of Questioned Documents, Mr. R. Stott?

(b) Will Government be pleased to state the length of time for which as well as the name of the place where the present Government Examiner of Questioned Documents qualified himself for the post?

(c) Will Government be pleased to state the date on which the present Examiner of Questioned Documents took service in the capacity of the official Assistant Expert as well as the number of the first case, parties' names, name and address of the Court and the Province in which he deposed as an expert?

(d) Will Government be pleased to state if a record is kept as to how many times the official expert's opinions have prevailed in Courts in preference to the opinions of independent experts?

The Honourable Sir James Orerar: (a) to (c). Mr. Stott was a member of the Military Accounts Service, which he joined in May, 1915. He was appointed Assistant Government Examiner of Questioned Documents in September, 1920. He had studied the subject privately in India for about two years prior to his appointment. The particulars of the first case in which he gave evidence are not available.

(d) No.

RETIREMENT OF MR. FRANK BREWSTER, GOVERNMENT EXAMINER OF QUESTIONED DOCUMENTS.

350. ***Lala Rang Behari Lal:** Will Government be pleased to state if any circular letter was issued in January, 1928, from the Government of India, Home Department, addressed to Provincial Governments, notifying the disqualification from further Government service of Mr. Frank Brewster, Government Examiner of Questioned Documents, and, if so, will Government be pleased to place on the table a copy of any such letter and as to what action, legal or otherwise, has been taken or is in contemplation against the said Mr. Frank Brewster and as to when the said Mr. Frank Brewster set up in practice in Calcutta after his retirement?

The Honourable Sir James Orerar: The circular letter referred to was a confidential document, which I am not prepared to lay on the table. The Local Governments were informed of the circumstances in which Mr. Brewster left Government service, but no further action was taken. He is understood to have commenced practice in Calcutta about the beginning of 1928.

PROVINCIAL EXAMINERS OF QUESTIONED DOCUMENTS.

351. ***Lala Rang Behari Lal:** (a) Will Government be pleased to state the names of such provinces, if any, which maintain their own experts as Examiners of Questioned Documents as wholtime servants or as consultants and their names and addresses?

(b) Will Government be pleased to state whether the Provincial Governments are free to appoint or recognise persons who have qualified themselves as experts, and if the answer is in the negative, will Government be pleased to state the reasons?

The Honourable Sir James Orerar: The Government of India have no information whether any Provincial Governments maintain their own experts. The Government of India have issued no instructions which fetter the discretion of Provincial Governments in this matter.

RECREATION CLUBS FOR POSTAL AND TELEGRAPH EMPLOYEES.

352. *Mr. Anwar-ul-Azim: (a) Is it a fact that certain recreation clubs of postal employees were granted a small donation during the year 1927-28?

(b) Will Government be pleased to state the amount granted to the clubs of the telegraphists for the last three years and the same to the clubs of the postal employees?

(c) Is it a fact that equipped halls are provided for such clubs of the telegraphists free of charge?

(d) Is it a fact that a certain club of the postal employees applied for construction of a house at the expense of the club on a plot of land attached to the post office?

(e) Do Government propose to continue the donation to the postal clubs and to lease out land for construction of club houses at the expense of the clubs?

Mr. H. A. Sams: (a) No, the first donations to Postal Clubs were made in 1928-29.

(b) The amounts granted to Telegraph Recreation Clubs during the last three years are: 1926-27, Rs. 4,000; 1927-28, Rs. 4,000, 1928-29, Rs. 4,795. No donations were made to Postal Clubs in 1926-27 and 1927-28, as stated in reply to (a) of this question. In 1928-29, Rs. 7,070 was granted to Postal and Railway Mail Service Clubs.

(c) Certain telegraph recreation clubs have been provided with partially equipped halls free of rent, but they are required to pay rental charges on the capital cost of electric installations in addition to the cost of current consumed. They also pay proportionate municipal taxes.

(d) Yes.

(e) The reply to the first part is in the affirmative; as regards the second part, Government cannot give any general undertaking, but they are prepared to consider sympathetically applications for such leases, if and when Government land is available.

THE POST OFFICE GUARANTEE FUND.

353. *Mr. Anwar-ul-Azim: (a) Is it a fact that, in reply to unstarred question No. 45, in the Legislative Assembly on the 4th September, 1928, Government stated that the Post Office Guarantee Fund was started in the year 1873 by the recovery of the fixed rate of subscription of Rs. 2 and Re. 1 per annum according to pay with the purpose of meeting with emergent expenses among which one of the items was for compensation not exceeding one month's pay to postal officials for loss of private property due to accidents, e.g., fire, floods, suffered by them while on duty?

(b) Is it a fact that as the fund, amounting to about eleven lakhs of rupees, was not sufficient to meet these charges, it has been credited to the Post and Telegraph Capital Account with the intention that in future, expenditure under the various heads enumerated above should be budgeted for in full in the working expenses budget of the Department in the ordinary way?

(c) Are Government aware that the Postmaster-General, Bengal and Assam Circle, has started a charity fund in aid of the flood distressed officials in Assam, Comilla and Chittagong? If the reply be in the affirmative, will Government be pleased to state the number of officials affected in those places, the total amount of their monthly pay and the total amount budgeted for their relief?

(d) Will Government be pleased to state the amount budgeted for the following items in the account in the year 1929-30:

- (1) Losses caused by the negligence or misconduct of postal staff,
- (2) Rewards for specially honest service,
- (3) Compensation to postal officials for loss of private properties due to accidents?

(e) Will Government be pleased to state the particulars of the officials to whom such compensation has been made out of the fund in the affected area? If the reply be in the negative, will Government be pleased to state the reason and when the employees can expect to get the help?

(f) Will Government be pleased to state the manner in which the fund started by the Postmaster-General, Bengal and Assam Circle, will be expended?

The Honourable Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra: (a) and (b). The Honourable Member appears to have misread the reply given by the Honourable Sir Arthur McWatters to the question quoted by him. If he will kindly read it again, he will find the answers to parts (a) and (b) of his present question.

(c), (e) and (f). It is understood that the Postmaster General, Bengal and Assam Circle, started a private fund in aid of the officials affected by the floods in Silchar and other places in Eastern Bengal and Assam, but Government are not concerned with this, nor have they any detailed information on the subject.

(d) (1) Rs. 34,100.

(2) Rs. 4,000.

(3) This expenditure is not specifically budgeted for, but is met from the grant for contingencies as occasion arises.

ADMISSION INTO POST OFFICES OF SECRETARIES OF POSTAL UNIONS.

354. ***Mr. Anwar-ul-Azim:** (a) Is it a fact that under rule 72 of the Post Office Manual, Vol. I (old edition), strangers are not allowed inside post offices? If the reply be in the affirmative, will Government be pleased to state whether or not the Secretaries of the District Postal and Railway Mail Service Unions, who are well known to the post office, may be allowed inside the post office? If the reply be in the negative, will Government be pleased to cite the rule which can be applied against their admittance inside the post office?

(b) Are Government aware of the letter No. D. O., dated 22nd November, 1927, from the Director-General of Posts and Telegraphs, to the General Secretary, All-India Postal and Railway Mail Service Union to the effect that before a grievance is put up in the form of a resolution the local secretaries should inquire and ascertain the facts from the district authorities?

(c) If the reply to part (b) be in the affirmative, are Government prepared to allow the district Secretaries to go inside the post office with a view to make necessary inquiries in the presence of the officials concerned?

(d) Is it a fact that the Director-General of Posts and Telegraphs permitted the secretaries and treasurers of the district postal unions to collect subscriptions sitting by the treasurer of the post office?

(e) Have Government issued clear instructions on the subject?

Mr. H. A. Sams: (a) The rule is substantially as quoted. The reply to the second part of the question is that this rule implies that an official of the Department well known to the Postmaster should be allowed inside a post office. But the rule also implies that his business should be connected with the Department. Part three of (a) does not arise.

(b) Government are aware of this demi-official, but it is not to the effect stated in the question.

(c) Government are not prepared to supplement the rule with any instructions regarding the local Secretaries of Postal and Railway Mail Service Unions.

(d) No.

(e) Government have not issued instructions of any kind on the subject.

PROVISION OF QUARTERS FOR CLERKS IN RURAL POST OFFICES.

355. ***Mr. Anwar-ul-Azim:** (a) Are Government aware that the clerks in rural post offices are put to great inconvenience for want of quarters and that some of them are compelled to live in a side room of the post office?

(b) Is it a fact that most of the post offices in the Bengal and Assam Circle are located in rented buildings and that in those places proprietors can provide quarters on rent?

(c) Have Government considered the question of requesting the proprietors to provide quarters on lease at those places and of hastening the construction of clerks' quarters at those places where there are departmental buildings, and of permitting the clerks to live in a side room of the office until this can be done? If so, with what result?

The Honourable Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra: (a) There are cases where postal clerks in the Bengal and Assam Circle are put to inconvenience for want of private quarters. The matter has been under the consideration of the Postmaster-General, and during 1929-30, 13 quarters have been provided in 10 places. Progress in this direction depends on the extent to which funds can be made available.

(b) The answer to the first part of this question is in the affirmative. The answer to the second part is that in some places rented quarters can be provided for the men.

(c) The Postmaster General, Bengal and Assam, has already taken up the question of renting further quarters, but, owing to the prohibitive rents demanded by the landlords, not much progress has been made in this direction. The Director-General has already instructed Postmasters General to devote a portion of their minor works grant yearly to the construction of quarters, and these orders are being carried out. Government

do not propose to issue orders permitting clerks to occupy rooms in post offices, but wherever the difficulty of securing accommodation is acute and rooms or outhouses are available, Postmasters General can, at their discretion, allow clerks to use them on payment of assessed rent.

Mr. Vidya Sagar Pandya: Sir, the Honourable Member has only answered the portion regarding the Bengal and Assam Circle, while the first portion pertains to other places in India. That part of the question has remained unanswered.

The Honourable Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra: Sir, from part (b) of the question I understood that part (a) also referred to the Bengal and Assam Circle in which, I believe, my Honourable friend Mr. Anwar-ul-Azim is more interested than in any other part of the country in which the conditions may not be so well known to him.

PAYMENT OF UNION AND MUNICIPAL TAXES BY POSTMASTERS.

356. ***Mr. Anwar-ul-Azim:** (a) Are Government aware that Postmasters are required to pay union and municipal taxes for their residential quarters?

(b) Is it a fact that the Postmasters reside in the quarters more in the interests of the Department than their private interest? If the reply be in the negative, are the Postmasters allowed to remain elsewhere if they can so arrange?

(c) Are Government aware that, in cases of rented houses, where the owners pay the tax, the Postmasters are also liable to the share of tax?

(d) Are Government aware that in some cases taxes are recovered from the Postmasters in excess of the ordinary rate fixed by the union boards and municipalities?

(e) Do Government intend to exempt the Postmasters from payment of the union and municipal taxes for their residential quarters? If not, why not?

The Honourable Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra: (a) Yes, at half per cent. of their emoluments subject to a maximum of Rs. 5 in respect of Union Board and Municipal taxes.

(b) Part 1, yes; part 2, does not arise.

(c) Ordinarily where landlords agree to pay the taxes, postmasters are not required to pay them. But where the landlords do not do so, the occupier's share is paid by the postmasters, subject to the conditions mentioned in answer to (a). As, however, the position in respect of the Bengal and Assam Circle is not clear, an inquiry is being made from the Postmaster General.

(d) Government are not aware of any such instances. Inquiry will, however, be made.

(e) The matter is under consideration. But the grant of any further concession must obviously depend on the financial position of the Department.

REVISION OF THE LAND REVENUE POLICY OF THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA.

357. ***Mr. Mukhtar Singh:** (a) Have the Government of India revised their land revenue policy since the publication of their Resolution, dated the 16th January, 1902?

(b) If the answer to part (a) be in the affirmative, will Government be pleased to place a copy of that Resolution on the table? If the answer be in the negative, will Government be pleased to state if they have any intention to revise their policy now? If so, when?

Sir Frank Noyce: (a) and (b). The Government of India have issued no Resolution subsequent to the one referred to by the Honourable Member. Under the present constitution, Land Revenue is a provincial subject, and several Local Governments have already taken action to regulate by statute the process of revising land revenue assessments. I would refer the Honourable Member to the legislation enacted recently in the Punjab, the United Provinces and the Central Provinces, from which it will be seen that provisions regarding the pitch of assessment, limitation of enhancement and duration of settlement have all now been embodied in law and are not left to be regulated by rules.

RULES FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF LAND REVENUE.

358. ***Mr. Mukhtar Singh:** (a) Will the Government of India be pleased to state the land revenue policy adopted in different provinces in assessing land revenue on lands improved at owner's cost or at cultivator's cost?

(b) Have Government promulgated any rules for the guidance of the Local Governments for the assessment of revenue on lands improved at owner's or cultivator's cost as they promised to do in their Resolution, dated the 16th January, 1902?

(c) If the answer to part (b) be in the affirmative, will Government be pleased to lay a copy of these rules on the table? If the answer be in the negative, will Government be pleased to state why such rules have not yet been framed?

Sir Frank Noyce: (a) All improvements made by the expenditure of private capital are exempt from assessment in Madras. In Bombay, increase in the value of land or the profits of cultivation due to any improvement made during the currency of a previous settlement at the expense of the landholder is not taken into account in fixing the revised assessment. In the United Provinces, the settlement officer is required to make deduction from the calculated assets, for improvements constructed by or at the cost of the proprietor or under proprietor, or at the cost of a tenant, if the tenant could claim an allowance for the improvement in a suit for enhancement of rent. In the Punjab, land which benefits from irrigation works constructed at private expense or with the aid of a Government loan is exempted in respect of the benefit due to such improvement for periods which vary according to the nature of the improvement. In the Central Provinces, lands improved by the construction of substantial embankments for the *rabi* crop or of irrigation works are rated at the value they would bear if unimproved, provided the improvements have been made since the last preceding settlement, or have been specially exempted from assessment for a term which, at the time of settlement, has not expired. In Assam, also, the settlement officer is not allowed to enhance

the land revenue of an estate on the ground of drainage or irrigation works, or similar improvements which have been carried out at the landlord's expense during the currency of the expiring settlement.

(b) and (c). Certain principles were formulated by the Government of India for the guidance of Local Governments in dealing with the assessment of improvements made by private enterprise. These principles were embodied in the Government of India Resolution No. 6-198-2, dated the 24th May, 1906, a copy of which has been placed in the Library of the House.

SALE OF PARCHED GRAM AND JAGGERY AT STATIONS ON THE NORTH-WESTERN RAILWAY.

359. ***Mr. Mukhtar Singh:** (a) Is it a fact that contracts for the sale of *chabena* (parched gram and jaggery) are given on stations of the East India Railway?

(b) Is it a fact that no such contracts are given on the North Western Railway and that after a representation was made such a contract was only given for the Delhi Division?

(c) Are Government aware that in these days of scarcity and famine the want of such a contract is being felt by the poor people who are forced to buy food at more than double the price for which they would have purchased parched gram and jaggery and would have satisfied their hunger?

(d) Are Government prepared to issue orders that provision be made for the sale of *chabena* on stations situated on the whole of the North Western Railway?

(e) If the answer to part (d) be in the negative, will Government be pleased to state their reasons for not doing so?

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons: (a) Yes.

(b) to (e). The Agent, North Western Railway, reports that there is no objection to *chabena* being sold by the food vendors who now hold contracts for stations on the North Western Railway. No representation on the subject has been received by him, but it is understood that the Divisional Superintendent, Delhi, received a representation last year and agreed to vendors at the principal stations on that division selling *chabena*. If vendors on other divisions wish to sell this article, all that they have to do is to address the Divisional Superintendent concerned and obtain his consent.

There would not therefore seem to be any necessity for special contracts for the sale of *chabena*. A copy of the Honourable Member's question will be sent to the Agent of the North Western Railway and he will be asked to arrange for this edible to be included in the sanctioned price list provided for all food vendors on that Railway.

NUMBER OF MUSLIMS EMPLOYED IN THE RAILWAY CLEARING ACCOUNTS OFFICE.

360. ***Maulvi Abdul Matin Chaudhury** (on behalf of Mr. Muhammad Rafique): (a) Is it a fact that Government have always refused to give the figures about the staff of the Railway Clearing Accounts Office on a

communal basis in spite of the repeated demands made by the Members of the House, and in face of the fact that they have done so in other Departments of the Government of India? If so, why?

(b) If the answer to part (a) be in the negative, will Government be pleased to state the total strength of the staff of the Railway Clearing Accounts Office in different grades and the number of Muslims therein?

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons: (a) and (b). The present strength of the Railway Clearing Accounts Office is as follows:

Grade of staff.	Permanent.	Temporary.	Total.
Accountants and Inspectors . .	19	6	25
Clerks, including Stenographers .	1,086	203	1,289

I regret that, for reasons I have already explained to the House on other occasions, I am not prepared to furnish information on the communal representation of individual offices. I can, however, assure the Honourable Member that I have personally satisfied myself that recruitment by the Director of the Clearing Accounts Office since it was formed has been carried out in accordance with the policy of Government relating to the representation of minority communities in such offices.

DOUBLING OF THE RAILWAY LINE BETWEEN MADRAS BEACH AND TAMBARAM.

Maulvi Sayyid Murtaza Saheb Bahadur: May I have, Sir, your permission to put questions standing in the name of Mr. M. K. Acharya?

Mr. President: I have had no information from the Honourable Member (Mr. M. K. Acharya) to that effect.

361. ***Mr. M. K. Acharya:** (a) Will Government be pleased to state how far the work of doubling the line between Madras Beach and Tambaram on the South Indian Railway has progressed up till now?

(b) When will the doubling of the said line be completed and be ready for the running of trains?

(c) When will the scheme of electrifying the said line become an accomplished fact?

(d) What are the proposals for the supply of electric energy for the electrification of the said line?

(e) What are the reasons for the delay that has already elapsed for the completion of the scheme since it was sanctioned?

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons: (a) to (e). The information is being obtained and will be communicated to the Honourable Member in due course.

PROPOSED RAILWAY BETWEEN MADRAS AND RENIGUNTA.

362. ***Mr. M. K. Acharya:** (a) Will Government be pleased to state whether it is proposed to construct a direct broad gauge line between Madras and Renigunta on the Madras and Southern Mahratta Railway?

(b) When will the work of the construction be taken up, and when will it be completed?

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons: (a) The proposal to connect directly Madras and Renigunta is under consideration. It is not possible to say definitely at present whether the connection, if undertaken, will be on the broad gauge.

(b) Until investigations are completed it is not possible to say if and when construction will be taken up.

SPEEDING UP THE GRAND TRUNK EXPRESS BETWEEN MADRAS AND DELHI.

363. *Mr. M. K. Acharya: (a) Will Government be pleased to state whether it is proposed to reduce the time taken at present by the Grand Trunk Express in running between Madras and Delhi?

(b) If the answer to part (a) be in the negative, have Government urged on the various Railway Administrations concerned the desirability of running the Grand Trunk Express in at least four hours less time than that taken at present?

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons: (a) Yes. From the 1st March the time on the journey from Madras to Delhi will be reduced by 4 hours and 43 minutes and on the journey from Delhi to Madras by 3 hours and 35 minutes.

(b) Does not arise.

MAIL ROUTE BETWEEN NAGPUR AND DELHI.

364. *Mr. M. K. Acharya: Will Government be pleased to state whether, having regard to the fact that the Grand Trunk Express runs between Madras and Delhi within 52 hours at present, they are prepared to consider the advisability of carrying the mails between Nagpur and Delhi by this train instead of by the present route, which takes a very much longer time?

Mr. H. A. Sams: Yes. Government have already decided to utilise the Grand Trunk Express for the conveyance of mails as soon as the necessary arrangements can be made.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR THIRD CLASS RAILWAY PASSENGERS AT EGMORE STATION.

365. *Mr. M. K. Acharya: (a) Are Government aware that third class passengers travelling by the Ceylon Boat Mail, the Trivandrum Express, the Madras Passenger and the Parcel Passenger from Madras on the South Indian Railway are put to great hardship and inconvenience by reason of the fact that they are actually locked up within an enclosure of iron railings on Egmore railway station and are let out into the departure platform only some minutes before the departure of the trains concerned?

(b) If the answer to part (a) is in the affirmative, have Government urged on the Railway Administration concerned the advisability of according better treatment to the third class passengers by making access to the said trains more easy for them?

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons: Government have not received information of the particular restriction referred to. The general question of allowing passengers on to platforms in sufficient time was discussed at the last meeting of the Central Advisory Council for Railways in September, 1929, and in consequence, Railways have recently been advised to give consideration to the question of issuing special rules on this point at particular

stations when necessary. The inconvenience referred to by the Honourable Member is a matter which might usefully be brought to the notice of the Administration by a member of the Local Advisory Committee and I am sending a copy of the Honourable Member's question to the Agent of the South Indian Railway.

RATES FOR TELEPHONES IN MADRAS.

366. ***Mr. M. K. Acharya:** (a) Will Government be pleased to state whether they have received any proposals for the reduction of the rate for telephones now charged by the Madras Telephone Company in the City of Madras?

(b) If the reply to part (a) is in the affirmative, have Government approved of the reduction of the rate for the same?

(c) What is the reduction proposed to be made?

The Honourable Sir Bhupendra Nath Mitra: (a) Yes. The Madras Telephone Company have proposed the introduction of the message-rate system which would secure the subscribers more favourable terms than obtain at present.

(b) Not yet. The Company have been asked to refer their proposals to the Local Government and public bodies in Madras for their views.

(c) The present and proposed charges are as follows:

<i>Present.</i>						Rs. A. P.
Connection fee	.	.	.	.	.	40 0 0
Rental (60 free calls)	.	.	.	.	.	17 8 0 per month.
Next 40 calls.	.	.	.	.	.	0 1 0 each.
Other calls	.	.	.	.	.	0 0 10 „

<i>Proposed.</i>						Rs. A. P.
Connection fee	.	.	.	.	.	20 0 0
Rental (No free calls)	.	.	.	.	.	12 0 0 per month.
Up to 200 calls	.	.	.	.	.	0 1 0 each.
After 200 calls	.	.	.	.	.	0 0 10 „

DROP IN THE PRICE OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCE.

367. ***Mr. E. F. Sykes:** (a) Has the attention of Government been drawn to the unprecedented fall in the price of agricultural commodities, especially wheat, cotton and ground-nuts?

(b) Is it a fact that the Karachi parity of wheat is under four rupees a maund?

(c) Are Government aware that this drop in the price of agricultural produce seriously affects the earnings of the masses of India and causes them grave anxiety?

(d) Do Government think of taking any steps to prevent further loss to the masses of their earnings, and if so, will Government be pleased to indicate what steps they intend to take?

(e) Does this depreciation of the earnings of the masses of India give any anxiety to Government? If so, do Government feel that effective and substantial efforts to prevent further depreciation of the hard earned produce of the masses are desirable?

Sir Frank Noyce: (a) Government have naturally been following the course of prices of agricultural commodities. They would not call the recent fall in prices unprecedented. In January 1924, the price of wheat was Rs. 85-8-0 per candy as against Rs. 86-8-0 on the 1st of February, 1930. In January 1927, the price of Broach cotton was Rs. 258 per candy as against Rs. 265 on the 10th of February, 1930. Cotton, except for short periods, has been expensive as compared with other commodities ever since 1919. World's prices for cotton are now approximating to the level of prices for other commodities in relation to pre-war prices.

(b) If the Honourable Member means by "Karachi parity", the price at which wheat would have to be purchased in Karachi in order to export it profitably to London, his statement is approximately correct. The actual price of wheat in Karachi is about Rs. 4-9-0 per maund. The Karachi parity is, however, purely of theoretical interest, as there is at present no exportable surplus of wheat.

(c) The drop in the price of the commodities they produce must obviously affect the earnings of agriculturists. In this respect, India has felt at a later date than many countries the prevalent agricultural depression throughout the world.

(d) Government consider that no steps which they could take could have any material influence on the course of the real price of commodities, which is governed by factors which are outside their control and for the most part outside India.

(e) In common with other Governments throughout the world, the Government of India have observed with anxiety the fall in the relative prices of agricultural products as compared with those of other commodities. They have already taken measures, by the promotion of agricultural research and agricultural improvement generally, to increase the effectiveness of agricultural production, which is the most obvious method of placing the producer in a stronger position to face lower prices with equanimity. It is their hope to develop and intensify their efforts in this direction.

Mr. Mukhtar Singh: Are Government aware that a committee of inquiry for the stabilisation of prices was appointed in England 12 Noon, and it was found that the drop in prices was generally due to the manipulation of the money market, especially of exchange and currency?

Sir Frank Noyce: I have no information on that point.

Mr. Mukhtar Singh: Are Government aware that the drop in prices is due to the contraction in currency?

The Honourable Sir George Schuster: Perhaps that is a question which concerns me rather more than my Honourable colleague. I suggest that a series of questions on this topic may lead to a long debate and it is perhaps not a suitable subject for question time. The only answer that I can give, and it is a full answer really to my Honourable friend's question, is as pointed out by Sir Frank Noyce in his answer, that we are now facing a world drop in prices. There has been a general fall in the prices of agricultural commodities throughout the world, which is due to world conditions, and it would be, I think, a very exaggerated view of the situation to suggest that any action by the Government of India has had any effect on the prices of such commodities as cotton and wheat throughout the world.

Mr. Mukhtar Singh: Are Government aware that in the inquiry made in England in 1924, it was found that the drop in prices was due to the contraction of currency, and if it was so, why can it not be assumed that the drop in prices in India is also due to the contraction of currency?

The Honourable Sir George Schuster: I am afraid, I am not familiar with the particular Report which my Honourable friend refers to, and therefore, I should like to have notice of any question which refers to that particular Report.

Mr. Mukhtar Singh: Will the Honourable Member refer to that Report?

An Honourable Member: He wants notice.

Sardar Bahadur Honorary Captain Hira Singh, Brar: When the price is very low, will Government consider the question of fixing import duties on wheat and cotton and other products?

The Honourable Sir George Rainy: If any specific proposal were placed before the Government of India, I have no doubt it would be considered, but obviously when it comes to a question of imposing a duty on food products, it would require the most careful consideration in view of the very large body of consumers in India.

Mr. Mukhtar Singh: Do Government care to inquire as to what specific steps have been taken in order to guard against a drop in prices in other foreign countries?

Sir Frank Noyce: I am not aware that any such steps have been taken in any country, but I will make inquiries on the point.

Mr. Mukhtar Singh: Will the Honourable Member kindly inquire about the United States of America?

Sir Frank Noyce: Yes.

Sardar Bahadur Honorary Captain Hira Singh, Brar: When the prices are very low, will Government kindly consider the question of a substantial help to the farmers by giving part remission from the revenue?

The Honourable Sir George Schuster: That question brings me up again. I am afraid that our revenue is not inexhaustible and if remissions were made under any particular head, it would be necessary to supplement the gap by imposing an increasing burden under other heads. I presume that the question refers chiefly to land revenue which, of course, is not a question for the Central Government, and therefore I am afraid, I cannot give a very satisfactory answer now.

SHORT NOTICE QUESTION AND ANSWER.

ARREST OF SARDAR ABDUL HAKIM KHAN AND SARDAR AMINULLAH JAN.

Maulvi Abdul Matin Ohaudhury (on behalf of Mr. Abdul Haye): (a) Is it a fact that Sardar Abdul Hakim Khan, late Afghan Trade Agent, and Sardar Aminullah Jan, a step brother of the ex-King Amanullah Khan, have been taken under custody by the Police at Peshawar?

(b) If so, why have they been arrested?

(c) Do Government propose to prosecute them or only to detain them at the King's pleasure?

The Honourable Sir James Orerax: Sir, in the absence of my Honourable friend Mr. Howell owing to illness, I have been asked to answer the question on his behalf.

(a) Yes.

(b) As stated in the North-West Frontier Province communiqué of February 8th, there is reason to believe that both men were concerned in a conspiracy to disturb the peace of the friendly Kingdom of Afghanistan.

(c) Inquiries are still in progress and Government is not yet able to declare its intentions.

UNSTARRED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

AUTHORISED LOADS FOR LOCOMOTIVES BETWEEN ASANSOL AND GAYA.

153. **Mr. E. F. Sykes:** Will Government be pleased to state what the authorised loads are in the different classes of locomotives between Asansol and Gaya on the East Indian Railway by:

(a) the main line; and

(b) the Grand Chord?

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons: I am placing in the Library a statement containing information obtained from the Agent, East Indian Railway, in connection with the Honourable Member's question, and sending him a copy.

GRADIENTS ON CERTAIN RAILWAYS.

154. **Mr. E. F. Sykes:** Will Government be pleased to state the percentage of the mileage of the following railways having gradients steeper than 1 in 200, that is, gradients up to 1 in 199:

(i) North-Western Railway,

(ii) East Indian Railway,

(iii) Bengal Nagpur Railway.

(iv) Rohilkhand and Kumaon Railway?

Mr. A. A. L. Parsons: It is presumed the Honourable Member desires to know what proportion of the route mileage is on a grade steeper than 1 in 200. Particulars of the total length of gradients on Class I Railways are given in Statement 9 of Volume II of the Report by the Railway Board on Indian Railways for 1928-29. The percentage of the total length of gradients up to 1 in 200 to the total route mileage on the 31st March, 1929, was as follows:

(i) North Western Railway (broad gauge)	. . . . .	13.58
" " " (narrow gauge)	. . . . .	51.8
(ii) East Indian Railway	. . . . .	9.41
(iii) Bengal Nagpur Railway (broad gauge)	. . . . .	44.5
" " " (narrow gauge)	. . . . .	41.7
(iv) Rohilkund and Kumaon Railway	. . . . .	4.76

ASSISTANT STORE-KEEPERS IN ARSENALS.

155. **Sardar Kartar Singh:** (a) Is it a fact that the stores sections of arsenals in India are being gradually Indianised and that the scheme of Indianisation has been tangibly translated into action by the appointment of Indian civilian assistant store-keepers to replace British non-commissioned officers to the extent of 25 per cent.?

(b) Do the Indian assistant store-keepers, who are replacing British non-commissioned officers, get the same pay, status and other concessions, which the latter get, and if not, why not?

Mr. G. M. Young: (a) Yes.

(b) Civilian assistant store-keepers, whether Indian, Anglo-Indian or domiciled European, do not get the same rates of pay and allowances as the British non-commissioned officers whom they are replacing. One of the objects of the scheme is to reduce expenditure. The Government of India are however satisfied that the terms offered to the civilian assistant store-keepers are adequate, and this view is confirmed by the large number of applications which are received for these appointments.

EMPLOYMENT OF INDIAN STOREMEN IN ARSENALS.

156. **Sardar Kartar Singh:** (a) Is it a fact that Indian storemen will shortly be introduced in arsenals in India to relieve the British military subordinates in storekeeping?

(b) If the reply to part (a) is in the affirmative, will a certain number of British military subordinates be rendered surplus, and how is it proposed to employ the latter class of men?

Mr. G. M. Young: (a) and (b). A scheme is under consideration for the employment of Indian storemen in arsenals. I am afraid I cannot inform the Honourable Member of the details of this scheme until they have been settled.

APPOINTMENT OF INDIANS TO GAZETTED POSTS IN ARSENALS.

157. **Sardar Kartar Singh:** (a) Is it a fact that the civilian Indian clerical establishment of the Indian Army Ordnance Corps have been for some years past clamouring for gazetted appointments at the rate of one per each arsenal in India?

(b) If so, what attempts have been made to meet this demand?

(c) Is it a fact that there is not a single gazetted Indian civil officer in any arsenal in India?

(d) Is it a fact that an Indian gazetted officer will cost the State 50 per cent. less than a military officer? Is it a fact that the latter receives lodging and other allowances? If so, have Government considered the question of effecting a saving in the Military Budget by creating gazetted appointments for Indians?

Mr. G. M. Young: Owing to the fact that the Ordnance Branch of Army Headquarters is in Simla, I have not been able to obtain a full reply to the Honourable Member's question, but will send him one shortly.

APPOINTMENT OF INDIANS AS ESTABLISHMENT OFFICERS IN ARMY HEAD-QUARTERS.

158. **Sardar Kartar Singh:** (a) What are the duties in the Branches of Army Headquarters of the Establishment Officer? Is it a fact that he is a British military officer risen from the ranks?

(b) Have Government considered the question as to whether these duties can be efficiently performed by an Indian gazetted officer, with only Rs. 500 pay without any allowances?

Mr. G. M. Young: (a) The Honourable Member is referred to the answer given to starred question No. 1340, asked by Khan Bahadur Ali-muzzaman Chowdhry on the 22nd March, 1926. The present Establishment Officer rose originally from the ranks, but he is a civilian and not a military officer.

(b) Government do not consider that the duties could be efficiently performed by any officer with a salary of Rs. 500 only.

BRITISH MILITARY CLERKS REPLACED BY INDIANS.

159. **Sardar Kartar Singh:** (a) Is it a fact that Indian clerks have replaced 28 British military technical clerks at Army Headquarters? If so, how have the latter been disposed of?

(b) If the ex-British military technical clerks have been drafted into arsenals, are they surplus to the existing authorized strength of each arsenal? If so, how are they being employed? If they are surplus, have Government considered the question of reverting them to regimental duties or of providing for them in other functions in existing vacancies?

Mr. G. M. Young: (a) and (b). 28 British military technical clerks at Army Headquarters have been, or will shortly be, replaced by Indian clerks, Indian Assistant Storekeepers of the Indian Army Ordnance Corps or British soldier clerks who will take civilian status on confirmation. The technical clerks have been absorbed in the authorised strength of British other ranks in the Indian Army Ordnance Corps with the exception of four, who are at present employed on the normal duties of storeholders or assistant storeholders and will be absorbed in the authorised cadre during 1930. They have not been reverted to regimental duty.

APPOINTMENT OF CHIEF CLERKS IN ARSENALS.

160. **Sardar Kartar Singh:** (a) Is it a fact that it is contemplated to employ the surplus military subordinates as Chief Clerks in all principal arsenals in India and to relegate the Head Assistants as subordinates? If so, will this deprive the Head Assistants of their existing status?

(b) Is it a fact that Indian Head Assistants have successfully carried out their duties from time to time, and specially during the difficult period of the Great War?

(c) Is it a fact that the Head Assistants have up till now acted as liaison officers to the Chief Ordnance Officer in the matter of complaints, petitions and other grievances of all Indians, and that he has been the interpreter of all representations affecting pay, budget, leave, etc.?

Mr. G. M. Young: (a) The answer is in the negative. As already explained in my reply to the previous question, the surplus British military technical clerks at Army Headquarters are being absorbed in the cadre of the Indian Army Ordnance Corps.

(b) Yes.

(c) Head Assistants are certainly consulted on these matters so far the clerical establishments are concerned.

RACIAL DISCRIMINATION IN ORDNANCE OFFICES.

161. Sardar Kartar Singh: Is it a fact that Indian clerks are not permitted to carry their bicycles inside an ordnance establishment, while European personnel have no such restrictions? Is it a fact that even Anglo-Indian men on daily rates of pay bring their bicycles inside the arsenal premises?

Mr. G. M. Young: I am making inquiries and will communicate the result to the Honourable Member in due course.

ELECTION OF MEMBERS FOR THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE AMENDMENT OF STANDING ORDERS.

Mr. President: I have to inform the Assembly that up to 12 Noon on Saturday, the 15th February, 1930, which was the date fixed for receiving nominations for the Select Committee on the amendment of Standing Orders only five nominations had been received. As the Select Committee will consist of seven members in addition to the President and the Deputy President and only five Members have been nominated, I appoint a further period up to 12 Noon on Tuesday, the 18th February, 1930, within which nominations will be received. The election, if necessary, will take place in this Chamber on Thursday, the 20th February, 1930.

STATEMENT LAID ON THE TABLE.

THE DACCA ARICHA RAILWAY PROJECT.

The Honourable Sir George Rainy (Member for Commerce and Railways): With reference to part (f) of my reply on the 3rd September, 1929, to question No. 61 by Mr. K. C. Neogy, I lay on the table the representation received from the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, and the reply which was sent, regarding the Dacca-Aricha Railway project.

COPY OF LETTER No. 1938-1929, DATED 4TH JUNE 1929, FROM THE SECRETARY, BENGAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, TO THE SECRETARY, RAILWAY BOARD.

I have the honour to invite a reference to the Committee's letter No. 1647, dated the 2nd May, 1929, on the subject of the Dacca-Aricha Railway. In that letter the Committee explained that the proposal to undertake the construction of the railway had been engaging the serious attention of the Chamber, and they requested that, until their views had been received by the Board, any action committing Government definitely to the construction of the line should be suspended. The Committee are

now in a position to submit their considered opinion in the matter, and they instruct me to communicate it to the Board.

2. The policy of the Board in regard to capital expenditure on new construction is defined in paragraph 26 of the Explanatory Memorandum of the Railway Budget for 1929-30. "In framing our programme of capital expenditure for next year", the Memorandum says, "We have acted on the principle that Railway Administrations should concentrate their efforts on a smaller number of new schemes, in order to push them through as rapidly as possible to completion, and obtain an early return on the money expended on them, instead of dissipating their energies by using up the funds available on a large number of projects and consequently lengthening the period before which they can be completed, piling up interest charges and postponing the date by which they will begin to yield a return on their cost". In view of the principle laid down in this paragraph, it is, the Committee think, reasonable to assume that a scheme would be selected for active prosecution only, if, in the opinion of the Board, it was considered to be urgently required in the interests of the area to be served, and if a fair return on the money expended was probable. It is the object of this letter to show that, in the opinion of the Chamber, neither of these criteria is applicable to the proposed Dacca-Aricha Railway.

3. Before dealing with the project itself, it is desirable to review very briefly certain matters in connection with it which were referred to in correspondence on the subject a few years ago. In the marginally noted letter the Board stated that it was for the Government of Bengal to decide whether the construction of a railway line in the area must be ruled out for reasons connected with the public health, and whether the requirements of the area in the way of communication could not best be met by an improvement of waterways. But if the decision should be in favour of some kind of railway communication, the Railway Board recorded the opinion that a light railway would sufficiently meet the requirements of the area. It may be recalled in this connection that at this date the scheme under consideration was for a metre-gauge line: there was no suggestion for a broad-gauge railway such as is now contemplated. The Board were themselves sceptical of the financial possibilities of a railway in the area; "they are bound to say", the letter remarks, "that they share Mr. Laughton's doubts whether the construction of a railway could be justified on ordinary commercial grounds..... the initial cost would be heavy, interruptions would be frequent, and maintenance would be expensive". Mr. Laughton (at the time Chief Engineer of the Eastern Bengal Railway) considered the area to be unsuitable for a railway link. The Chamber is not aware if the Government of Bengal came to the conclusion that the construction of the line could safely be undertaken without prejudicing the public health of the district, and whether Government were also of opinion that the requirements of the area could not be adequately provided for by an improvement of the waterways; for so far as they know, a public investigation of the whole position has never been conducted.

4. Particulars of the scheme are given in the Memorandum by the Financial Commissioner of Railways which is incorporated in the proceedings of the meeting of the Standing Finance Committee for Railways on 3rd and 4th January, 1929 (Vol. V, No. 5). The Memorandum frankly admits that the chief competitor of the Railway will be the water transport services, as the country is surrounded by rivers: in other words, even the modest return that is expected is dependent on the Railway appropriating traffic for which other means of transport are already available. The Memorandum explains the choice of a broad-gauge instead of a metre-gauge line, and estimates the total capital cost, including interest during construction, at Rs. 203 lakhs; and for the current year the Railway Budget provides a sum of Rs. 27 lakhs for expenditure in connection with the project. The anticipated return on capital, after the line has been opened for some years and has established itself as a through route between Bengal and Eastern Bengal and Assam, is 5.14 per cent. The Financial Commissioner's Memorandum does not explain how the figures of earnings are arrived at, but it is noted that the net earnings of the Dacca-Aricha line itself are estimated at Rs. 4½ lakhs, and that the additional net earnings of the existing main lines due to the new connection, are estimated at Rs. 10½ lakhs.

5. As is stated in the previous paragraph, the Financial Commissioner's Memorandum candidly admits that the line is expected to attract traffic from the inland steamer companies, and this matter is referred to at greater length in paragraphs 9 and 10 below. So far as the expectation is to attract a large share of the traffic

to and from the Mymensingh area—principally coal inwards and jute outwards—the main incentive will be the somewhat shorter route that will be available as compared with the route by which the traffic is now conveyed. So far as the Naraingunge-Dacca area is concerned, the object in view will be to compete with the inland navigation route between Naraingunge-Dacca and Calcutta, and to deprive it of traffic that has been efficiently and adequately handled for many decades. It cannot be a matter for surprise if there is, in these circumstances, a marked feeling that in questions relating to the development of communications the possibilities and the achievements of inland water transport do not receive adequate consideration when the launching of new railway schemes in competition with existing water services is being examined.

6. It is desirable to analyse some of the important factors which bear on this scheme, and in the first place the geographical features of the area call for examination. The greater portion of the area to be

Geographical features. traversed is bounded by the Padma and the Dhalleswari Rivers. Between Aricha and the site of the bridge over the Dhalleswari at Rajphulbari the country is a narrow strip entirely composed of alluvial soil, and liable to be cut through by the rivers during any monsoon. Such country is not suitable for a broad-gauge line, and can be better served by a system of tramways connecting the interior with the river ports. The Financial Commissioner's Memorandum states that no serious competition is anticipated from road services, but the Chamber is not so sure that this anticipation will prove to be sound. The extraordinary development of motor road services within recent years has falsified many anticipations, and although some of the services in the area have to close down during the rains—when, on the other hand, water transport is available to a greater extent—they are able to operate for the greater portion of the year, and the Chamber does not think it would be correct to assume that motor competition for local traffic—particularly passenger traffic—can be ignored.

7. As has already been mentioned, the greater portion of the area to be traversed is bounded by the Padma and the Dhalleswari Rivers, both of which have to be crossed. The **The Padma Wagon Ferry.** Padma is to be crossed by a wagon ferry at Aricha, and this site is, in point of fact unusually exposed, being open to the storms which periodically sweep up the river. There is much less natural protection at this point than there is lower down at the present site of Goalundo Ghat, where the inland steamer companies already find it difficult enough at times to protect their vessels; and the Chamber thinks it is open to serious doubt whether it will be practicable to maintain a regular wagon ferry service at Aricha. They cannot but think that this feature of the project has not attracted the consideration which should be given to it.

8. In the case of the Dhalleswari, the line is to be carried over the river by a **The Dhalleswari River bridge,** and the design of the bridge will probably offer some difficulties as the river is a shifting one. On this account an opening span, or a single span bridge with a sufficiently high headway, would not be adequate, unless at any rate extensive training works were undertaken to ensure that the river keeps within a fixed channel. In either case—whether by the provision of training works, or by providing a bridge with a sufficient number of spans to ensure reasonable certainty that it will not be deserted by the river—the bridge and the works connected with it will prove to be a costly feature of the scheme. While on the subject of the Dhalleswari, it may be mentioned that the river is at present showing signs of opening out to an extent that has been unknown for many years past. This development has taken place during the current dry season, and there are indications that further changes are likely, resulting in a much greater depth of channel throughout the river from the Brahmaputra (Jamuna) to Dacca; the development may also result in changes in the course of the river which cannot at present be foreseen, and which might seriously affect the contemplated alignment of the railway and render it maintainable only at a cost of revetment of the river banks out of proportion to the financial possibilities of the railway. In the past, the lack of water has compelled the closure of the steamer service above Manickgunge during the dry season but, if the developments go on as they now promise to do, there appears to be no reason why a service of fast motor passenger vessels should not establish a line of communications equal in value to the railway. The inland steamer companies have stated that they would be prepared, with the sanction and support of Government, to provide such a service within a reasonable period, a step which they would have considered before this time had they not been prevented from doing so by (a) navigation difficulties, which a reasonable

measure of waterways conservancy would go far to remedy, (b) the post-war financial stringency and (c) the problem of providing adequate block to meet the insistent demands for improved connections in the areas served by them.

9. Without going into the question in any detail, it is obvious that the financial results of the proposed railway must depend to a very large extent on the share it can attract of the

Jute traffic.

jute and coal traffic, a subject that has already been touched on in paragraph 5 above. Much of the jute goes direct to the jute mills, and it may not be appreciated that all jute mills prefer river delivery of their jute to delivery by rail. The reasons for this attitude on the part of mills are these :

- (a) that large consignments of jute can be brought alongside mill jetties by flat at one time;
- (b) that such consignments are properly arranged and loaded, with the result that unloading and storing operations are facilitated; and
- (c) that railway siding accommodation at practically all mills is limited, and consequently during the busy season great difficulty is experienced in handling jute arriving by rail, a position which is complicated by the fact that coal in practically all cases is received thus. The sidings are already rated to their full capacity.

In these circumstances jute mills could not cope with any increase in rail deliveries of jute, and on this account alone it is open to question whether the Dacca-Aricha line would be used to any appreciable extent for the carriage of jute to the Calcutta mills, particularly when the continuous trouble which would arise with regard to wagon demurrage is borne in mind.

10. The position is very similar with regard to much of the inward coal traffic

Coal traffic.

to places like Naraingunge and Dacca. The great bulk of the Dacca coal requirements is for brick burning, and the delivery of all this coal, and of the coal for jute firms there and at Naraingunge, is required at scattered places on the river banks, many of which are not accessible to the railway: and in these circumstances it is unlikely that, apart from its own requirements, the railway would carry more than a very small share of the coal imported into the area.

11. A matter that is deserving of very serious consideration in connection with the scheme is the effect of an increase of the traffic over the main Eastern Bengal Railway line. Every year, during the height of the jute season, there is serious congestion, and it is sometimes impossible to obtain wagons, particularly in Northern Bengal, where large quantities of jute are held up indefinitely. In

Effect of increased traffic on existing railway facilities.

the unlikely event of much of the jute traffic to Calcutta being diverted by the new line to the railway—and on any other supposition the line could not show the estimated profit—the congestion would be multiplied, and the existing marshalling yards on the broad-gauge section of the line, already inadequate to cope with the traffic, would be hopelessly blocked.

12. Without exaggerating the objections that can be brought against the project, the Chamber has endeavoured to show that these are material, and that due consideration has apparently not been given to them. The Chamber feels that a very large sum of public money is being risked in a scheme which is certainly not one of urgency, and which can show even the smallest return only if it succeeds in attracting traffic already adequately provided for by the inland steamer companies. It is instructive to note in this connection that the Indian Jute Mills Association, which might have been expected to welcome the possibility of competition with the steamer companies, is strongly opposed to the project and deprecates the expenditure of public money on an undertaking that is, comparatively speaking, so little needed. It is a matter of regret to the Chamber that a fuller opportunity was not given to the public to express their views on the scheme before it received sanction, and they hold very decidedly that all further proceedings in connection with the project should be suspended forthwith, and a public enquiry instituted. At such an inquiry the trading interests represented in the area should be given the fullest opportunity of expressing their views on the scheme, and details should be furnished showing how the various estimates have been arrived at, in particular the estimates of earnings. The Committee hope that they may be informed at an early date that it has been decided to withhold any further action in regard to the scheme until an inquiry such as they have asked for has taken place.

Letter No. 412-P, dated 4th February, 1930, from Mr. J. F. Blackwood, Secretary, Railway Board, to the Secretary, Bengal Chamber of Commerce.

"I am directed to reply to your letter No. 1938/129, dated the 4th June 1929, in which the Committee of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce protest against the construction of the Dacca-Aricha Railway.

2. I am to refer at the outset to the contention of your Committee that the construction of the line cannot be justified, unless it can be shown that it is urgently needed in the interests of the area to be served, and to the view they express that the road and river facilities in this part of the Bengal Presidency are adequate for the public needs. The original project for a railway in this tract was mooted more than 50 years ago, and it has been revived on several occasions since then. For many years past indeed the demand for railway facilities by the inhabitants of the western part of the Dacca district has been strong and persistent. In 1920 the Government of Bengal appointed a committee to make a special investigation into the feasibility of railway construction in that area, and though at the time the Railway Board were not prepared to proceed with the project, it was very speedily revived. In 1924 the Government of Bengal again impressed on the Railway Board the desirability of constructing the Dacca-Aricha Railway, offered to bear the cost of a survey, and asked to be informed of the amount of the guarantee that would be required in case objection was raised to the project on the ground that it would be unremunerative. Since then the Local Government have consistently placed the Dacca-Aricha Railway high in order of importance among the projected railways in the Presidency. It will be evident therefore that neither the Government of Bengal nor the inhabitants of the Dacca district share your Committee's view as to the adequacy of existing road and river communications, and it seems to the Railway Board that the need for a railway to improve the district communications has been established.

3. It is not, however, as a local feeder line only that the Dacca-Aricha Railway must be considered, but also as an essential link in a trunk system of communication. This new aspect of the case was clearly brought out as a result of the inquiry undertaken at the instance of the Government of Bengal after 1924, and this was the principal reason which led the Railway Board to modify their earlier view (formed after considering the report of the Committee which sat in 1921) that it was doubtful whether the construction of a railway could be justified on ordinary commercial grounds. The Dacca-Aricha Railway is closely linked with two other projects, viz., (1) the establishment of a through railway connection between the Eastern Bengal and Assam Bengal Railways by bridging the Megna river at Bhairab, and (2) the opening out of a direct route from the coal-fields to Eastern Bengal and Assam by means of the Sainthia-Halsa line. It is this development, actual and prospective, which has given a new importance to the Dacca-Aricha Railway.

4. I am now to turn to the doubt expressed by your Committee whether the line is likely to be remunerative and whether a fair return on the money to be invested in its construction can be expected. I am to say that the investigations made were such as to satisfy the Railway Board that, if account was taken, not only of the local traffic but of the through traffic which was likely to develop in the future, there were good grounds for believing that the line would more than pay its way. In reaching this conclusion they were influenced by the remarkable growth of traffic of the railways operating in Eastern Bengal and Assam, a growth which must be ascribed in part to the substantial additions which have been made to these railways in recent years. During the period from 1922-23 to 1928-29, the earnings of these railways have increased by about 44 per cent., and there can be little doubt that, with further extensions in contemplation when money can be found for them, the traffic will continue to grow. It is not proposed to discuss the estimate of earnings in any detail at this stage, but since your Committee evidently attach some importance to the point, I am to explain that the traffic estimate of the new line assumes that only a small proportion of the jute traffic will be transferred from the inland steam vessels to the railway.

5. The Railway Board, as a result of all the investigations made, came clearly to the conclusion that the Dacca-Aricha Railway would meet a real local need, that it was an eventual link in a trunk system of communication, and that the project was likely to be remunerative. It was on this basis that the construction of the line was sanctioned. A consideration of the arguments advanced in your letter has not led the Railway Board to modify their views, and the Government of Bengal, to whom a copy of your letter was forwarded, have stated that their support of the project is not affected by the representation of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce. In the ordinary course, therefore, the construction of the line would have proceeded. But, owing to financial circumstances, it is impossible to allot funds in 1930-31 for the commencement of the actual work of construction, and opportunity has thus presented itself to make sure—and, as your Committee suggest, in a project of such magnitude this was in any case desirable—that the construction and traffic estimates are as accurate

as they can be made. The detailed estimates of the work are at present under preparation and the only expenditure to be incurred in 1929-30 and 1930-31 is in connection with the final location and the acquisition of land. The Agent of the Eastern Bengal Railway has been instructed that, in preparing the detailed estimates, no pains must be spared in ascertaining the probable cost of the line, and he has also been asked to review carefully the traffic estimate, including the jute and coal traffic, about which your Committee are specially concerned. His special attention has been directed to the difficulties your Committee anticipate in the working of the Padma wagon ferry, and the doubts they express regarding the bridge over the Dhaleshwari River. I am, however, to add that the information at the disposal of the Railway Board as regards the working of other wagon ferries does not lead them to endorse the views of your Committee on the former point.

6. Another matter to which your Committee have referred is the effect which the construction of the line may have on river conservancy and the public health. Both these matters closely concern the Government of Bengal, and the Government of India cannot doubt that they were taken into account by that Government before they gave their support to the project. Both of them, however, will be examined again while the detailed estimate is under preparation, by the Agent of the Eastern Bengal Railway, who has been directed to work in the closest consultation with the Government of Bengal and their expert advisers. The actual construction of the line will not be commenced until the Railway Board have received and considered fully the report of the Agent on the detailed estimate.

7. Finally, I am to refer to the suggestion of your Committee that the facilities on the Eastern Bengal Railway may not be adequate for dealing with the increased traffic which the new line is likely to bring into Calcutta. I am to say, for the information of your Committee, that the programme of development of the Eastern Bengal Railway makes provision for handling the increased traffic which may arise not only from the construction of the Dacca-Aricha Railway, but also from other new lines, also under construction or projected.

8. In view of the public interest which is taken in this matter, the Government of India propose to publish this letter."

RAILWAY BUDGET FOR 1930-31.

The Honourable Sir George Rainy (Member for Commerce and Railways): It is my duty today to present to the House the Railway Budget for the year 1930-31. No change of importance has been made in the form of the statements submitted, and I do not think it is necessary that I should refer to certain minor alterations, especially as they are rather technical in character. The Railway Board's Memorandum contains detailed explanations of the various figures, and in what I say I shall attempt to survey the position on somewhat broader lines. The main burden of the preparation of the Budget has, of course, fallen on the Financial Commissioner, as usual, and I should like to take this opportunity to thank him, the Chief Commissioner and the Members of the Railway Board for the assistance which they have given. While Mr. Parsons was on leave in summer, the post of Financial Commissioner was held by Mr. Rau, and I know the House will pardon me if I acknowledge in a word the competence and energy displayed by the first Indian who has held the office of Financial Commissioner. (Applause.) I should like also to pay my tribute to the Standing Finance Committee who have, as we are accustomed to expect, never failed throughout the year to render valuable assistance in the control of railway finance.

2. May I express the hope that, as in previous years, Honourable Members who give notices of motions for reductions in the Demands will indicate briefly in their notices the questions they wish to raise? It must obviously lighten the task of the Government Members, if they know in advance on what points they will be expected to reply.

[Sir George Rainy.]

Financial results of 1928-29.

3. When I presented the current year's Budget to the House, we expected that the surplus for the year 1928-29 on all lines would be nearly Rs. 9 crores. Both receipts and expenditure fell short of the estimate, but the shortage on the receipt side was the more serious, and the year closed with a net gain from the Railways of less than Rs. 8 crores. The result was that we were able to add Rs. 2½ crores to the reserve after paying the fixed contribution.

Revised estimates for 1929-30.

4. The falling off in traffic receipts in February and March 1929, was unfortunately symptomatic of what was to come, and the financial results of the current year can only be described as disappointing. We budgeted for a total revenue of about 1,06½ crores and a total expenditure of 95½ crores, and had this result been achieved, we should have closed the year with a surplus of Rs. 11½ crores on the commercial lines. We now expect that the actuals will be more than Rs. 4 crores worse than the estimate so that the final surplus is likely to be little more than Rs. 7 crores. There has been a serious decline in the loadings of grain and pulses; oilseeds did well in the first half of the year and badly in the second, and with two exceptions all classes of traffic have been lower than in the previous year. The two exceptions are cotton and coal. The increase in the cotton traffic appears to be due not to a larger crop, but to the fact that it has moved unusually early, and we must expect a decline in the coming months. The increased traffic in coal, on the other hand, is, I am glad to say, the visible sign of improved conditions in the coal industry and the lifting of the depression which has so long overshadowed it. The increase in the number of coal wagons loaded up to date is 5 per cent. or if the coal carried by the East Indian and Bengal Nagpur Railways is included, 6 per cent. Conditions are now totally different from those prevailing three or four years ago. The large stocks which had accumulated at the coalfields have disappeared, and since May last the railways have been moving the coal as fast as it could be raised to meet an insistent public demand. An important feature of the improved trade conditions is the recovery of India's export trade in coal, and this recovery is unquestionably due in large measure to the admirable work of the Coal Grading Board, of which the Railway Board's Chief Mining Engineer is the Chairman. In November and December last, owing to an abundant rice harvest, there was a serious shortage of labour in the coalfields, and the pressure on supplies became acute. Indeed the maintenance of adequate stocks of coal on the railways became difficult, and had it not been for the existence of the State Railway collieries, it would have been necessary to take steps which might have endangered the export trade. Firms with contracts to supply coal to the railways found themselves unable to supply both the railways and the export market, and as the railways clearly could not be allowed to go short, it would have been necessary to insist on supplies in accordance with the contracts. Actually we were able to avoid any action of that kind by increasing the output of the railway collieries.

5. I do not propose to analyse in detail the causes to which the reduction in earnings should be ascribed. The heavy falling off in grain traffic is clearly due to the unsatisfactory harvests of recent years in Northern India, but under other heads it is not so much that traffic has fallen off heavily as that it has failed to expand to the extent we hoped. India, like other countries, is passing through a period of trade depression due to falling prices, when buyers naturally adopt a cautious policy and goods move slowly. Conditions

such as these must inevitably be reflected in the railway traffic returns, and the falling off in traffic might easily have been worse than it is. It must not be forgotten that the reductions in rates and fares made in the last five years were estimated to involve a loss of revenue exceeding Rs. 5 crores in a full year, a loss which we hoped to make good from the expansion of traffic. For the present our hopes have not been realised, for when traffic is inelastic, reductions in rates and fares must inevitably bring down receipts. But there is no ground for despondency, and I do not doubt that when trade conditions improve, our expectations will prove to have been well founded. Our reduced rates for long distance coal announced last year 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. The passenger mile figure has gone up by $5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. and the passenger earnings this year are likely to exceed those of the previous year by about two-thirds of a crore.

6. On the expenditure side, we budgeted for total working expenses of Rs. 64½ crores, but actually they are likely to be 2½ crores of rupees higher. Detailed explanations have been given under the various heads in the Railway Board's Memorandum, and I will not attempt to do more than notice the salient points. As the mileage of the Indian Railways increases—and we expect to open 600 miles of line this year—expenses inevitably go up, for the new lines have to be staffed and more train miles are run. Again, we have begun to spend money on the improvement of service conditions of our lower paid staff, and I shall have more to say on this subject at a later stage. Flood damages have been unusually severe and have helped to swell our repairs and maintenance bill. The stocks of coal on the railways had fallen to a low level in March last, and the raising of them to an adequate figure has increased the expenditure on fuel. Finally, the taking over of the Southern Punjab line from the 1st of January means an apparent increase in working expenses of about a quarter of a crore. I say an apparent increase, for the expenditure on that line was formerly recovered from the Company and the recoveries shown as a 'deduct' entry under working expenses, while from now onwards there will be no recoveries and both receipts and expenses will be increased proportionately.

7. I have mentioned the principal factors which have tended to raise our working expenses, but during the last two years the growth of expenditure has been rapid, and I recognise the obligation resting on those who administer the railways to take all possible measures to keep down expenses and enforce economy in every branch of the administration. This is necessary at all times, but when trade is poor and revenue is inelastic, there is particular need to apply to every proposal, which means higher working expenses, the test whether it ought to be put in force at once, or whether it can be postponed with advantage. It may be, for example, that a workshop could undertake a larger programme of repairs, and that, if it did so, it might in some respects be advantageous to the railway to put the work through quicker, but it may be wholly inadvisable to assent to such a scheme during a year when railway receipts show a downwards tendency. I am far from advocating that false species of economy which postpones necessary expenditure only to be faced by higher costs at a later date. But in present circumstances I feel that working expenses must be watched with a specially vigilant eye, and the Railway Board some months ago drew the attention of Agents to the matter and impressed on them the importance of keeping the financial aspect constantly in mind. Their attention will again be directed to the matter when they meet at Delhi in March. The repair of rolling stock is a branch of railway work in which much may be done to reduce expenditure by constant care

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and attention, and I am glad to be able to inform the House that both the average cost of standard repairs and the period during which an engine, wagon or carriage is detained in the shops continues to fall. In this region the results achieved by the East Indian Railway are particularly good and deserve special notice.

8. On the expenditure other than working expenses I need not dwell. As compared with 1928-29, interest and depreciation charges are up by Rs. 1,09 lakhs and Rs. 58 lakhs respectively, and the expenditure under surplus profits paid to Indian States and Railway Companies has been swollen by an unexpected throw forward into the current year of the surplus profits payable to the Burma Railways Company for the last nine months of 1928. On the basis of the revised estimates, we expect that at the close of the current year the figures will stand as follow. The total receipts from commercial lines we put at nearly Rs. 1,05 crores, which is Rs. 1½ crores above the receipts for last year. The expenditure is estimated to be nearly Rs. 98 crores—an increase of Rs. 3½ crores. The net gain from the commercial lines will then be Rs. 7 crores, out of which the loss on the strategic railways amounting to Rs. 1,81 lakhs has to be met. The balance of Rs. 5,26 lakhs is insufficient to meet the contribution of Rs. 6,12 lakhs to General Revenues, and we shall have to draw on our reserves to the extent of Rs. 86 lakhs.

Budget estimates for 1930-31.

9. The Budget figures for the coming year do not disclose any startling differences from the revised estimates. Our total receipts will, we estimate, amount to nearly Rs. 1,08 crores, a figure which is nearly Rs. 3 crores more than the revised estimates for the current year. The total expenditure we put at nearly Rs. 1,00 crores, an increase of slightly over Rs. 2 crores on the revised estimates. The final result is a net gain to the Railways of nearly Rs. 8 crores, which is about three-quarters of a crore better than the revised estimates of the current year. Out of the surplus, we shall have to meet the net loss on the strategic railways amounting to Rs. 1,80 lakhs and the contribution to general revenues amounting to Rs. 5,74 lakhs. Only a small balance of Rs. 34 lakhs will then remain to be added to the Reserve Fund.

10. One important change, which affects the figures both of receipts and expenditure, deserves special mention, I mean the purchase of the Southern Punjab Railway. Had we not taken advantage of the opportunity to purchase this year, our receipts in 1930-31 would be lower by about Rs. 1,44 lakhs and our working expenses by about Rs. 88 lakhs. It will be seen therefore, that our net receipts will be 56 lakhs higher owing to the completion of the purchase; and, since our charges for interest on the purchase price are only 37 lakhs, we make a clear profit of 19 lakhs from the transaction. I have thought it worth while to mention the matter in order to make it clear that though the purchase of the line in the current year has meant a heavy drain on our capital resources, it is in itself a most profitable transaction resulting in a substantial increase in our railway revenues.

11. If we eliminate the increase in our traffic receipts ascribable to the purchase of the Southern Punjab Railway (making due allowance for the fact that the purchase affected also the last three months of 1929-30), it will be found that we are budgeting for an increase in gross traffic receipts of only about 2 crores. This, I think, is a reasonable estimate, for while we may fairly

hope for a normal year, we are unfortunately not justified at present in anticipating any marked improvement in trade conditions. On the expenditure side, we anticipate an increase of Rs. 1 crore in the charge for interest and two-thirds of a crore under depreciation. Both these charges of course follow automatically from the increase in the capital at charge. For the rest, we expect an increase of three-quarters of a crore under working expenses (excluding depreciation). But here I must remind the House that not only revenue, but expenditure also is increased by the purchase of the Southern Punjab Railway, and if that factor is eliminated, the increase is only a quarter of a crore. That increase I can most conveniently discuss at a later stage. For the moment I will only say that, while we expect fairly substantial increases under Administration and Operation, we believe that these will to some extent be counter-balanced by a reduction under Repairs and Maintenance.

Capital Expenditure.

12. I turn now to the Capital Programme. We expected to spend during the current year Rs. 26½ crores on works the cost of which is debitable to capital, and we now estimate that the actual expenditure will be a little more than Rs. 24 crores. Next year the capital expenditure is placed at Rs. 16½ crores. These figures show clearly how greatly the position has changed since 1927, when it still seemed possible that funds would be forthcoming to meet all reasonable requirements for railway development. It has now become evident that the most drastic reduction in the capital programme is inevitable, and that in present circumstances there is nothing for it but to cut our coat according to our cloth. I need hardly say how deeply the Railway Board, and I personally, regret that it should be necessary to call a halt and to postpone the initiation of new projects urgently required to meet the need for improved traffic facilities, knowing as we do how great that need is. But financial exigencies have made retrenchment imperative.

13. How the Railway Board propose to deal with the situation is best explained in their own words, and I make no apology for quoting what is said in paragraph 25 of the Railway Board's Memorandum :

"It has become apparent that owing to existing conditions, not only in India but outside India as well, we are unlikely to obtain funds for capital expenditure on railways in the near future except at rates of interest substantially higher than those at which they have been procurable in the last three or four years. A rise in the rate of interest not only makes some projects either for extensions to the railway system or for improvements to the existing system unremunerative; it also makes it necessary to consider whether it is not wiser to postpone the inception of other projects which, even with a higher rate of borrowing, may still be remunerative, rather than to burden the railways of India with a large volume of indebtedness for money raised at a period of high interest rates. Consequently we have this year, and propose next year, to concentrate almost entirely on pushing schemes already in hand through to completion, so that we may obtain an early return on the money spent on them, and have avoided adding to our commitments at a time when the future is so uncertain by undertaking new schemes."

The Railway Board in the words quoted accurately express the policy laid down by the Government of India, but in one respect I am in a position to supplement what they say. When the scale of development expenditure is for any reason subjected to sudden and drastic curtailment, the danger always is that works in progress may have to be abandoned or postponed for an indefinite period when they are half way to completion,

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and if that happens, the inevitable consequence is that the money already spent is largely wasted because it cannot come to fruition until long after the due date. I am glad to be able to say that this result will not occur on the Indian railways to-day. In order to bring about the necessary reduction in capital expenditure, it has not been necessary to bring to a standstill important works in progress, and it has sufficed to refrain from the commencement of new projects which would have involved the railways in heavy commitments for future years. That this danger should have been averted is a satisfactory element in a difficult situation, and much credit is due to the Railway Board, and in particular to the Financial Commissioner, Mr. Parsons. But for the fact that, during the last four or five years, constant attention has been given to restricting the magnitude of our future commitments, it would have been impossible to avoid very serious dislocation in our plans.

14. Compulsory abstention from the initiation of new projects provides an opportunity for taking stock of the railway construction programme as a whole and for laying down the broad lines of policy which for the next three or four years we ought to try to follow. It is intended to take full advantage of this opportunity and to consider deliberately the best use which can be made of such funds as are likely to be available during that period. It is in connection with the Capital programme that the operations of the Railway Department chiefly affect the general finances of the Government of India, and in any review of policy the Finance Department must take its full share. The Government of India have decided that, in order that the position may be kept under control and that the best use may be made of all sums available for capital expenditure, the general questions of railway policy in their financial aspect should be brought under review at half-yearly intervals by the Finance and Railway Members of the Government in consultation—once at the beginning of the Simla season and once at the time of the Agents' Conference in the autumn. I believe that very real advantages will result from this new arrangement and I am sure it will go far to relieve any anxiety felt by Members of this House that the Railway Department is a law unto itself and not amenable to salutary financial control. I ought perhaps to add that, while probably it will be matters connected with the capital programme which will most frequently come under review, that does not by any means exclude from consideration all proposed expenditure on the revenue side which is likely to affect substantially the financial results of the railways.

15. In a year like the present when we are rigidly restricting our capital expenditure, it is natural that there should not be much to say as regards particular projects. Of the works now in progress I need only mention the electrification of the ghat sections of the Great Indian Peninsula Railway and of the suburban railways at Madras, the new Perambur workshops of the Madras and Southern Mahratta Railway, and the further prosecution of the Raipur Vizianagram Railway, which will ultimately provide the Central Provinces with a new outlet to the sea at Vizagapatam. The only new work of any magnitude which it is proposed to initiate is the doubling of the East Indian Railway line between Cawnpore and Tundla, which has become a matter of some urgency. A sum of Rs. 20 lakhs has been provided in the next year's Budget for doubling the most congested section between Shikohabad and

Tundla. Of the works which we should like to have commenced but are unable to do so, I might perhaps mention the Dacca-Aricha Railway in Eastern Bengal (Shame) and the branch lines intended to serve the cotton growing tracts north and south of Akola in Berar.

16. Having dealt with the Capital programme, I have in one sense completed my review of the railway finances for the year, but there are one or two matters about which I have hitherto said little or nothing, and to these I must refer before I close. One of them may be dismissed briefly in a sentence or two. In two successive years I was so fortunate as to be able to announce, at the time of the presentation of the Budget, substantial reductions in railway rates and fares. From the figures already given it must have been evident to Members of this House that on this occasion I shall not be able to make any similar announcement. At a time when we are compelled to draw upon the Reserve Fund in order to pay our contribution to General Revenues, it is obvious that we cannot contemplate any further reduction in rates and fares. Our first duty is to ensure the solvency of the railways and reductions which we should like to make in order to facilitate the movement of traffic must await the coming of better times. But apart from that, at the present juncture there is a prior claim upon such surpluses and this brings me to the second subject to which I wish to allude.

17. When I presented the Railway Budget last year, I promised that we would set on foot a systematic examination of the service conditions of our lower paid employees in order to ascertain what were the measures most urgently called for in order to bring about an improvement, and I mentioned, amongst matters which required to be examined, not only the rates of pay and wages but also reductions of working hours, the extension of provident fund benefits to classes who do not at present enjoy them, and improvement in housing conditions and so on. In order to make this examination possible, the Assembly agreed, on the recommendation of the Government of India, to the creation of a new appointment of Member of the Railway Board who would be specially charged with responsibility for all matters connected with the welfare of the enormous staff employed by the railways of India. It is right that I should attempt, however imperfectly, to convey to the House what has been done in order to carry out that promise.

18. Mr. Hayman assumed charge of his duties at the beginning of April last, and since then he must have been, I suppose, the busiest man at the headquarters of the Government of India. His work may be said to have fallen under five principal heads relating to :

- (1) improvement in the service conditions of the staff generally, and in particular of the lowest paid employees ;
- (2) the Indianisation of the railway services and the elimination of racial discrimination ;
- (3) the revision of the cadres of the superior services and of the methods of recruitment ;
- (4) the relations of the railway management with the organisations of workmen, and
- (5) the preparation of material, so far as the railways of India are concerned, for the Royal Commission on Labour.

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It would take me much too long to attempt to enumerate in detail all the matters which have come up for review under the various heads. That would require a speech to itself, and some of the subjects can only be briefly referred to.

19. Under the head of Indianisation, I should like to mention the special efforts which have been made to bring the Transportation (Power) and the Mechanical Engineering Branches into line with the Civil Engineering and Transportation (Traffic) and Commercial Branches in the matter of Indianisation. A scheme for the training of apprentices has been in force since 1926, but the period of training being six years, it could not provide fully qualified officers until the end of 1932. In order to accelerate progress in this direction, when it became necessary to fill eight vacancies in the Transportation (Power) and Mechanical Engineering branches, it was decided to invite applications both in India and in the United Kingdom specifying the qualifications which represented the minimum which could be considered, in the hope that Indian candidates might be forthcoming who would be likely to develop into efficient officers. The age limit was also relaxed, so that the field of selection might not be limited. The result has been that four Indians have been appointed to the Transportation (Power) Department and three to the Mechanical Engineering Department. Although there were only two vacancies in the latter branch, a third Indian has been appointed as a special probationer in anticipation of the occurrence of a vacancy. It is proposed to continue similar arrangements until 1933 when the scheme for the training of apprentices will bear fruit and provide the requisite number of Indians for these Departments.

20. Under this head I must also refer to the elimination of racial discrimination, but I can only do so briefly. The whole question has been systematically considered and we have now reached a stage when the material has been digested and consultation with the Central Advisory Council is likely to be both helpful and fruitful.

21. I must now turn to the most important head of all, namely, the improvement of the service conditions of the lowest paid railway servants, and here there are several questions which demand more detailed notice. In May last, I received a deputation of the All-India Railwaymen's Federation when a number of important subjects were fully and frankly discussed and our examination of service conditions has proceeded largely on the basis of the representations then made. First, I may mention the matter in which we have been able to make the most rapid progress, I mean what is sometimes called security of tenure and which arises out of the complaints of alleged wrongful dismissal or discharge from railway service. This was a matter to which the Federation attached great importance, and a new set of rules has been issued which it is believed will go far to meet the complaints made on this subject. I cannot enter into details now, but copies of the rules have been placed in the Library, and it is my intention also that copies should be supplied to all members of the Central Advisory Council.

22. Next comes the revision of the leave rules. That is a question which has been under consideration since 1924, but it proved impossible, owing to the defective organisation of the Railway Board, to bring the matter to a head until the new Member was appointed. The rules hitherto in force have been defective in two vital particulars. In the first place, the

rules applicable to staff taken over with the East Indian, Great Indian Peninsula and Burma Railways when they were acquired by the State were manifestly open to the charge of racial discrimination, and, in the second place, the existing rules in force on the old State Railways are liberal enough in theory but operated in practice to the prejudice of employees in inferior service, owing to the condition that the grant of leave must impose no extra cost on the State. The new leave rules have now been settled and are on the eve of publication.

All new recruits will come under the new rules and those at present in service will be given the option of electing to be brought under them. These rules eliminate the objectionable features involving racial considerations of the existing leave rules on the East Indian, Great Indian Peninsula and Burma Railways.

So far as the inferior servants are concerned, the no extra cost condition is abandoned and the effect will be that a number of daily-rated employees, particularly in the workshops, will be admitted to privileges which they had not previously enjoyed. I may add that instructions will be issued to Agents that where necessary in order to enable inferior servants and other subordinate staff to take the leave admissible under the new rules, additional staff must be recruited in order to form a leave reserve. Here again as soon as the new rules are issued, I shall be glad to place copies in the Library and to furnish copies to members of the Central Advisory Council.

23. Next I would refer to the question of hours of employment and periods of rest, and here my reference must be brief, for the Bill which is intended to secure the application to railway servants in India of the 60 hour week and the weekly rest day provided for in the Washington and Geneva Conventions will come before the Assembly at an early date. Before the details of the scheme could be worked out, an immense amount of spade work has been necessary, the whole burden of which has fallen upon the Labour Member of the Board. The recurring expenditure which the scheme will involve will certainly be not less than Rs. 50 lakhs per annum and may amount to as much as Rs. 60 lakhs. It also necessitates the expenditure of something like Rs. 50 lakhs on the capital side, in order to provide quarters for the additional staff.

24. There are other matters which have come under review under these heads such as improvement in the service conditions of workshop employees, the acceleration of the payment of monthly wages, and welfare subjects such as education, co-operative credit societies and the staff benefit fund, but the only one upon which I can attempt to enlarge is the revision of the wages of the lower paid staff. This is obviously a question of great importance, but if unnecessary expenditure is to be avoided it also requires the closest and most systematic examination. Mr. Hayman, rightly I think, commenced his investigation on the Calcutta railways, and the principal question which he discussed with the Agents was the wage which should be paid to the lowest unskilled class of labour comprising gangmen, porters, bhistis, watermen, sweepers, etc. After the discussions with the Agents, a detailed scheme was prepared in the first instance for the Eastern Bengal Railway, and in broad outline this has now been approved by the Railway Board, though certain details have still to be worked out. It has taken time to settle, because it was all important in the first case which came under consideration, to lay down the general principles which ought to regulate such matters, for if schemes are adopted without sufficient consideration, there is a very real

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danger that public money may be wasted. Now that the first scheme has been passed and the general principles laid down, progress should be much more rapid upon other railways.

25. I have attempted, very imperfectly I fear, to give the Assembly some idea of the magnitude and complexity of the problems with which the Labour Member of the Railway Board has had to deal. I wish it had been possible, before the discussion of the Railway Budget, to lay on the table of the House a memorandum giving a full account of all that has been done. It is my intention in any case to submit such a memorandum for the information of the Central Advisory Council, but it was impossible to get it into shape before the presentation of the Railway Budget, since the inevitable result must have been to delay progress in the schemes under consideration, and that had to be avoided at all costs. In winding up this part of my speech, I will only say this, that it is open to any Member of the Legislature to blame the Government of India because these matters were not taken in hand in earnest at an earlier date, and if that charge were made, I should not be too much concerned to reply to it. But if the accusation be that since the new Member of the Railway Board was appointed to deal with all the staff questions there has been any avoidable delay in subjecting them to a scrutiny at once sympathetic and systematic and taking all possible steps to bring about the earliest possible solution, then I would only say that that charge is without foundation and could only be made by those who are unacquainted with the facts. During the last eleven months Mr. Hayman has thrown himself whole-heartedly into the discharge of the important duties which have fallen to his lot. He has given his whole energies unsparingly to their successful accomplishment. I should like to take this opportunity of making clearly known the high value which the Government of India place on the services he has rendered.

26. I turn now to the question of the expenditure involved in giving effect to the various schemes of improvement. In the first place, there is the cost of the additional staff required in order to secure compliance with the Washington and Geneva Conventions and the capital cost of the quarters for that staff. In the second place, there are the schemes for the revision of pay of the lowest paid employees of the railways which must obviously involve extra expenditure, and in the third place, there is the extra staff which will be needed if the new leave rules are to effect a real as distinct from a nominal improvement in service conditions. Very naturally and properly Members of the Assembly may ask what provision has been made in the Budget to cover this expenditure. It will be seen from the Railway Board's Explanatory Memorandum that of a provision of Rs. 28 lakhs under Revenue in the current year's Budget it is not expected that much more than Rs. 18 lakhs will be spent before the 31st of March next and in the Budget for the next year there is provision for Rs. 25 lakhs in all under Revenue and a similar sum under Capital for the construction of quarters. Are these sufficient, it may be asked, to meet the expenditure likely to be incurred?

27. I may say at once that quite possibly these sums will prove to be insufficient, and I should like to explain to the House the reasons why Government have not included in the estimates a larger provision. One reason is that at the present stage of our inquiries it is not possible to estimate with any accuracy the magnitude of the sums involved. Take

for example, the introduction of the new leave rules and the recruitment of additional staff to provide the leave reserve. These rules will apply automatically only to new recruits, and officers already in service will not come under them, unless they elect to do so. We do not know what number of officers may choose the new rules, nor can we tell whether in all cases recruitment of additional staff will be necessary. If, for example, in a workshop the existing staff is redundant having regard to the volume of work to be done, it may be quite possible to introduce the new rules without any increase in expenditure. In the second place, experience has almost invariably shown that when new schemes are being introduced the money is never spent so fast as was originally anticipated, and allowance must be made for that factor. Finally, I must mention the need for economy in the working expenses of the railways to which I alluded at an earlier part in my speech. It would have been quite possible to make larger provisions in the Budget and thereby swell the total working expenses, but this we did not consider advisable. I am anxious to make plain to the Railway Administrations the importance which Government attach to keeping revenue expenditure within bounds. I am inclined to think that an effective means of securing this is to keep the estimate of working expenses on the low side. One point, however, I desire to make clear. If and when we are satisfied that the introduction of well-considered schemes involving expenditure are necessary in order to secure the welfare and contentment of our staff, and if we find that the cost of these schemes cannot be met without raising our working expenses to a higher figure than is set down in the Budget, we shall not hesitate to place supplementary estimates before the Assembly and ask the House to sanction the additional expenditure. I am anxious to make this clear, because when our review of service conditions discloses the fact that there are legitimate grievances, then it is the desire of the Government of India and of the Railway Board that they should be redressed with as little delay as possible.

28. I will not apologise, Mr. President, for dwelling at some length on these matters which so deeply concern the interests of the great body of railway servants in India. It is impossible for me, however, to dilate upon them longer to-day. I desire only, before bringing my speech to a conclusion, to thank the House for the patience with which they have heard me, and if I may, to acknowledge the friendliness and courtesy with which the Members of this House have always listened to what I could tell them about the affairs of our railways.

PANEL OF CHAIRMEN.

Mr. President: Order, order: Under rule 3 of the rules for the conduct of business of this House, I nominate Pandit Malaviya, Mr. M. A. Jinnah, Sir Darcy Lindsay and Sir Zulfikar Ali Khan on the panel of Chairmen for the ensuing Sessions.

The Assembly then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Tuesday, the 18th February, 1930.