

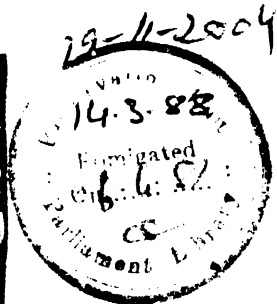
Thursday, 21st February, 1935

THE
COUNCIL OF STATE DEBATES

VOLUME I, 1935

(11th February to 17th April, 1935)

NINTH SESSION
OF THE
THIRD COUNCIL OF STATE, 1935



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COUNCIL OF STATE.

Thursday, 21st February, 1935.

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

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

ZANZIBAR DECREES.

39. THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA MATHURA PRASAD MEHROTRA : Do Government propose to make a full statement on the Zanzibar Decrees in the light of Mr. Menon's report and the meeting of the Emigration Committee ?

THE HONOURABLE KHAN BAHADUR MIAN SIR FAZL-I-HUSAIN : Representations were made to His Majesty's Secretary of State for India on the lines approved by the Standing Committee on Emigration, and Mr. Menon's report together with certain connected papers were published in a Gazette of India Extraordinary, dated the 28th January, 1935. We have recently received the views of His Majesty's Government on our representations and these are under consideration.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA ON THE REPORT OF THE JOINT PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE.

40. THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA MATHURA PRASAD MEHROTRA : (a) Have the Government of India sent their recommendations on the Joint Parliamentary Committee Report ?

(b) If the answer to part (a) is in the affirmative, what have they stated about the reception of the Report in India ?

THE HONOURABLE KHAN BAHADUR MIAN SIR FAZL-I-HUSAIN : (a) I very much regret the Honourable Member's question is not sufficiently understood to be answered. It is not clear what the Honourable Member means by recommendations, and to whom he thinks they have to go. Part (b) is still more difficult to follow.

ISSUE OF PASSES TO MEMBERS OF LOCAL ADVISORY COMMITTEES.

41. THE HONOURABLE KUMAR NRIPENDRA NARAYAN SINHA : (a) Will Government be pleased to state whether any circular has been issued in connection with the issue of free passes for the journey of the members of the Local Advisory Committee for Railways attending the meetings of the Committee ? If so, will they lay on the table a copy of such circular ?

(b) Is it a fact that the letters of authority to the station master concerned for supplying free tickets to the members of the Local Advisory Committee are issued only a week before the date fixed for the meetings ?

(c) Is it a fact that if a member, for his convenience, requests a pass for the journey to be sent a few days earlier, such a request is refused?

(d) Will Government be pleased to lay all papers in this connection on the table?

THE HONOURABLE SIR GUTHRIE RUSSELL: (a) I am placing on the table a copy of the Railway Board's letter No. 1125-T., dated 9th December, 1929, to the Agent, Madras and Southern Mahratta Railway, a copy of which was endorsed to the Agents of other Railways. No circular on this subject has been issued since then.

(b) Government have no information, but the practice in this respect may vary according to circumstances.

(c) I have not been able to trace any such case as having been referred to the Railway Board.

(d) I am not quite clear what papers my Honourable friend refers to.

LETTER TO THE AGENT, MADRAS AND SOUTHERN MAHRATTA RAILWAY, No. 1125-T., DATED NEW DELHI, THE 9TH DECEMBER, 1929.

Issue of passes for members of Local Advisory Committees.

I am directed to refer you to the correspondence ending with the Railway Board's letter No. 1125-T., dated the 30th July, 1929, and to say that, on reconsideration, the Railway Board have decided that on State-managed Railways members of Local Advisory Committees, when travelling on business connected with the Committee, should travel on ordinary card tickets. These tickets will be issued on production of a letter of authority from the Agent, or any officer authorized by him, addressed to the station master of the station at which the journey commences: the letter of authority being forwarded by the station master to his Audit Office in support of his action in issuing the ticket free of charge.

2. I am to suggest for your consideration the adoption of a similar procedure for members of your Local Advisory Committee.

MURDER OF CASSIM MAHOMED MAITER IN SOUTH AFRICA AND THE POSSESSION OF FIREARMS BY INDIANS IN NATAL.

42. THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU: (a) Will Government be pleased to state whether it has received any information about the recent murder of one Cassim Mahomed Maiter, who owned a store at Buffelsdraai, five miles west of Verulam, in South Africa?

(b) Has Government received information that there is much dissatisfaction among Indians in Natal with the fact that the Native Affairs Department of Natal turns down nearly every Indian application to possess a firearm?

(c) Is the Agent taking any steps to represent the grievances of Indians in regard to this matter?

THE HONOURABLE MR. M. G. HALLETT: With your permission, Sir, I will answer the question on behalf of the Honourable Member in the Department of Education, Health and Lands.

(a) Government have seen press reports of the incident referred to by the Honourable Member.

(b) and (c). The Agent of the Government of India accompanied a deputation of the Natal Indian Congress to the Chief Native Commissioner. The latter assured them that applications from Indians for firearms would be sympathetically considered.

NUMBER OF APPEALS AGAINST ACQUITTALS FROM SESSIONS COURTS TO HIGH COURTS.

43. THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU : (a) Will Government be pleased to state the number of appeals against acquittals from Sessions Courts to High Courts in the various High Courts of India within the last five years ?

(b) What proportion of these appeals has succeeded ?

(c) Has Government received information that there is a feeling that the right of appeal against acquittals should be further restricted ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. M. G. HALLETT : (a) and (b). I would refer my Honourable friend to the statement showing the results of appeals in criminal cases which he will find appended to the Report on the administration of Criminal Justice in each province, copies of which are in the Library of the House. Appeals from acquittals are shown separately in the statement. Government have no information in regard to such appeals other than that contained in these statements.

(c) No.

ELECTION OF FOUR NON-OFFICIAL MEMBERS TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON EMIGRATION.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : I have to announce the names of non-official Members nominated for election to the Standing Committee on Emigration. They are :

The Honourable Mr. Mahmood Suhrawardy.

The Honourable Mr. Bijay Kumar Basu.

The Honourable Sir Phiroze Sethna and

The Honourable Sardar Shri Jagannath Maharaj Pandit.

As there are four vacancies and only four candidates, I declare them to be duly elected.

NOMINATIONS FOR ELECTION TO THE CENTRAL ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RAILWAYS.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : The following Honourable Members have been nominated for election to the Central Advisory Council for Railways :

The Honourable Diwan Bahadur G. Narayanaswami Chetty.

The Honourable Sir David Devadoss.

The Honourable Khan Bahadur Syed Abdul Hafeez.

The Honourable Mr. Mohammad Yamin Khan.

The Honourable Saiyed Mohamed Padshah Sahib Bahadur.

The Honourable Sardar Buta Singh.

The Honourable Sardar Shri Jagannath Maharaj Pandit and

The Honourable Mr. S. D. Gladstone.

There are eight candidates for six seats and an election will be necessary. I shall announce later on the date on which the election will take place in respect of this Committee.

GENERAL DISCUSSION OF THE RAILWAY BUDGET FOR 1935-36.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: General discussion will now proceed on the Budget (Part I).

THE HONOURABLE MR. HOSSAIN IMAM (Bihar and Orissa : Muham-madan) : Mr. President, the budget which the Honourable the Chief Commissioner for Railways presented to us was a brighter budget than the past ones. He tried to show us that it was a surplus budget as far as commercial lines were concerned inasmuch as there is a surplus of Rs. 7 lakhs. Personally, though from the way in which it has been presented it might seem to be a surplus budget, I think in reality it is a deficit budget. If we take it as a commercial department, it is necessary that we should follow all the rules of commercial houses. One of the fundamental principles of a commercial house is that all replacements of its existing assets must come from revenue and not from capital. Indian railways even in their days of prosperity did not follow this dictum. They always financed their renewals and replacements from capital. The result is that without increasing the earning capacity of the railways we are increasing the capital at charge. This results in undue increase, and other capitalization and by that the net results are reduced. As a matter of fact if we follow strict commercial principles only the purchases of old lines or the building of new lines and unforeseen expenditure like the expenditure due to the calamity of the earthquake can be financed from capital ; all the rest should be financed from revenue account. If we had followed this salutary principle the amount of money set apart for depreciation would have to be increased. At the present moment Government have adopted the principle of one-sixtieth of the capital at charge as the contribution to depreciation fund. That, Sir, ought to be augmented if they are not going to make any provision for sinking fund. All the concerns usually make some sort of provision for sinking fund. Railways are in a strange position. Neither do they make any sinking fund provision for the Rs. 800 crores of capital at charge ; they go one step further. The railway annuities which ought to be a charge on railways are being charged to general revenues. If those annuities were shown in the railway budget, reduction in the capital could be shown in the railway budget, and thereby a reduction would have resulted in the payment of interest. In the end it would have been more advantageous to the railways to take this responsibility on themselves rather than leave it on the general taxpayers.

The second feature which I find in the railway accounts is that the amount of sterling debts has remained stationary for all these years. They have adopted the principle that all the loans which are given by the Government should be taken as rupee loans, while as a matter of fact the Government had to contract sterling loans to finance railway purchases. It is undesirable that our rupee assets should be more than our rupee liabilities and the sterling assets are to a very great extent uncovered by any assets. This is bad accounting and I cannot understand why even this 120 million pounds which are shown as sterling capital at charge have been converted at neither of the prevailing rates of the Government, I mean neither have they been converted at 1s. 4d., nor 1s. 6d. nor even at 2s. to the rupee. They have been converted at the rates which were operative in the years in which these loans were contracted. The result is it stands midway between 1s. 6d. and 1s. 4d.

Sir, I cannot understand what is the meaning of the fact that in Demand No. 8, sub-head 2, the management of debt charges have been shown at the paltry sum of Rs. 2,78,000? As a matter of fact, more than two-thirds of the Government of India loan are represented by the railways and the expenditure of the Government of India on the management of debt amounts to more than Rs. 30 lakhs. How this small amount has been debited to the commercial account is beyond our understanding. I hope the Honourable the Railway Member will tell us how it has been arrived at.

Last year, Sir, we also tried to induce the Government to follow a line of conservatism in the purchase of new wagons. At the present moment the Government is going to purchase about 5,000 wagons. The position, as far as I have been able to find from the Administration Report, is that the wagons are not being utilized to the same extent as they were utilized in the year 1930 or the other years. Even in this year, Sir, there is a great deal of difference between one railway and the other. For instance, for the East Indian Railway the actual figure for the net mileage per wagon per day is 323, and for the Great Indian Peninsula it is 374, in Statement 24 of the Administration Report. Still, Sir, although the Great Indian Peninsula are utilizing their wagons more, the purchase is more for the East Indian Railway than for the Great Indian Peninsula. And they are still very much below their record in times of prosperity. I find, Sir, that in 1929-30 the East Indian Railway wagons were being utilized at the rate of 375 net wagon miles per day and the Great Indian Peninsula at the rate of 428. So you can see, Sir, that it is lagging very much behind the maximum utility to which it could be put. Then, Sir, I very much regret that in all the 56 statements which are published in Volume II of the Administration Report there is not one to show how many wagons and how many locomotives and coaching stock was scrapped in each year. We find a bare statement in Volume I that 3,928 broad gauge and 1,008 metre gauge wagons have been scrapped. These statements, Sir, do not give the distribution in each railway. The statement which is published in the Administration Report, Sir, simply says that so much net addition or deduction has been made. That means that if we had a thousand new wagons and scrapped 500, the net result would be +500. Therefore that does not help us to find the exact number which are being put in from new stock and the numbers that are being scrapped each year. Sir, the rolling stock programme is a bit ambitious. The Pope Committee in its second session recommended that more intensive use should be made of locomotives and the wagons should be more thoroughly worked. One thing which has struck me, Sir, in this connection is that from Statement 10 of the Administration Report I find that the present position is that, although there are about a lakh and a half wagons in stock of the State-owned railways, the number on the lines is less. As a matter of fact, this year's report shows that 5,598 or 3.7 per cent. less wagons were on the line than those owned by the State-owned railways. This means that those were either lying idle in the workshops or they were on foreign lines. However that might be, it is not proper that such a percentage as 3.7 should lie idle and still new wagons are being purchased. The replacement, Sir, at the rate at which we are purchasing today comes to about 1/29th. That means that the life of a wagon is less than 30 years. It seems to be rather a short period for the life of a wagon. I wanted to see, Sir, what has been the programme of the railways during the years of prosperity. I saw, Sir, that in 1927-28 and 1928-29, both years combined, we purchased less wagons than this year. That shows, Sir, the ambitiousness of the programme because in the days of prosperity when we had good income we did not purchase more

[Mr. Hossain Imam.]

than 5,000 wagons in these two years. Again, Sir, in the years of depression troubles, I mean 1930-31 and 1931-32, in both those years combined, we purchased fewer wagons than we are purchasing this year. Now, Sir, it seems to me that the Government is practically embarking on an unduly expensive programme. A turn of the wheel, a little turn of the wheel, which has not been of prosperity, as I say, but a little less of adversity, has given the Government so much confidence that they feel that no more vigilance is required. I think, Sir, that the economic campaign should be carried on at every step and all the time. Even when we are in the enjoyment of prosperity we should not give it up because unless we economize in these commercial concerns we do not know how far we can go ahead. There are a lot of commitments which are not disposed of in a year or two, but take several years to completely wipe out, and if Government do not start being economical from the very beginning the result will be that we will be landed again in a morass as in previous years.

Now, Sir, I wish to say a few words about the recruitment of Muslims in the railway service. Sir, this notification that the Government of India had fixed 25 per cent. as the proportion of Muslim recruitment shows that the Government as usual has failed to give to the Muslims what it professes to give. This notification, Sir, has hedged in even this percentage, by fixing it not for total recruitment, but for direct recruitment. Now, Sir, the general principle in the railways and other departments of the Government is that nearly half the posts falling vacant are filled in by promotion from the lower grades, with the result that the Muhammadans get only 25 per cent. of that half, which means 12½ per cent. of the general recruitment of the office. It may be said, Sir, that in the end in the lowest grades there will be more vacancies and we will get 25 per cent. of the posts. But there too, I find there is a tendency in the department to promote men from the inferior grades into the lower grades and thereby this is not open to Muhammadans. This, Sir, is the first complaint, and the only way of remedying it is to fix a quota on the total recruitment and debit those who are promoted from the lower grades. I do not say, Sir, that Government should fix a quota for promotion, because after all promotion is made on ability, and in judging that, you can never ask that there should be communal discrimination. But as far as recruitment goes, if Government do wish to give something, they should give it fully, or not say what they do not mean to give. In the second place, I very much regret that in the East Indian Railway, which serves most of our provinces, the Government did not see fit to fix any quota for the recruitment of Muhammadans. The only instruction is that the present proportion should be maintained. We of Central India, Sir, in which western parts of Bengal, the whole of Bihar and the whole of the United Provinces are included, would have very much welcomed if the Government had fixed a 25 per cent. quota in the East Indian Railway. It serves the country in which the Muhammadans are in no way behind the other communities who inhabit these territories.

In conclusion, I should like to say that the contentment of its employees and an assurance that full justice will be done are necessary if this concern is to work successfully. No amount of lip sympathy can do this. Unless the Railway Board frame rules and regulations giving its employees the assurance and belief that justice will be done, this will not be a successful concern.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. C. D. CHARI (Burma : General) : Sir, I rise to congratulate the Honourable Sir Joseph Bore that he has been lucky enough to present us this year a hopeful budget, and we all trust that the hopes

entertained that in the coming years we shall have balanced budgets will be realized. But looking at the figures, I find that the budget is balanced so far as commercial lines are concerned, leaving a surplus of Rs. 7 lakhs, but owing to the fact that strategic lines are also included in the budget for commercial lines, we have got a very confused state of things. The budget shows a deficit of Rs. 190 lakhs. The reason is that the strategic lines come in for a loss of Rs. 197 lakhs. This really creates confusion. This loss of Rs. 197 lakhs ought to be debited to the Military Department. Really speaking, it is only an item of military expenditure and I do not see why, year after year, in spite of protests, both in this House and in the other place, the loss on strategic lines is taken into account in arriving at the working of commercial lines.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF: May I ask the Honourable Member how he defines a "strategic line"? What are strategic lines? Name them.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. C. D. CHARI: I have seen it in the budget statements. They are primarily intended for military purposes.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF: Is the Northern Railway not a strategic line—from Karachi to Peshawar? What else is it? It is my principal line of communication.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. C. D. CHARI: The budget says that the loss on strategic lines is—

HIS EXCELLENCY THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF: What are they?

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. C. D. CHARI: Strategic lines are maintained primarily for military purposes.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF: You mean, if I may say so, the lines on the other side of the Indus? I will take them over tomorrow and I will give you one train a week to Peshawar and one to Quetta. That is all I want.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. C. D. CHARI: It may be possible to arrive at a working arrangement that a portion of the loss on lines primarily meant for military purposes is borne by the Military Department. You cannot have a railway line and make use of it only once a week. The traffic that offers may do a good deal to reduce the loss.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF: I will take them over tomorrow and we will see.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. C. D. CHARI: There is also one other aspect of this question. We find that military stores are being carried by the railways at concession rates. The military have also other concessions, like the concession given to British ranks, who are allowed to travel second class by paying third class fares. There are several other concessions like that. If all these are taken into account, that would amount to considerable expense, which now goes as a debit against commercial lines, but which really ought to go in as an item of expense in the military budget. That is what strikes me from a perusal of the papers.

THE HONOURABLE SIR JOSEPH BHORE : I would like to explain, with regard to that, that the Military Department is a very big customer of the railways and consequently it is entitled to some concession.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. C. D. CHARI : Yes, they are entitled to some consideration, no doubt, but it does not mean that when you have a big customer, you will have to make a big gift. It may be possible to arrive at a figure which ought to be debited to the Military Department. Some sort of favourable arrangement may be arrived at. That is what I would like to urge. Last year, when the question was mooted, the Honourable Sir Joseph Bhore gave an assurance that the matter had been considered exhaustively from all aspects and that the delay in arriving at a settlement was due to his pre-occupations during the budget session, and that the matter would be decided very soon by the departments concerned. I hope, Sir, it may be possible for the Honourable the Commerce Member to give us an idea as to what really stood in the way of arriving at a favourable settlement. I am sure that the Commerce Member would have fought out the case in the proper way. The budgetary position of the commercial lines ought not to be made worse by having to make a sort of indirect contribution or subsidy to the Military Department.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : If your argument is sound, why should not the Indian States share a portion of the losses ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. C. D. CHARI : This may be the beginning of a series of re-arrangements which are necessary and which may be taken in hand by the Commerce Department. The military budget can bear a certain amount of the expenditure. Why should they have concessions from this department and that in the shape of several crores and show in the military budget less expenditure than what is really incurred ? That is my point.

The next point to which I would like to refer is the increased earnings from passenger traffic. We find that there has been a considerable increase in the earnings from goods traffic, but that is not so in the case of passenger traffic. The reason to my mind is not far to seek. In the case of the goods traffic motor transport does not compete very much with the railways, whereas in the case of passenger traffic the competition is real. The ordinary passenger who travels third class finds motor transport more comfortable. I would suggest, in view of the ever-increasing competition, that the Railway Board would do well to seriously ponder over this and take steps to provide more attractive travel by rail. In the case of upper class passengers I would suggest certain amenities to attract greater traffic. I would suggest heating installations during the cold season, especially in Northern India, for warming the compartments, and some cooling arrangement to keep the compartments cool during the hot weather. I would also suggest that compartments should be made more dust-proof than they are today. As regards the third class, there is much to be desired. The present state of things is very unsatisfactory, and any money that may be spent in improving the position will be really worth while in the sense that it will give a good return. I suggest that the berths in the third class should be widened, and bigger and more sanitary lavatories should be provided and the compartments should be fitted with fans. I would impress upon the Railway Administration the necessity of carrying out these reforms not merely in the interests of the travelling public but primarily in the interests of the Railway Administration itself. It is

necessary for them to take note of the serious competition between the railways and motor transport and it would be a very good business proposition to make railway travel more attractive and comfortable for the third class passenger particularly than it is today.

I would also make one or two suggestions to increase the passenger traffic. The reduction of fares has been tried on one railway, the North Western, and I hope they will adopt the same policy on other State-managed lines also. I would also urge the necessity of introducing concession return fares as much as possible. We have concessions during Christmas and Easter, and the same concessions may well be given in the case of fairs and festivals in particular areas.

Then coming to the question of working expenses, the Council would very much like to know if all the economies suggested by the Retrenchment Sub-Committee and the Pope Committee have been carried into effect? I hope the Railway Administration will profit by the lessons they have learnt during these lean years of depression. I would urge the necessity of not relaxing their vigilance in keeping down the expenses as much as possible, taking advantage of the economies they have been compelled to make during the depression.

I would like to refer to a few complaints which have been made against the Burma Railways. There is a well known rule enunciated by the Railway Board that in the matter of appointments axed men should be preferred. This rule, I understand, has been observed in Burma by the Agent of the Burma Railways more in the breach than in the observance, and I would urge the Railway Board to go into this matter and see that effect is given to the wholesome rule enunciated by them. My second complaint against the Burma Railways is that, because the children of domiciled Indians in Burma go by Indian names and wear Indian costume, their claims in the matter of appointments are overlooked and they are treated as fresh Indian emigrants. I hope that the railway administration in Burma will in future be impressed with the view that the children of domiciled Indians in Burma are entitled to the same consideration as the children of Burmans. My third complaint against the Burma Railways is with regard to the registered union of its employees. This union has over 2,000 members drawn from various departments of the railway, but in spite of repeated requests the Agent of the Burma Railways persists and is still persisting in refusing to recognize the union. In this respect the Burma Railways are more than half a century behind the times. The unions of employees all over India have been recognized by the Agents of the various railways concerned, and I do not see any reason why the Agent of the Burma Railways should not recognize this union, which has come to stay and which is doing really good and efficient work on behalf of the employees of that administration. I hope the Honourable the Commerce Member and the Railway Board will see to it that the Agent of the Burma Railways is called upon to recognize the Burma Railways Union.

Then I come to the question of the restoration of the cut in the pay of railways servants. I do not see the reason for this haste in restoring the cut. The budgetary position shows that we are having a deficit budget. Why not wait till we can balance the budget before restoring the cut? There may be some justification for restoring the cut in the case of employees getting Rs. 200 and less. If it is considered necessary—

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Will you please conclude your remarks.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. C. D. CHARI : Yes, I will cut short my speech.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : Your time is up.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. C. D. CHARI : If I am given two minutes more, Sir, I shall wind up. It is stated here that they are following the Government of India in the matter of the restoration of cuts. Probably the budget of the Government of India is balanced, or it may be a surplus budget, and what may be justified in the case of the restoration of cuts in the pay of the Government servants need not be followed here where we have a definitely deficit budget.

Sir, I now come —

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : I am afraid I cannot allow the Honourable Member to go into a new point at this stage. He has already had two minutes over and above his time.

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. C. D. CHARI : One sentence and I conclude. I take this opportunity of voicing the emphatic protest of India against the establishment of the statutory railway authority practically ousting the jurisdiction and control exercised by the people through the central Legislature. This becomes a grievous wrong and a monstrous injury when this authority is sought to be established not by any Act of the central Legislature but by an Act of Parliament.

THE HONOURABLE MR. MAHMOOD SUHRAWARDY (West Bengal : Muhammadan) : Sir, when we were listening to the admirable speech of the Honourable Sir Guthrie Russell it was difficult to shake off the impression that if his optimism had been justified in regard to earnings of railways it was not by any original effort on the part of the railway authorities to increase the traffic but by the beneficent intervention of Providence. It is not inconceivable that the railway returns would have been what they have been even if the railway authorities had taken to the philosophic method of taking things more easily than they appear to have done. There has been no serious effort to help the returning tide of prosperity to carry us to greater prosperity. There has been drastic economy, but many regard some measures of economy, particularly in departments managed by States as deepening the gloom of depression. What is needed is effort to lessen the gloom.

The Honourable the Chief Commissioner has told us that there has been no large increase in passenger traffic, but he has not said what efforts have been made to induce people to travel more than they do by railways. He tells us that motor transport is interfering with an increase in revenue on the railways from passenger traffic. But, Sir, the truth is that in these hard times motor transport has come as a Godsend to the people of this country. It is cheaper and it has the advantage of producing more frequent services than railways. So far as railway revenue from passenger traffic is concerned, with all the goodwill in the world for the railway authorities, it would be depriving the poor masses in their country of a great economic advantage to do any thing to deprive them of the facilities of motor transport. The fares on the railways compare very unfavourably with fares on motor omnibuses. So far as I know the railways have not taken steps to compete fairly with motor transport. Conferences have been held to help railways to compete with motor transport,

but if there has been initiated any scheme to attract more passengers to railways, Sir, I confess, I do not know. The railway authorities have it within their power so to reduce passenger fares and increase amenities for the travelling public on railways as to make travelling by railways more popular. Here and there, there has been a reduction in fares, but there has been no improvement in amenities of railway travel. Particularly so far as inter and third classes are concerned, one has only to see passengers in the respective compartments of the railway that comfort of passengers is even now only a distant consideration so far as railway authorities are concerned. I draw the attention of the Honourable the Commerce Member and the Chief Commissioner of Railways to the Bengal Nagpur Railway third and inter class running from Howrah to Nagpur and from Howrah to Puri and other places.

Even in first and second class travel, while fares remain very high, there is little improvement so far as accommodation and other amenities are concerned. It is no use saying that fares are considerably cheaper in India than in other countries. India is a poor country, or at least the travelling public in India is the poorest in the world. India should have the cheapest fares in the world. There has been no effort visible to introduce on a liberal scale the hundred and one devices to increase passenger traffic which railways in other parts of the world have introduced. Where are excursion fares, day return fares and other similar devices?

Then in the realms of freight rates. The Honourable Sir Guthrie Russel has placed in the forefront of railway achievement the reduction in the surcharge on coal, but, Sir, coal does not make all the goods traffic even in exports and there are imports. If exigencies of the industrial situation have necessitated imposition of higher customs duties, Sir, I think it is for the railways to reduce the handicap on imports by a liberal reduction in freight rates. India cannot live exclusively by its export trade. There should not only be a reduction in freights for exports but a general reduction in freight rates. There should also be offered every inducement both to exporters and importers to use railways more. On the contrary, Sir, one hears complaints from exporters and complaints from importers of slowness of railway transport, of excessive charges and surcharges and of innumerable other obstacles to easy trade. Indeed, if merchants are to be believed it is surprising that there is the volume of goods traffic that there is.

The railway authorities recently invited an expert from the London and Midland Scottish Railway to advise them how to economize. It seems to me that they should now ask one of the railway experts in England to show them how to attract more passenger and more goods traffic.

Another point to which I should like to draw the attention of the railway authorities is the way the rule about minorities in the railway service operates. When Muslims are allotted their share, I find, Sir, that it is Muslims from the United Provinces and the Punjab who are taken into account. Muslims from my province of Bengal are ignored. Their claims should receive due consideration.

Before I sit down, I draw the attention of the railway authorities to the matter of the purchase of stores. Under the head "Track renewals" provision has been made for rail and sleeper renewals. What amount is for purchasing rails and sleepers is not mentioned and what amount for renewal works? How many of the sleepers would be of steel and how many of wood? Whether the steel sleepers are to be purchased from Europe or locally? Whether the wood sleepers are to be purchased from Bengal or any other province?

[Mr. Mahmood Suhrawardy.]

If wood sleepers are available in Bengal, why should they be brought from distant places which cause the railway to pay more railway freight ?

Sir, these are my observations on the budget before the House and I am glad the Honourable the Commerce and Railway Member, the Honourable Sir Joseph Bhore, is also present to listen to our complaints.

THE HONOURABLE RAJA GHAZANFAR ALI, KHAN (West Punjab : Muhammadan) : Sir, for a layman like myself who is not very familiar with these figures and maps it is not easy to understand the depreciation charges and other complicated commercial matters but there are certain obvious things upon which I have no hesitation in offering my sincere congratulations to the department for this great improvement in the earnings of the State Railways. Sir, the mere fact that their earnings have increased from 1932-33 to 1934-35 by Rs. 9 crores is a matter of congratulation to the department. It may to a great extent be due to providential help but I have not the least doubt that it is also due to the efficient working of the department. And it is a matter of further pleasure, Sir, that the budget presented should be possessing an optimistic feature at a time when it is the last budget which will be presented by the Honourable Sir Joseph Bhore, and I am sure, Sir, that among the memorable things which he has achieved during the time he has had charge of his office this will be one of the things which will always be remembered. I may further submit, Sir, that the reason for this great improvement which we generally find in the railway administration and for which the credit goes to the Honourable Sir Guthrie Russell as well, is mainly due to the fact that both the Honourable Member for Commerce and the Honourable the Chief Commissioner have always listened with great attention and sympathy to any complaints or criticism which have been made on the floor of this House by the Members of the Assembly and the Council of State. There is no doubt that some of the questions received and some of the opinions expressed are not always very accurate, but, Sir, I must concede that this has not prejudiced their minds towards the opinions which they hear from these Members and I am sure that the secret of their success lies in the fact that they attach great importance to these opinions. As a matter of fact, if one were to count all the questions asked about the Railway Department in the Legislative Assembly and the Council of State from the year 1920 to 1935, I am sure the number would run to thousands, because the Railway Department is not only a commercial department but is a department with which almost every citizen in this country is concerned and closely related. Therefore, Sir, I wonder what would be the condition of the railways when under the new scheme their charge will be entirely transferred to the Statutory Board who probably will have very little to do with the central Legislature. I am sure they will be deprived of the constant touch which they now have with the taxpayers through their representatives and I am afraid the Railway Department may become, instead of a commercial department, a great executive body which will consistently ignore the grievances of the travelling public. However, Sir, this is a matter upon which this is not an opportunity to discuss at any great length.

Sir, there are only one or two main points concerning this budget about which I would like, with your permission, to make a few remarks. In the first place, I would like to refer to what are known as strategic lines. I must confess I was very much bewildered when my friend the Honourable Mr. Chari was speaking and he was interrupted by His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief

who asked him what these strategic lines were. Naturally he was unable to name any line. So what is the position? On the one side an impression is created that there is no such thing as strategic lines; on the other hand there is the Honourable the Chief Commissioner of Railways who has definitely stated in his speech that there are strategic lines and they are running at a loss. Well, I think we would request him, if he is taking part in this debate and is going to make a speech, to name these strategic lines or to explain to us that there is no such thing as strategic lines which are maintained mainly for the purposes of the military, because, Sir, he clearly states in his speech, from which I may be permitted to read just two lines:

"The position for 1935-36 will be that our deficit will be rather less than the loss on strategic lines, that is, the railways of India, as a commercial concern, after meeting all their charges, will have a small surplus".

Does it not show, Sir, that, while the Railway Department are making profit on the other lines, they are running at a loss so far as the strategic lines are concerned. Further he goes on to say:

"Though no one can see into the future, I have every hope that, when I place the budget estimates for 1936-37 before the Council next year, I shall be in a position to estimate for a surplus for commercial and strategic lines combined".

So, Sir, I think this leaves no doubt in the minds of the Members of this House that the Honourable the Chief Commissioner has made a definite statement that the strategic lines are a source of great loss to the Railway Department and that if there is any deficit it is due to this.

The second point which I wanted to make was the representation of minority communities in the railway service. Sir, this is a subject which has been discussed more than a dozen times on the floor of this House as well as the other House. But the results achieved seem to be very, very small indeed, if any. I wish, Sir, the Honourable the Chief Commissioner of Railways would also supply us with information in the graphic form as he shows the earnings of the railways. I am sure if he were to prepare a graph showing the representation of minority communities on the Railway Board during the past few years, the increase will appear to be absolutely imperceptible. When I make this remark I do not confine myself to the representation of the Muslim community alone. I have also in my mind the other minority communities, for instance, my Sikh friends in the Punjab. Sir, the Muhammadans and Sikhs in the Punjab have been very backward so far as education is concerned. The result is that having started later our numbers in the services are very small. I know that that is a source of great concern to those communities and those interests who are already in possession of the various posts in these departments. Sir, they feel the knock. The knock may not be so loud in other provinces but in the Punjab it is very loud and I think unless the Railway Department decide to take some definite step and take some definite action in the matter, the mere issuing of statements and holding of conferences and giving assurances will not help matters. I would suggest, Sir, for their consideration that they should have a separate department at the centre to co-ordinate efforts in this direction by the various railways in the country.

It would not involve a very high expenditure. Just the expenditure of appointing an officer with a staff, who should tour all over India and see that these instructions which are issued by the Government are being carried out honestly and properly. May I hope, Sir, that the Honourable the Commerce Member, before laying down charge of his office, will consider the desirability of having this scheme put into practice? If he does so, I may assure him

[Raja Ghazanfar Ali Khan.]

that he will be placing under an everlasting obligation all the minority communities and will also be carrying out the intention expressed in the communique issued by the Government.

Coming to the third point, viz., the complaints of the third class travelling

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public, I am sure everybody will agree with me that very, very little change has been made in the position since the last 30 or 40 years. In my lifetime, at least, I have not seen the slightest change, particularly as far as the North Western Railway is concerned. Unfortunately, Sir, it is the contrast which makes people discontented, and that contrast is very vivid. When those of us who are accustomed to travel on the branch lines of the North Western Railway suddenly come to Delhi and happen to travel to Moradabad or other such places, we find the contrast between the two railways very great. I wish, Sir, the North-Western Railway will pay a little more attention and provide such facilities on their railway as the Great Indian Peninsula and East Indian Railway and other railways provide. I hope you, Sir, and the House will excuse me if I just relate that the chief reason for this is that the Agents, those great autocrats, do not keep themselves in touch with the public. As I had to describe in more detail on a previous occasion, it is almost impossible to have access to the Agent of a railway. There will be no difficulty in going and seeing the Chief Commissioner and explaining to him the grievances of the public. But if somebody—he may be a Member of the Council of State or of the Legislative Assembly: whatever may be his position—if he wants to go and see an Agent, you will be surprised to hear that when he gives his card to the *chuprasi*, he takes it to the superintendent; the superintendent calls the visitor in and cross-examines him for about ten minutes and then sends the card, if he approves, to the secretary. The secretary calls that man and submits him to a further cross-examination, and if he is also satisfied, then he can go and see the Agent. If I have a story to tell, and I first tell it to the superintendent, and then repeat the same story to the secretary, I begin to feel disgusted with that story myself, and if I am lucky enough to approach the Agent and if I have to repeat that story a third time, that story loses all charm. I trust that the Chief Commissioner of Railways will invite the attention of the Agents and ask them to keep themselves more in touch with the public so that they may be able to know their grievances.

Another feature which is mentioned in this budget is about the large number of people who travel without tickets. That is really a matter of great concern to everybody. What is the reason for that?

THE HONOURABLE MR. JAGADISH CHANDRA BANERJEE: We would also like to travel without tickets. Every one would like to do so!

THE HONOURABLE MR. MAHMOOD SUHRAWARDY: Unless you get a silver or gold pass, you cannot do so.

THE HONOURABLE RAJA GHAZANFAR ALI KHAN: This is really due, if I may be permitted to say so, to the inefficiency of the railway staff. It will really be unreasonable for me or any other Member to accuse any department for not being honest. I would be the last person to do so. But I have a suspicion that the public is under the impression that if they are caught when travelling without tickets, they will be able to escape by paying one-fourth of the fare. Some means should be adopted for removing this idea. The remedy lies in employing honest men and to have more control over the

staff so that they may be able to detect cases of corruption. The only qualification for men to be employed on this staff should not be the marks obtained in a University examination. You should employ men of a good class. I can assure you, Sir, that every Member of the House will support you in whatever action you take in eradicating this evil of travelling without tickets.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : Will you please bring your remarks to a close ?

THE HONOURABLE RAJA GHAZANFAR ALI KHAN : I would like to see the Railway Department reach a stage of efficiency when they are able to abolish the inter class, making the third class as good as the inter class, and abolish the first class by making the second class passengers as comfortable as those in the first class.

THE HONOURABLE MR. E. MILLER (Bombay Chamber of Commerce) : Sir, I am sure all Honourable Members will agree that the position of our railway system for the past year and the forecast for 1935-36, as placed before us by the Honourable Sir Guthrie Russell on Monday last are most encouraging and I believe I shall be voicing the general feeling of this House, if I tender our congratulations to the Commerce Member and the Chief Commissioner of Railways on the financial result of the past year's working of the railway system in India.

While conditions generally have assisted towards this, I do not agree with my Honourable friend Mr. Suhrawardy and think the railway administration have contributed their share and this deserves recognition. At the same time I think there are still many avenues to explore and there is plenty of scope for further improvement. I hope my remarks will be accepted as being made in a spirit of friendly and constructive criticism, for after all the main point of this discussion is, I take it, in order to bring out any weak points that may appear to exist.

My first point is in regard to railway tariffs. I am glad to hear that the general classification of goods has been under review and that it is coming up for further consideration next month, but I am somewhat concerned to note that it is a matter for consideration as to whether a simplification of the tariff might not be carried out without the preparation of the more elaborate statistics which have been recommended by the Special Committee. Frankly I do not believe this is impossible, but whether this is done or not it is absolutely essential that the non-official opinion of commerce and trade must be taken. The Honourable the Commerce Member indicated that this was desirable, in his speech in another place made on the 8th March last year, and I would ask Government to give us their assurance on this point. We are not satisfied with the position as it is today and I would request the Honourable Sir Joseph Bhore to inform the House, when Government propose to ascertain the views of representatives of commerce and trade. Will it be before the final report of the Special Committee is presented to Government or will it be after that is submitted and before Government take action ? Obviously non-official opinion should be taken and unless this is contemplated, it will be my duty on behalf of my constituency to lodge a very strong protest.

My next point is in connection with the manipulation of railway freights in competition with carriage of goods by sea between Indian ports. While it is appreciated that the railways are a national asset, there can be no defence

[Mr. E. Miller.]

for a policy which permits the cutting of rates over long distances in order to compete with the carriage of goods by sea in such case where under normal conditions such merchandise can be carried more economically by sea. It is not only unfair but financially unsound. Moreover, this policy strikes at the very life blood of the ports which depend for their existence upon sea-borne trade and in its coastal aspect, this is being seriously damaged by the present policy of the Railway Board. It is a matter that has been represented on more than one occasion and it is one that calls for immediate action. I hope that the Honourable the Commerce Member will tell us what Government propose to do in the matter.

This brings me to the question of road-rail competition. The line of policy now being taken by Government is most encouraging to me for I have been pressing for co-ordination between railways and road transport for some years past. I believe that we are now within measurable distance of this and I know that Sir Guthrie Russell is a strong advocate of it. It is still only appreciated to a very limited degree amongst railway officials outside Delhi and I wish the Chief Commissioner of Railways could imbue his own spirit of co-operation into the hearts of all railway officials in the provinces. The development of roads and of motor transport cannot be withheld but they both *can* and *should* be developed on properly organized lines so that railway transport and road transport are complementary to each other. Where roads exist which run parallel to a railway, these will of course have to be maintained up to a standard to carry motor transport and any missing links should be joined up. Such roads were in existence before the railways and they must be continued. Without these arterial roads it will be impossible to develop the feeder roads to link up interior towns and villages with the railway. This policy has been endorsed at a recent meeting of the newly formed Transport Advisory Council and all railways should welcome this decision, for it will bring increased freight to the railway system. In future of course the construction of new roads should not be carried out parallel with railway lines except for short distance through towns and villages where it is necessary to connect up with railway stations, while similarly new railway lines should not be constructed parallel with existing roads.

While on this subject, may I again express the hope that the contemplated re-arrangement of His Excellency's Executive Council may be given effect to as soon as it is conveniently possible so as to allow for all subjects connected with railways, roads, airways and posts and telegraphs to be in charge of one Member, as until this is done a full measure of co-ordination will be impossible.

I am glad to see that provision is made in the budget for expenditure on rolling stock, though I think the figure allotted to carriage and wagons is much too small. Improvements in the facilities for the carriage of goods and passengers will do much to assist in meeting competition with motor transport about which we hear so much and a programme of this nature is perfectly justified. What should not be permitted is the undue cutting of rates below what should leave the railway a fair margin of profit, in order to compete with motor transport and if the further recommendations of the Advisory Council are carried out this should be unnecessary.

I trust that the provision of better and more accommodation for third class passengers has been given full consideration when drawing up the proposals connected with expenditure on carriages. I think I am right in saying that the third class passenger is the most paying class of traveller and

it is only fair that he should receive more consideration. I trust that Sir Joseph Bhore can assure us that these proposals in regard to rolling stock form part of a scheme spread over a period of years for the modernizing of rolling stock and the scrapping of obsolete carriages and wagons. It was my intention to quote from a recent speech of the Honourable Sir Joseph Bhore's in connection with the forward policy of railways, but Sir Joseph did this himself when concluding his speech on the railway budget in another place. Coming as it does from the Honourable Member in charge of Railways gives added weight to such a statement and I would commend it to the consideration of all and particularly railway officials.

With regard to Sir Guthrie Russell's statement in reference to people travelling without tickets, in 1933 nearly three million passengers were detected in this offence and this Sir Guthrie says is only a fraction, yet he admits that while the Railway Board have suggested amending the Railway Act in order to provide a deterrent penalty, it is only intended to discuss this matter in *due course* with the Central Advisory Committee. Surely if he is losing so much as is suggested, the matter is of extreme urgency and there is no reason why section 113 of the Indian Railways Act should not be strengthened in this respect during the present session. In addition to this I suggest the problem will never be adequately tackled until a better class of travelling ticket inspector is recruited for this very important task, while if necessary the number should be doubled. The present class and pay of the men recruited is no guarantee that this detective service is either efficient or above reproach.

There is one more constructive criticism which I should like to offer and that is in respect of the form which the railway budget speeches take year after year. Usually they are in the nature of an auditor's report with an occasional deviation into such matters as wagon supply and construction, bridge programmes and staff reorganization. Yet the questions which we the representatives of the public would like to ask are how have the railways served the public and how have the railways assisted the trade and commerce of the country during the year? If these questions were dealt with, as I am sure they can be dealt with, in the annual review of the Chief Commissioner of Railways to this House, the budget speech would be more human and, dare I add, more interesting.

Now, Sir, may I in conclusion say just a few words in regard to the executive and other staff of our great railway system. I agree with the Chief Commissioner of Railways when he says, however those at headquarters may lay their plans and form their policy, its success depends largely on the manner in which it is carried out by the various units concerned. The Commerce Member referred in another place to the able and efficient work of Sir Guthrie Russell, Mr. Rau and others here at headquarters and I am sure all of us will fully endorse those remarks.

Finally there is Sir Joseph Bhore himself to whom we have to regretfully bid good-bye. I have known Sir Joseph intimately for the past six years and when I first came in contact with him he held in his portfolio all matters dealt with by the Government of India in connection with roads. He always gave me a patient hearing and was very helpful and encouraging in those early days when I was pressing for road development. Then he changed his portfolio to one which included railways and perhaps it is because he has experience in dealing with both these important subjects, that has helped him to hold the broad vision he does. His genial manner even when pressed with over work is well known and his departure is a great loss to the Government of India and to us. I wish you Sir and Lady Bhore a long and happy

[Mr. E. Miller.]

holiday and trust that after a well deserved rest, we may see you holding a further important office in another part of the empire.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS (Punjab : Non-Muhammadan) : Sir, before I begin my review of the railway budget I want to associate myself with the remarks of praise and also of sorrow which fell from the lips of my Honourable friend Mr. Miller. I join with him in congratulating the Honourable Sir Joseph Bhore and the Honourable the Chief Commissioner for Railways on the result of the working of railways this year. I also observe that Sir Joseph Bhore's success has established that an Indian Member can efficiently administrate even the Departments of Commerce and Railways. I regret that Sir Joseph Bhore will shortly retire and give up this important job. We wish him all peace and farewell.

I agree with the Honourable Mr. Miller that the development of the country mainly depends on roads and railways and that a Ministry of Communications ought to be established at the earliest possible moment. Sir, this is one of the most important portfolios which His Excellency the Viceroy ought to allot to a single Member. If I mistake not the Legislature has from time to time been assured by Government that a Ministry of Transport will be founded as soon as possible and the time has now come when no further delay ought to be made in establishing the new ministry.

Sir, we have been often assured that the railways are being run on commercial lines. When the railways are being run on commercial lines, when this fact and assurance has been put before the Legislature from time to time, we fail to see why this principle is not being observed in practice. When there is a deficit budget, where is the justification for the restoration of the out in salaries ? You must cut your coat according to your cloth. When you are in deficit, simply on sentimental grounds because certain other Government departments are restoring the cut, you are following suit. Sir, a mistake has been done in the restoration of the out.

Nowadays we all expect that when the annual report on the working of the railways is presented to this House that something should be mentioned as to how far and in what manner the railways have assisted in the development of the commerce and industry of India. On that point the report is always silent. Perhaps there may be reasons for it ; because nothing much has been done, so this information is not placed in the forefront.

I find on the working of the strategic lines there has been a loss of Rs. 197 lakhs and on the restoration of cuts in salaries of Rs. 92 lakhs. If railways had been run on commercial lines, as is generally being assured by the Railway Member and the Government of India, this year would have seen a balanced railway budget. With due deference to His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief I must say that it is not purely a matter of sentiment or a matter of accounting. His Excellency has today said that he is prepared to take over the strategic railways. Well, I welcome that step and I shall beg of His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief to do it as soon as possible. As regards the other point which His Excellency has raised that in case we want him to take the lines on the other side of the Indus, he would give a train a week for passengers ; from purely a military expert one can expect that ; but in the present Field Marshal we have an army as well as a diplomatic expert. Does he mean that even in case he can make more money by running more trains for passengers he will not do it ? I cannot understand the argument which

His Excellency has been pleased to put forward before this House. It is purely a business proposition. His Excellency will not refrain from making more money from strategic railways through commercial traffic if he possibly can. Sir, accounts ought to be real. Every year for the last so many years that I have been in this House and I have had this privilege from the very inception of this Council—I have been always pressing that for the sake of proper accounting, for the sake of the reality of the accounts, let the strategic railways be separated from the commercial railways and the loss on their working be borne by the Army Department. It is purely a matter of accounting. Why should we show to the public a false account or an account which is not complete. By false account I mean that that account—

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : It is a very unhappy expression on your part.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS : If that is an unhappy expression I will withdraw that word and replace it by "artificial" accounts because after all the army budget must contain and show all the expenditure which is connected with the army. In case railways are run for military purposes, the military department must bear their expense. That is a principle which nobody can deny and I think it will be wise and proper that the sooner the strategic railways are taken over by His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief the better. His Excellency asked where are the strategic railways? What are those strategic railways? That is what I understood from him. In case I am wrong, I hope His Excellency will put me right. The Nushki-Duzdab and Sindh-Pishin and Fort Sandeman-Khanai Railways in Baluchistan were constructed purely for military purposes. So were the Kohat-Thal and Khyber Railway.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF : It is now closed.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS : Only a portion of the Duzdab line which was built in Persian territory, I understand without the sanction of the Persian Government, and which was taken possession of by the Persian authorities. All the rest of that railway now exists and trains are regularly running to Nokkundi even now.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF : It is not used. It has not been used for ever so long.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS : My contention was that it was built purely for military purposes. I do know that it is used for commercial purposes. The line was originally constructed purely for military purposes and was built at the request of the military authorities. Now that line is used purely as a stand-by measure; in case there is any further trouble on the Persian side that railway is sure to be used to carry troops, ammunition, etc. No commercial railway can run on alternate days or every fourth day and pay. That fact alone proves that that line is not a commercial line but is being maintained for the future use of the army.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF : It is not being maintained.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS : Sir, that line is now running. How can it run without maintenance? It is a fact that even now that line is running; there are regular services. The fact cannot be denied.

THE HONOURABLE SIR GUTHRIE RUSSELL (Chief Commissioner of Railways): Up to about Nushki. Beyond that is closed down.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS : May I understand from the Honourable the Chief Commissioner that the railway exists only as far as Nushki?

THE HONOURABLE SIR GUTHRIE RUSSELL : It is beyond Nushki for a short distance. I cannot at the moment recollect the actual name of the station where the line terminates.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS : That short distance I hold is 217 miles. Can you call that 217 miles a short distance? I can say from the knowledge that I have that that line even now is more than 200 miles and that trains run every third or fourth day to Ahmedwal and once a week to Nokkundi.

Then comes the question of expenditure on army sidings and on army vehicles. In addition to these strategic railways, certain improvements and re-modelling of military yards are being carried out at the expense of the railways. A number of vehicles are constructed for the Military Department. I think that also is a legitimate charge on the army budget and that ought to be debited to the army.

Sir, I find that Government is acquiring the Amritsar-Pati Railway at a cost of Rs. 44 lakhs. I welcome that measure. They say that the return on it will be somewhere about 7 per cent. I would also like the Government of India to acquire the Bengal and North-Western Railway. That request has been repeated from time to time and as the rate of interest ruling now is very low the present time is opportune to acquire that railway. That railway is now paying a dividend of over 15 per cent. and if the Government acquires it it will be a better paying proposition. So I would like the Honourable the Chief Commissioner to tell us why they are not acquiring the Bengal and North-Western Railway? There have been many complaints about the running of that railway and the public is thoroughly dissatisfied with its present working.

Sir, I also find that there is a demand on behalf of the railways for the purchase of 5,000 more goods wagon. I would like the Chief Commissioner of Railways to very kindly explain to this House why, if the existing wagons were sufficient when trade was at its height, why there should be any necessity for increasing their number now by 5,000. In every yard when travelling on the railways one finds that a great number of empty rolling stock is being stored, and from the figures of the traffic we do not see that there is any justification for more wagons this year. And, Sir, supposing that the Railway Department does establish a necessity for the purchase of these wagons, I should like to know from whom these wagons would be purchased? How far will the carriage and wagon building industry in India benefit from it? In the past, Sir, I remember that this local industry was always given a share to keep it alive. I should like to know how far it will be patronized now?

A crore of rupees is being demanded for boilers and locomotives. Will they be made at the Peninsula Locomotive Works at Tatanagar? There also, Sir, I find that a number of locomotives are lying idle in various sheds. I made, a similar observation last year, that there were many engines lying idle in the Agra shed of the Great Indian Peninsula Railway. Well, I now find that these engines have been transferred to the North Western Railway and about 20 odd engines are working on that railway. Even now in a number of sheds you find these engines stored with their parts, painted white so that they may not rust. I think, Sir, that we may go on for another year easily as we have these engines in surplus. In case it be said that those engines are not up to date and they ought to be scrapped, why does one find these very engines being used by the North Western Railway on the mail trains, where speed and efficiency are of great importance?

Sir, I come to the matter of the surcharge on coal. Well, we are grateful to the Railway Department for giving some relief in this connection and the relief given is that there will be a maximum surcharge of Rs. 1 per ton on coal carried 700 miles and over. But even that bit of generosity, as we might call it, will not come into force before the 1st of April. That, Sir, is rather a setback because those people who want to carry stocks of coal as a stand-by in their own manufacturing concerns and factories will have to wait till the 1st of April before making up their stock and at that time it will result in unnecessary congestion of traffic and delay in the carriage of coal. So, Sir, I think it would be better if this concession comes into force as soon as possible.

Then, Sir, I come to the question of the Muslim representation. From the figures that we have before us we find that a bigger percentage is being given to the Muslims in the services than they deserve on the basis of their numbers. In case Honourable Members will go into the statement which I presented to the Central Advisory Council for Railways in this connection, in which the question is fully dealt with, by its perusal one will be satisfied that I am correct in saying so.

One more point, Sir, and then I will resume my seat, and that is in regard to the policy as regards railway vendors. Platform vendors play an important part in the convenience and facilities of the passengers. Sir, there appears a new policy which the Government is contemplating, and that is to give these vending contracts to limited companies. Sir, those people who have done well in the past and whose services spread over a number of years ought not to be deprived of their privileges purely on account of that new policy. The conversion of a private company to a limited company does not add anything to its efficient working. I find, Sir, that in big companies where one can afford to employ competent staff things are different but in small companies the improvement which people expect in increased efficiency will not be achieved and therefore I want to stress that before any change in policy is adopted the claims of these old vendors who have worked for scores of years should not be ignored.

Then I come, Sir, to the overcrowding of third class passengers—

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: I cannot allow the Honourable Member at this stage to go into a new point. He has already exceeded his time limit.

THE HONOURABLE DIWAN BAHADUR G. NARAYANASWAMI CHETTY (Madras: Non-Muhammadan): Mr. President, I must first of all congratulate the Honourable the Railway Member on having brought at the end of

[Diwan Bahadur G. Narayanaswami Chetty.]

his tenure of office such a hopeful and an all-round improved budget. When the Honourable Member took charge of his present office from the hands of his distinguished predecessor he had to face a huge deficit. This deficit was mainly due to the acute trade depression which paralyzed not only the finances of India but also of many other countries. But owing to the indefatigable and sincere efforts of the Honourable Member and also of the Honourable Sir Guthrie Russell, this deficit has continued to decrease steadily and I am sure every one in this House will feel highly grateful to them and appreciate their efforts.

I find that the budget estimates for 1935-36 anticipate a deficit of nearly two crores which is indeed an improvement on the 1934-35 budget estimates. This, as the Honourable Member has said, is mainly due to improvement in goods and passenger traffic. It is necessary therefore that every effort should be made by all railway administrations to make the goods and passenger traffic as cheap and comfortable as possible so that a greater number of people avail themselves of these benefits.

I am also glad to see, Sir, that the Honourable Member has been able to balance the budget estimates of commercial lines without recourse to cuts. Cuts, however imperative they may be in times of low finance, cause great discontent among the rank and file and I think result in grave detriment to efficiency, but I am glad that the Honourable Member has realized this and has been able to infuse the spirit of contentment among railway employees.

As regards road-rail competition, I am sure Honourable Members will agree with me when I say that much of the present acuteness of competition will be minimized if greater amenities are given to the travelling public on railways, such as holiday concessions, week-end return tickets, etc. I am also glad to see that the Honourable Member "fully realize and appreciate the necessity for keeping abreast of the times" so as to cope with the vehicular traffic on roads. In this connection I am glad to find that one and two-thirds third class return tickets on the Eastern Bengal Railway are being issued as a test case to see whether a greater number of people are benefited by these cheap return tickets and the railway administration is also benefited proportionately by this new venture. Incidentally, I may bring to your notice the very successful introduction of round tour tickets introduced by the Madras and Southern Mahratta Railway recently. I am sure the Honourable Member knows all the details about it. It will be indeed a great boon to third class passengers if such a system is introduced in other railways not only during holidays like Christmas but also many times in the year.

Coming to the works programme, I find that it is bigger than in recent years. I see that, in addition to providing money for the construction of the Megna Bridge on the Assam Bengal Railway and the extension of the electrified suburban section of the Bombay, Baroda and Central India Railway from Borivli to Virar, Rs. 10 lakhs has been set apart for the construction of Karaikudi-Melur-Madura line. This new line, if constructed, will be of immense benefit to the people of my province and I would request the Honourable Member to take such steps as he thinks fit to expedite the construction of this line.

Regarding the checking of ticketless passengers on the trains, I think any attempt to amend the Indian Railway Act so as to inflict deterrent punishment on the ticketless travellers will not solve the problem. I wish to point

out that the two railway administrations in my province, *viz.*, the Madras and Southern Mahratta Railway and the South Indian Railway, have been able to check this evil to a great extent by increasing their staff of ticket examiners, but if such a like expansion of staff is carried out in other railways, I would request the Honourable Member to see, at the same time, that the ticket examiners do not cause unnecessary annoyance and trouble to the travelling public.

Lastly, I would like to invite the attention of the Honourable Member to the position of the Local Advisory Boards of Railways in India. I would suggest that every effort should be made by railway administrations to consult the members of their Local Advisory Boards with regard to matters that closely affect the comfort and convenience of passengers. It is my suggestion that this consultation should take place every year and that too before the annual budget estimates of railway administrations are prepared. I may also add that as far as the Madras and Southern Mahratta Railway Administration and the Local Advisory Committee are concerned, their relationship is very cordial and they have been working in very close co-operation.

Now, I would be failing in my duty if I did not refer to the cordial relationship which continued to exist between the Honourable Member in charge of Railways and the Honourable Members of this House. He has heard our grievances and criticisms patiently and I have found him willing, as far as he can, to carry out our wishes. His genial and suave personality we will always miss, but let me assure him that every one of us here who had the pleasure of knowing him either in this House or elsewhere, will always remember him as one of the best friends of India.

THE HONOURABLE SARDAR BUTA SINGH (Punjab : Sikh) : Sir, I heard with great interest and satisfaction the lucid speech which the Honourable Sir Guthrie Russell made and his hopes of better times for the railways. I trust that his optimism will be justified and the railways will make a substantial contribution to the revenues of India. There are just one or two questions I should like to ask. He mentioned that working expenses on the State Railways were somewhere near 51·15 per cent. Could he kindly tell the Council what is the ratio of working expenses on privately managed railways in India and in England ?

I share with him the regret that railways have still to meet heavy interest charges. If a sinking fund had been provided from the start, the debt of the railways would have by now been extinguished. Even now if one per cent. could be put in the sinking fund for the redemption of debt, it would, in a definite number of years wipe off this burden and the railways will become a paying investment free of all interest charges.

Sir Guthrie Russell made a pointed reference to the rail-road competition. From what I have heard, it seems to me, that so far railways have only sought to remove this competition by raising motor service into a monopoly also. This seems to me rather unimaginative and not in the public interest. Hitherto the railways have enjoyed a monopoly, why should motors not also share in this monopoly ? There are other ways of securing rail-road co-operation and serving the public interest by a co-ordinated service.

As usual a large sum is being provided for renewal and replacement of rolling stock. It does seem tragic that after a hundred years of experience our railways have still to depend on outside supplies. Could the Chief Commissioner of Railways say when it will be possible for our workshops to turn

[Sardar Buta Singh.]

out complete locomotives, wagons, etc.? Now that a step has been taken in standardization there does not seem any reason why the railway workshops should not produce all the requirements in the country itself, thus providing employment for our unemployed and becoming pioneers in manufacturing locomotives and other mechanical appliances which we now import.

I was very glad to hear that railways were now trying to get into touch with local administrations, that is, trying in some measure to meet the traffic requirements of provinces. In this connection I should like to suggest making this co-operation more effective. Take the North Western Railway which serves my province. Would it not be possible to constitute a small board consisting of the Agent, North Western Railway, the Minister of Agriculture, Punjab, an official representing agriculture from the North West Frontier Province and another from Sind and place all traffic problems before this board? If this was done, complaints which now find expression even from high quarters will disappear and both railways and producers will gain.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS : That will be a purely official board.

THE HONOURABLE SARDAR BUTA SINGH : Traffic is the life blood of railways and traffic will be accelerated if there were co-operation between the producer and the carrier.

I feel I must congratulate the Honourable the Railway Member for his able administration of the railways during the very difficult period through which we have been passing.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA JAGDISH PRASAD (United Provinces Northern : Non-Muhammadan) : Sir, it is no doubt a matter of gratification that the railway budget that has been presented to us indicates that so far as the passenger traffic and railway receipts from goods traffic go, the low tide, to borrow the expression of the Chief Commissioner of Railways, which was reached during 1932-33, is now being followed by a rising tide and that there is every prospect that the railways in India are now well on the road to a period of prosperity.

The working expenses for 1935-36 have been placed at a crore and five lakhs above the figure for the current year. Of this sum, Rs. 92 lakhs are due to the fact that it has been decided not to re-impose the cuts in pay which were imposed three years ago. This decision is not, in my opinion, justified in view of the fact that in 1935-36 there is estimated to be a deficit of about Rs. 2 crores which would have been reduced to nearly a crore if there had been no restoration of the salary cut. The Reserve Fund has been exhausted and deficits have been met from loans from the depreciation fund the balance of which at the end of 1935-36 would amount only to Rs. 12.87 crores. It is not until 1936-37 that the Chief Commissioner of Railways expects a surplus budget. In these circumstances the restoration of cuts, which will no doubt be warmly welcomed by the railway employees, will not be approved by the public.

A provision amounting to Rs. 15 crores has been made for works expenditure during 1935-36. For new construction Rs. 26 lakhs are being provided. And I find in the Explanatory Memorandum that Government are examining a number of projects in order to ascertain whether they are likely to yield an

adequate return on the money to be expended. These projects, I am glad to find, include certain lines in the United Provinces also. I understand that the construction of a R. K. R. line between Kashipur and Kalagarh via Thakurdwara in my province is also under consideration, and I hope that the Honourable the Railway Member and the Chief Commissioner of Railways will come to a favourable decision in respect of this project and that it will be taken in hand at an early date.

Sir, there are certain grievances of the travelling public which I venture to bring to the notice of the Honourable the Railway Member, whom I am glad to find present in this House today, as well as of the Chief Commissioner. Owing to a growing increase in the standard of living of Indians a larger number of people have now begun to travel second class, whereas second class accommodation on trains is practically the same as it used to be many years ago, with the result that second class compartments are generally overcrowded. May I suggest that in view of the larger number of people now preferring to travel second class more second class accommodation should be provided on trains. Further, it is a common experience of the first and second class travelling public that at nights first and second class passengers close the shutters and glass panes of the windows, bolt their compartments from inside and prevent *bona fide* passengers at intermediate stations from entering their compartments, even when there is sufficient accommodation available in them for new passengers. In other words, the privilege of bolting the compartments from inside is abused to the exclusion of *bona fide* passengers. This practice is getting so common that it is becoming extremely difficult, if not almost impossible, for would-be passengers at intermediate stations to get accommodation in first and second class carriages at night. This evil urgently calls for remedy, and to remedy the evil I wish to throw out a suggestion for the consideration of the authorities, although I do not know if it would be found practicable. In my opinion an officer of the railway (who may well be called a controller) should be put in charge of first and second class compartments on trains during the night and should travel on trains. Instead of first and second class carriages being allowed to be bolted by passengers from inside for the safety of their persons and property, it should be the duty of this controller to lock the compartments from outside, and at stations to open such of them as have accommodation if new passengers want to enter or those inside want to get out. This or some similar arrangement should be considered to remedy the evil, and it will be a great boon to the first and second class travelling public.

Another inconvenience which the second class travelling public have to put up with is caused by quite a large number of railway officials travelling at times in second class compartments who I think are privileged to travel free of charge. This makes second class compartments overcrowded to the great inconvenience of *bona fide* passengers. I wonder if it will not be better if such officials are asked to travel in the guard's compartment or in some other compartment meant entirely for their use and thereby reduce the congestion in second class carriages.

One other thing which I wish to bring to the notice of Government is that there is no representative of the United Provinces on the Advisory Committee of the North Western Railway, although that line traverses no less than three districts of my province, namely, Meerut, Muzaffarnagar and Saharanpur. The result is that the grievances of the travelling public belonging to the United Provinces concerning the North Western Railway go unrepresented. May I suggest that arrangements should be made to have the United Provinces represented on the North Western Railway Advisory Committee through a member actually residing in the province.

[Rai Bahadur Lala Jagdish Prasad.]

Sir, I hope that the above suggestions of mine, in the interests of the travelling public as they are, will receive due consideration at the hands of Government.

THE HONOURABLE MR. MOHAMMAD YAMIN KHAN (United Provinces : Nominated Non-Official) : Sir, I am very glad that the Honourable the Commerce Member is present to listen to the debate in this House. And since it is the last budget which will be framed during his term, it is gratifying that it is so balanced as to leave very little margin for a deficit. Here, Sir, I congratulate the whole Railway Administration on this result. The Honourable the Chief Commissioner and the Railway Board have gone to great pains to achieve this end. I had the privilege of sitting in the Standing Finance Committee for Railways for several years and therefore know something of the difficulties which the Administration have had to face. I have listened with great interest to some of the remarks made by some of my Honourable friends here as to why these wagons have been built this year.

THE HONOURABLE MR. JAGADISH CHANDRA BANERJEE : Who are they ?

THE HONOURABLE MR. MOHAMMAD YAMIN KHAN : If the Honourable Member had been present here I need not repeat the names of those Members, or if he was he must have listened to the Honourable Lala Ram Saran Das and to the Honourable Mr. Hossain Imam. Sir, the difficulty was that for several years past no wagons were built as no money was available for building wagons and so their construction had been postponed until a stage was reached when it was not possible to carry on without constructing more wagons, and the opportunity was taken this year because prices were very low. The advantage which is to accrue on account of the low prices will be a great deal. I think the Railway Department is to be congratulated for having put this proposition before the Railway Finance Committee and got their sanction to build up the wagons this year. As regards the observations of the Honourable the Chief Commissioner and the other Honourable Members about strategic lines, I think it is very unfortunate that the two lines are separately accounted for. I have always been of the opinion that we must take the lines as a whole. It is no use calling them State Railways if we separate them into commercial lines and strategic lines. If the lines were managed

1 P.M. by companies we could separate them, but as they are State lines there is no reason why there should be any distinction between strategic and commercial lines. I do not agree either with my Honourable friend Lala Ram Saran Das that strategic lines should be separated nor with the Railway Administration in pointing them out separately. I do not think it will serve any purpose.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS : They are shown even now as separate.

THE HONOURABLE MR. MOHAMMAD YAMIN KHAN : That is what I am objecting to. It should not be done. I do not agree with my friend when he says they should be separated. I hold that they belong to the State and the whole administration should be one. It will not be a good proposition or a

sound theory if we begin to say that because a particular station does not provide a sufficient number of passengers and it is not sufficient to cover the salaries of the staff at a particular station, therefore that station should be closed.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS : That is closed.

THE HONOURABLE MR. MOHAMMAD YAMIN KHAN : In the same way it is wrong to say if a particular branch or a small line does not pay that it should be closed.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS : Such a station is already closed.

THE HONOURABLE MR. MOHAMMAD YAMIN KHAN : If the business proposition is strictly followed, many railway stations will have to be closed because they are not sufficiently remunerative. Similarly in the postal department there are many post offices which are run at a huge loss but they are kept up simply for the sake of the convenience of the public. In the same manner the lines ought to be kept if they are called State lines. If the Honourable Member holds that they should not be State lines, I have got no grievance. But my view is if they are State lines one may be run at a deficit and others may make a great profit.

THE HONOURABLE RAI BAHADUR LALA RAM SARAN DAS : No post office is run at a loss.

THE HONOURABLE MR. MOHAMMAD YAMIN KHAN : I am entitled to hold my view and the Honourable Member is entitled to hold his.

My Honourable friend Raja Ghazanfar Ali Khan said that the statutory authority which will be formed in the future will not be a representative one. I beg to differ from him. If the statutory railway authority is put up as suggested by a committee which sat and made its proposals in London, that will be a purely representative committee and that will be in a position more to represent the public than this House at present.

As far as the budget is concerned, I am sorry, Sir, that I do not see on certain points eye to eye with the Railway Administration. It is high time that we must take into consideration our financial condition. From 1932-33 up to 1934-35 we have had a deficit of Rs. 22 crores and 43 lakhs. All these sums have been taken away from the reserve fund and a great deal of money has been borrowed from the depreciation fund. We cannot ignore that a huge sum has been utilized either from the reserve fund or by borrowing from the depreciation fund. The whole of the reserve fund of Rs. 15 crores has been exhausted. That was a huge sum which was accumulated in good years and spent in bad years ; but the policy of taking money from the depreciation fund for meeting your running charges is not a good proposition. If the railways had been run by commercial companies, they would not have allowed so much dividend to be given as is given in the shape of the interest. Certainly that is a great difficulty before the Railway Administration ; but what would a commercial company have done under the present circumstances if they had been tied down to give a fixed rate of interest ? They would not have allowed Rs. 2 crores extra to be allowed to be spent in restoration of cuts in the present circumstances. Undoubtedly it may be said that the budget

[Mr. Mohammad Yamin Khan.]

would have been balanced if these wagons had not been allowed to be built, if the railway bridges which are a great necessity, had not been allowed to be built. But the Railway Administration came up for sanction for these two items; we could not do without bridges and wagons were a necessity; but the restoration of the cut could have been postponed for another year. That is not a sound proposition in present circumstances: neither do I agree that this blame may be thrown on strategic lines.

Certain lines are allowing return tickets. I welcome that; but I do not know why it is not allowed on the Great Indian Peninsula Railway. There are many places on the Great Indian Peninsula and Bombay, Baroda and Central India Railways where the travelling public require return tickets. I have pressed on several occasions that return tickets should be allowed to these big *melas*. There is no reason why if they should be allowed during the Durga Puja holidays and Christmas they should not be allowed when people are going in large numbers to Ajmer. Lakhs and lakhs of people go to Ajmer once a year. If this facility is allowed to Ajmer and to Piran Kaliar during Urs time then I think a larger number of people will go by trains than by motor lorries and that will add to the income of the railways which the railways are losing over it nowadays. If a return ticket or concessions are given, they will find a lot of people will come to their rescue.

There is another point, Sir, and it is this. I am very glad that some concession has been given by the railway administration for seeds and rice in the shape of cheaper freight, but I find no mention of what facilities have been given for the purposes of wheat. It is a great problem which really needs tackling nowadays, and if wheat is allowed to go at a cheaper rate to Calcutta, Bombay and Karachi, then greater traffic will be possible. However, that question will come up later in another connection and I will deal with it on a separate issue.

One thing I was surprised to hear stated by Honourable Members is that third class carriages have not been improved during the last 30 years. As far as I have seen, and I have myself visited several places where new carriages are built, there has been a great deal of improvement and it is not right to say there has been no improvement. (*An Honourable Member*: "On the North Western Railway?") I think so, except on the branch lines where the old carriages are shifted. The old carriages have got to be utilized somewhere. It would be a waste of money if they are scrapped just because they do not suit the fancy of some Honourable Members at the moment.

There is one point, Sir, I would urge upon the Railway Administration and it is this, that if they are losing by motor competition it is because they do not provide proper facilities at certain stations. I will give one instance in my own town because it is within my personal knowledge. In Meerut City, which is a junction where about 2,000 people get down every day *en route* for Delhi, there is no shed provided where people can get down and take shelter from rain and the heat of the sun and they have to go a long distance to the further platform from the main platform in order to get to the Delhi train, and these people are not willing to do all this when they have the facility of a motor lorry just close to their door. Unless the railway administration can give better facilities these people will not be willing to run that risk. I think, Sir, it will not cost much to build a shed. I have impressed the necessity for this year after year but it has never been seriously considered and I am sorry to find that there is no provision for building sheds on the North Western Railway and the East Indian Railway stations, where they are badly required.

Sir, these are the few remarks I had to make. There is only one more thing. I pressed last year and I do so again this year that, although we have to pay a larger amount in the shape of interest, this could be easily remedied at the present time when money is cheap. If the money was borrowed at a high rate of interest some years ago it is no use keeping the same money and paying the higher rate of interest. Government can launch a new loan and pay up the old loans. They can get money at a cheaper rate now and in this way wipe out the Rs. 800 crores. In this way there will be a reduction of several crores of rupees only in the shape of interest and Government can easily see their way to do this in order to balance their budget. There will be no difficulty about restoring a salary cut of the services, or anything else, and the whole of the deficit can be paid up by getting at a cheaper rate of interest the money that is available in the country at present.

The Council then adjourned for Lunch till Half Past Two of the Clock.

The Council re-assembled after Lunch at Half Past Two of the Clock, the Honourable the President in the Chair.

THE HONOURABLE MR. JAGADISH CHANDRA BANERJEE (East Bengal : Non-Muhammadan) : Sir, the railway budget has been presented this year with the usual self-complacency of the bureaucratic administration. From our childhood we Indians are taught that self-praise is no praise, but this self-praise is the only quality ingrained amongst the bureaucrats. In the usual customary way, both the Honourable the Railway Member and the Chief Commissioner of Railways have praised themselves and their underlings for the best railway administration in India. Sir, year in and year out we din into the ears of the railway administrators the grievances of the third class passengers who are the real profit-earning customers of the Indian railways. When the separation of railway finance from general finance was effected, we were told that such separation is being effected for running the railways on a commercial basis. I am neither a commercial magnate nor a business man ; so I do not think it lies in my power to teach business principles to those all-knowing gentlemen opposite, who are at the helm of affairs of the Railway Administration in India.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : Much less can you pronounce an opinion !

THE HONOURABLE MR. JAGADISH CHANDRA BANERJEE : I am expressing an opinion, Sir.

Sir, yet I cannot but ask them whether there is any business man worth the name who would dare to displease his best customers from whom he earns more profit. Even if on a summer evening, we enter an ordinary European firm who are reputed to be the best business men, we find that they immediately put on the fans and offer smokes or cold drinks to their best customers. But as against that, what do we find in the railway administrations ? The representatives of the people have cried themselves hoarse all these past years for the supply of good drinking water for third class passengers and the supply of electric fans in third class compartments. But it is a great pity that the railway administrations could not find their way to mitigate the hardships of their best customers, the third class passengers. Sir, I wish to prove to the Government and the House that the railway administrators in India desired

[Mr. Jagadish Chandra Banerjee.]

to have the separation of railway finance only for the purposes of squandering railway earnings on the already pampered first class passengers who land at Bombay from the United Kingdom and the European continent. When the Railway Department was put in charge of an Indian Member, and when the post of Financial Commissioner was filled by an Indian, we hoped that at least the lot of third class passengers would improve. But the system of bureaucratic administration proved only one thing, and that is that whatsoever Indian is fixed as a spoke in the wheel of this form of administration, he immediately sizes and shapes himself as a bureaucrat, the only difference with the western bureaucrats is in colour, which is beyond human power to change. Sir, during the last few years, we find that the programme of construction of third class carriages have been changed with the sole motive and idea as to how best to squeeze such passengers, allowing them as little space as possible, and to make available every inch of space in the third class compartments for sitting third class passengers without caring in the least for the comforts, conveniences or health of such passengers. The railways in India have started constructing only bigger compartments with a carrying capacity varying between 20 and 40 passengers and even more. These bigger compartments have been provided with two doors for the inlet and outlet of passengers, and with one latrine with no flush arrangement. I wish that the heads of railway administrations are given these third class saloons for their travels and tours and then only they would realize the hardships of third class passengers!

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. C. D. CHARI: They will not realize it till they have a separate compartment for themselves in the third class.

THE HONOURABLE MR. JAGADISH CHANDRA BANERJEE: Instead of first class, they ought to be given third class, or fourth class, or even lower class compartments, or even vans. Then they will understand what the difficulties are. I cannot even imagine how a set of men running the Indian railways can with equanimity claim more earnings from passenger traffic? This year as in past years the Honourable the Railway Member and the Honourable the Chief Commissioner of Railways have deplored that though goods traffic earnings have increased, yet passenger traffic earnings have not increased. But may I ask them as to what they have done during the year under review for increasing the comforts and conveniences of such passengers? Not even a mention has been made about it, except that a slight reduction in fare on the North Western Railway or the introduction of third class return tickets on the Eastern Bengal Railway. Sir, I congratulate them for these small mercies for what it is worth, but these are not so much as to attract more passengers on railways. In order to divert passengers from road motors to the railways they will have to give more comforts or even equal comforts that are allowed by the road motors. For comparison sake I would quote the competition between road motors and railways on the Kalka Simla line. A passenger by paying Rs. 20 or Rs. 25 can take all his luggage and his servants with him, and the road motor carries him faster and reaches Simla in about four hours. As against that, the second class fare from Kalka to Simla is about Rs. 11 per seat. This does not show the alertness of the railways in diverting passengers to the railways. This is not all. Even the railway lords will at times put obstacles in the way of reserving third class compartments. Had I any hand in the matter, I would have tried to accelerate the trains, made smaller third class compartments of six seats with a latrine for each of the two contiguous compartments, and would have allowed the reservation of second class compartments with a lesser number of fares than the carrying capacity

of such compartments. I have quoted one example only. There are hundreds of such competitions all over India, and where the passengers can easily be redirected to the railways, if the heads of railway administrations in this country had heads and brains and a little bit of imagination in them. Here I would once more draw the attention of the Railway Department to introduce second class rail motors on that line as that will divert most of the road motor traffic to the railways. The only argument against such introduction, as far as I could see, is that there will be no first class rail motor traffic. This brings me to a question of very great importance. Sir, if we go to the Simla or Kalka station and scrutinize the present day rail motor passengers we find that on an average 80 per cent. or even more of such passengers during a year are railway officials holding passes. This system of issuing railway passes to railway officials must be restricted so that only the lower paid railway servants getting a pay of Rs. 200 or Rs. 300 at the most may be allowed to travel on passes. I may bring to the notice of the House that free railway passes are not the only concession allowed to railway officials. They are allowed any number of P. T. O. concessions which means that a railway official by paying one-third fare of any class will be entitled to travel all over India with his family, luggage and servants. I do not see any reason why the already top-heavy railway administration should be burdened with the carrying of so many thousands of passengers a year without any earning. I think it will be a surprise to many if I say that in the course of the evidence tendered by the Honourable the Chief Commissioner of Railways before the last Retrenchment Committee, he stated that the issue of railway passes does not cost the Railways anything. If that be the argument in favour of the issue of unrestricted railway passes to railway officials, I would in the circumstances request the Government to extend the same concession to all the Members of the Indian Legislature who are really the representatives of the people so that they may during the off session acquaint themselves about the grievances of their constituents. I would even go a step further and request the Government to extend at least the concession of P. T. Os. to all the Government of India servants who are recruited from distant parts of India such as Burma, Assam, Bengal, Bombay and Madras. I base my claim for the Government of India servants on the analogy of the Leeloot allowed to the railway officials over and above the concession of railway passes and P. T. Os. enjoyed by them. There is no justification for the highly paid railway officials to have the Leeloot concession and also the concession of free railway passes and P. T. Os. They seem to be an exception to the general rule which lays down that you can not have the cake and eat it too. Now, Sir, I come back to the question of third class passengers. In hot weather, if fans are supplied in third class compartments, and smaller third class compartments of eight or ten seats with a latrine is constructed which can easily be reserved, I am positive most of the passengers who are using road motors wherever available will come back to the railways. Sir, I would further suggest that arrangements should be made for the reservation of smaller third class compartments all over the Indian railways and strict vigilance should be kept against the overcrowding of compartments. Arrangements should also be made for attaching bogies at big stations whenever there is overcrowding and whenever a message of such overcrowding is received from a previous station. In short I would like to suggest to the Honourable the Member in charge of Railways to move *in cognito* in third class trains and see for himself the condition of the profit accruing third class passengers. I know that this will all fall on deaf ears, as the present Railway Administration in India is too wooden and too rotten from its foundation. These are the reasons why moderates of today are becoming the extremists of tomorrow and the extremists of today are becoming the socialists

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of tomorrow. Before I conclude I give a warning to Government that unless and until they change their heart and unless they try to understand the public point of view, the representatives of the people can never allow the railway budgets to be passed in the form in which they are presented which is only for pampering the already pampered railway officials.

I should like to add one word more. Last but not least, may we through you, Sir, express our sincere regret at the impending retirement of the popular Railway Member Sir Joseph Bhore.

THE HONOURABLE SIR JOSEPH BHORE: My Honourable friend should be quite glad, considering all that I have been responsible for!

THE HONOURABLE MR. JAGADISH CHANDRA BANERJEE: He has been a familiar figure in our House since I came in 1931 and, as a matter of fact, he was for some time Leader of our House, if I remember aright. His wide experience and his indomitable courage in facing facts and his untiring zeal and energy and sagacity will be a great asset to the constitution in its making, when we shall want him and his services again, to appear before us fair as a star that will shine in the political horizon of India and lead us to the goal of real self-government. (Applause.)

THE HONOURABLE MR. P. N. SAPRU (United Provinces Southern : Non-Muhammadian): Sir, I desire to congratulate Sir Guthrie Russell on the admirable lucidity with which he has presented the railway budget. May I also as a very junior Member of this House pay a tribute to Sir Joseph Bhore? Sir Joseph Bhore has been a very distinguished Indian public servant, and he has earned well of his country. In his retirement he will have our best wishes. (Applause.)

Sir, the railways of this country represent a great commercial undertaking. Most of them are now State-owned and State-managed, and the department comes into intimate contact with all classes of the people. We have about 700,000 workers on the railways and the department is a great employer of labour. The State, Sir, ought to be a model employer. Certainly we should run the railways as a commercial concern, but the railways are also a public utility concern and the humanitarian point of view ought not to be subordinated to mere commercial considerations. That is the point of view from which I will endeavour to make a few observations on the railway budget.

Sir, the budget is a deficit budget, but if we examine it closely it is not a gloomy budget. If we leave out the strategic railways and if we leave out the special arrangements in regard to the depreciation fund, then we find that really we have a surplus of over Rs. 3 crores. Now, Sir, so far as the strategic lines are concerned, I agree with my leader Rai Bahadur Lala Ram Saran Das and with Mr. Chari that expenditure on them should be shown as defence expenditure. We ought to know really what is the amount that we are spending on our defence. If you are giving any concessions to army officers, if you have any strategic railways for military purposes, then show them as part of the defence expenditure of the country. That is the proper system of accounting which we should like you to adopt. Then, Sir, I come to the question of the restoration of cuts. Frankly, Sir, as I have said, there is no reason for us to take a gloomy view of our immediate future. I am not disposed to object to the restoration of the cuts so far as the employees who are getting

Rs. 100 or less than Rs. 100 are concerned. So far as the higher officers are concerned, their case stands on a different footing and they ought to wait for the restoration until the railways are contributing to the central revenues.

Sir, I should like also to say something about the attitude of the Railway Board towards trade unions. Sir, the Whitley Commission had suggested that the railways should adopt a generous attitude towards trade unions; they should be ready to recognize these unions. In most of the big railways trade unions have not been recognized. I plead that the Whitley Commission's recommendation in this matter should be given effect to at an early date. May I, Sir, also refer to the Washington Convention on hours of work which was ratified in 1921 but which has not been implemented so far? Why has it not been implemented and when will it be implemented? These are questions on which no doubt the Honourable Sir Joseph Bore will enlighten us. I should also like to refer to the increase of unemployment among railway workers. There are about 40,000 people who are on the unemployed list. We know that there is no system of unemployment insurance in this country. Railway workers in some parts of the country have expressed a desire for shorter hours and less wages in order to enable these 40,000 men to be absorbed. I make this suggestion for the consideration of the Railway Board. Then, Sir, there is the question of the purchase of new locomotives. Rai Bahadur Lala Ram Saran Das has shown that there is no need for spending Rs. 1 crore on the purchase of locomotives and engines. Sir, I believe there was a committee appointed to inquire into this matter and they laid down a certain proportion, and if I mistake not, there are a great many more idle engines now than there should be having regard to the recommendations of that committee. I should now like to refer to the hardships of the third class passengers, and on that point I am more or less generally in agreement with my friend the Honourable Mr. Banerjee. I have never travelled myself in a third class, but I know what the hardships of these people are by personal observation. The sanitary arrangements in our third classes are very bad. You have no electric fans and these people are herded together like cattle. I think really we ought to treat them as human beings. There ought to be some consideration for the people who contribute the greater part of our revenues and I do hope that the railway administration will improve in this respect.

One of the very important questions which the railways have to consider is this question of rail-road competition. I do not know whether I should suggest a very drastic remedy. One way of dealing with the problem is to take over, after compensating these bus owners, these motor cars in your own hand where you have motor transports running parallel to railway lines. But a solution of this kind would probably be regarded as very drastic, and I would therefore like to refer to the recommendation of the Rail-Road Committee on this subject. At page 75 they make this suggestion :

"The evils from which public service motor transport is suffering are largely due to excessive competition, unemployment among buses, and their concentration on the more populous routes. The number of licenses for buses on any route might be restricted; the issue of time-tables, publication of schedules of fares and compulsory insurance might be prescribed. Such control would raise the business to a better and more economic condition".

I should be prepared, therefore, to support the recommendation of the Mitchell-Kirkness Committee on this matter, because after all it is a question which very vitally affects the public. The railways contribute to our central revenues and we cannot see these central revenues go down.

[Mr. P. N. Sapru.]

Sir, I will now make a few observations on the future of railways. The future as envisaged in the Joint Select Committee's Report and the Bill which is based on the Report is not very bright. I know, Sir, that the railways are a commercial concern and that in some constitutions, notably in South Africa, you have a statutory authority to deal with the railway administration. But what is the nature of this statutory authority which you are going to have under this Joint Select Committee constitution which is entirely unacceptable to us? The Governor General in his individual discretion will appoint three-sevenths of the members of the railway authority. The Governor General will have the right of removing any Member of the Board. Then, Sir, the Chief Commissioner for Railways will be appointed by the Governor General in his individual discretion. It will not be open to the Legislature to consider questions of rates and fares without a recommendation of the Governor General, which presumably means, because the words individual discretion are not used here, the responsible ministry of the day. These are provisions which will reduce the control of the Legislature to a shadow. The Railway Department is a department which concerns very vitally the public. It is a department which concerns industrial labour in this country and we cannot set up an autocracy in the shape of a statutory railway authority. Sir, I think in future years we shall have even lesser opportunities of criticism so far as the railway administration is concerned than we have at present.

Then, Sir, I should like to refer to certain grievances of ticket examiners on certain State Railways in India. I do not know how far these grievances are justified. We have been supplied with a pamphlet. I was given this pamphlet here in this very room. I have not been able to study this pamphlet myself, but I should like to bring to the notice of the Honourable Sir Joseph Blore and the Honourable Sir Guthrie Russell the grievances of these men. I hope they will examine these grievances and see whether there is any substance in them and if there is any substance in them remedy them to the extent it is possible for them to do so.

Then, Sir, there is the question of railway rates and railway fares. Commercial opinion in India has been very emphatic so far in its condemnation of the railway rates policy of the Railway Board. I am prepared to recognize that in reducing the surcharge on coal the Railway Board has met us half way. I hope they will pursue this policy and fully act as a national body in national interests, because after all it is the national interests that must be kept supreme. May I also suggest that there should be some railway workshops—I think you have a workshop in Ajmer—where you can make these locomotives. It ought not to be necessary for you to import locomotives and rolling stock from foreign countries. We ought to encourage indigenous industries as far as possible and I think railways can make a contribution in that respect also.

Then, Sir, there ought to be some holiday concession tickets for workers

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and the poorer classes of the community. We want to encourage the habit of travel in this country. Travel, Sir, has a great educative value and the countryside ought to be opened up because with a wider electorate we should like our masses to be conscious of their rights and responsibilities and for that reason, Sir, it is very necessary that we should have these concessions and return tickets so that it may become possible for the poorer section of the people to avail themselves of the opportunity for travel.

Well, Sir, these are the observations that I have to make on the railway budget, but before I close my remarks I should like again to emphasize that it is very necessary that expenditure on the strategic lines should be shown as defence expenditure. We want to know what really is the total amount that the Army Department in this country absorbs? I am not objecting to these strategic railways. Probably they are necessary for strategic purposes but then let us have a straightforward system of accounting, a system which we can all understand, which will enable us to see at a glance what it is we are spending on a particular department. These strategic railways are admittedly not railways that are running as a commercial concern. Then why confuse the two aspects? Why show strategic railways also in the general railway budget? If His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief is prepared to take over these strategic railways I have no objection and I think that our constituencies will have no objection. We will criticize the defence expenditure as we have always criticized it but this is not a proper way of dealing with the matter.

There is just one more point and that is in regard to the recommendation of the Whitley Commission about a Joint Standing Committee for settlement of labour disputes. I do not know what the position in regard to that matter is. I can read out the relevant passage but I am not going to tire the House by reading it out. I understand there have been discussions between the railwaymen and the railway authorities on this matter. I hope, before Sir Joseph Bhore retires, he will make a contribution to industrial peace and put into effect the machinery suggested by that most admirable of bodies, the Whitley Commission.

These are all the observations, Sir, I have to make on the budget.

THE HONOURABLE SIR DAVID DEVADOSS (Nominated Indian Christians): Sir, I think an undeserved attack was made upon the Honourable the Railway Member. Though he does not require my defence, I think it is my duty to point out that, so far as administration goes, he has been doing his level best to make it a success. He may say in the words of the Jewish Prophets:

"The fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge".

He has inherited the system which he is trying to improve as much as possible. What I mean is, Sir, that when we had a few prosperous years, the railway administrations were lavish, I will not say extravagant, in building a number of new stations, beautiful waiting rooms and so on. Of course, they did not then anticipate lean years; but it is the law of nature that fat years are followed by lean years. Nature may be said to recoup herself in that way. But so far as railway administration goes, Sir, I have every reason to congratulate the Railway Member upon the efficient administration of the railways as well as the Chief Commissioner of Railways on the manner in which things have been done during the last three years. I would only make one or two suggestions to the Railway Department. Sir, seeing that in the past a good deal of money has been sunk in stone and mortar I hope the administration will not hereafter follow that example. No doubt it is all very well to have beautiful stations but considering that India is a poor country let us be satisfied with stations which are convenient and which really serve the purpose for which they are intended instead of being ornamental. For instance, take the South Indian Railway. Not that I have any particular grudge against that railway but it happens to be known to me. Before that railway was acquired by Government, the Company was able to pay a very

[Sir David Devadoss.]

good dividend—I believe between 5 and 7 per cent. on the outlay. It does not pay so much now. What is the reason for this? I think I am right in saying the South Indian Railway is a State Railway?

THE HONOURABLE SIR GUTHRIE RUSSELL: The South Indian Railway is a Company Railway.

THE HONOURABLE SIR DAVID DEVADOSS: Well, take the Madras and Southern Mahratta Railway. My point is this—I may be wrong—but after it became a State Railway a good deal of money was sunk in station buildings. I mean station buildings have cost a lot of money. That means money has been spent upon something which is not capable of producing anything. So far as the permanent way and the rolling stock are concerned, we must have them in the best of conditions because upon them depends the safety of the passengers but I would certainly suggest that money should not be unnecessarily spent upon things which do not give a return, because we pay interest on the amount. It is not our own money: we pay interest on the amount that is spent and therefore we should take care to see that we spend money on things which will give us some return. That is one submission.

My second submission is that we should explore the means of meeting this road competition. It is no good killing the buses for they really benefit the people. Speaking of my own province, Sir, there are places which are far away from railway stations. We must have a bus traffic in order to bring people to the railway stations. Now if the bus traffic is killed it will affect a lot of people who live far away from railway stations. No doubt where the main roads run parallel to railway lines there is very serious competition between the railway and the bus traffic but people find the buses to be more convenient than a railway train for the reason that they have to wait at the railway station a considerable time to buy a ticket and catch a particular train and then find their way to their destination which may be at some distance from the station, whereas the buses take them almost from their very doors to the places they have to go, and thus they find the use of buses more convenient. In some cases though they have to pay a little more they are prepared to pay it for the convenience which they derive thereby.

Then, Sir, there is a good deal—of course I am speaking as a layman—there is a good deal of material all along the railway lines. Has it been ascertained whether all this material could be utilized or not? No doubt some time back there was a discussion about this and we were told that all this material was necessary. But year after year, one passing through a place finds the same quantity of material stored. I would suggest that somebody should go into this matter and see that only such material is stocked as is necessary for the purpose of replacing anything that may require replacing.

I would also suggest that the Railway Administration, in placing the budget before us, should give us some idea as to the earnings of each one of the railways to enable one to know whether railways are able to pay their way, and what is the profit which each railway has been able to earn. We want to know whether each one of the railway administrations has been able to pay its way and whether it is really able to earn a profit. I suggest this in order to create emulation among the various administrations. When we have got a combined budget, I do not think, humanly speaking, that each administration feels that it ought to show how much it has been able to earn. When a railway administration is responsible to its shareholders, it is a well-known fact that the administration takes very great care to see that the shareholders do not find fault with the administration on the date of the general

meeting. If the administration is able to declare a decent dividend, the shareholders are satisfied, but if that dividend is not satisfactory, there is a good deal of clamour, as every one who has experience of companies would know. Each administration should show a sort of profit and loss account, which would enable one to see at a glance whether that railway administration is being run on really commercial lines. It will not only show what is being done but it will also enable them to emulate one another. If one administration is able to make out that it is capable of paying 6 or 7 per cent. and another administration is not, the latter will try to see that it also comes up to that standard. Of course, there may be exceptional circumstances. In particular parts of the country where you have got plenty of passenger traffic, the railway may be able to pay more than in the case of a railway which does not carry very much traffic. But still, it will enable the administrations to emulate one another in trying to make out that it is as efficient and as cheap as possible. I would also request the Honourable the Railway Member and the Chief Commissioner to see whether the Panangudy-Palamcottah Railway could not be built soon. My impression is that that line was surveyed years ago and there was a talk that it was going to be constructed, but nothing has been done. I know personally that there is a good deal of traffic between Tinnevelly and South Travancore. South Travancore gets almost all its salt—I believe it is something like three lakhs of maunds—and its grain and a number of other things from Tinnevelly. There is also a good deal of passenger traffic. I believe that almost every 10 or 15 minutes buses run, and these buses are full of passengers. There are three or four salt factories, one at Kulasekarapatnam, one at Arumuganeri and one at Koyalpatam within about 25 miles of the Travancore border. If a railway is constructed from Palamcottah to Nagercoil, that is to say, to Travancore State and if it joins on to Kulasekarapatnam, I think it will be a very paying concern. I would ask the Honourable the Railway Member to consider whether this is not possible.

Sir, I have much pleasure in echoing what the Honourable Mr. Miller said as regards the Railway Member. He has been a very successful administrator and it is a great pity that he has to leave us owing to the way in which our services are manned. We hope, Sir, that he and Lady Bhore will have a very restful holiday. We also hope that he will come back to us to give us the benefit of his long and wide experience and to place his brilliant talents at the disposal of this country.

THE HONOURABLE SRIJUT HERAMBA PROSAD BARUA (Assam : Non-Muhammadan) : Sir, I would like to make a few remarks in connection with the railway budget now before the House. The Honourable the Chief Commissioner of Railways, Sir Guthrie Russell, has assured us that the railway earnings are on the rising tide and that the Indian railways are well on the road to prosperity. That is well and good. For all that, all credit goes to the Railway Administration and the Honourable the Chief Commissioner of Railways, and our best congratulations go to the Honourable the Railway Member, Sir Joseph Bhore. The budget shows that the receipts have increased. The Honourable Member told us at the time of the introduction of the budget that the increase was due to the goods traffic and not due to the passenger traffic. The authorities, however, in an endeavour to gain passenger traffic, have made reductions in fares, particularly on the North Western Railway, and with some justification. This has increased the passenger traffic on that railway to a great extent. The Great Indian Peninsula Railway has also done something in the way of reduction of railway fares and the Eastern Bengal Railway also has done something in the shape of re-introduction of concession fares. This certainly augurs well. I think

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this sound policy should be extended to other railways also. Of course, there ought to be some loss in fares, but I think that it will be more than made up by the increase in the passenger traffic in the near future. I say this policy should be extended to all the railways and particularly with regard to the lower class, the third class and the inter class, passengers who form the bulk, or I should say, 90 per cent. of the traffic. It has been rightly said by the Honourable the Chief Commissioner that the increased traffic earnings are the life-blood of the railways. If that be so, I submit that the authorities should look to the barest amenities of these lower class passengers who form the bulk of the passenger traffic of the railways. I beg to submit that if the authorities look to the barest amenities of these lower class passengers with more of sympathy, humanity and foresight, I think they will be more than recompensed for what they may do for these lower class passengers. I do not know much about railways in other parts of the country, but I can speak with some knowledge of the railways in my province of Assam, namely, the Assam Bengal Railway and the Eastern Bengal Railway. On these railways, the authorities have hitherto been rather apathetic with regard to the amenities of third class passengers. The third class compartments on the Eastern Bengal Railway and Assam Bengal Railway are rather too small and in consequence the passengers are all uncomfortably huddled together. The benches are narrow and sometimes they can only find standing room in the compartments. I think the authorities should look to the comfort of the third class passengers on these railways. It has been suggested that third class passengers should be provided with fans. I do not see any reason why they should not be, and I do not see any reason why they should be denied the ordinary amenities of light and air. In first class compartments there are two and sometimes more than two fans, which sometimes run when there are no passengers and in any case serve only three or four passengers. The third class fare of course is only one-sixth of the first class fare, but if two fans can be given in a first class compartment for three or four passengers I do not see why an equal number cannot be provided in a third class compartment accommodating 25 or more passengers?

Then I have to say something about the waiting rooms at railway stations in Assam. There are many stations with no waiting rooms at all, and even at the main stations there is no waiting room worthy of the name for third class passengers. All that is provided is an open shed. No benches are provided and they have to squat on the floor and pass the hours waiting for trains and are entirely at the mercy of the elements.

Then, Sir, the two railways in Assam, the Eastern Bengal and Assam Bengal, although they traverse a distance of about 400 miles in Assam and have long been working there, strangely enough employ only a dozen or a dozen-and-a-half of Assamese employees. An Assamese employee in the staffs of these railways in Assam is as rare as the Dodo. In this connection, Sir, in order to elicit a few facts and figures I put some questions in the Council during the Simla session last August. My question No. 128 of the 27th August, 1934 was :

"Will Government be pleased to state the number of Assamese recruited into the subordinate ranks in the different departments of the Assam Bengal and Eastern Bengal Railways?"

And the reply I received from the Government was,

"Government have no information".

Then question No. 129 of the same date was,

"Is it a fact that there is not a single Assamese medical graduate appointed as Medical Officer on any of the State-managed Railways in India? Do the Government propose to take steps in this matter?"

And the reply I received was still more disappointing. It was,

"The Government regret they are not prepared to lay down any fixed proportion for recruitment on a territorial basis".

Sir, I do not know on what basis the appointments are made. I do not know why such treatment is meted out to the Assamese people. I claim that they do not deserve such treatment and that there is no dearth of Assamese youths at the present moment. Unemployment is acute in my part of the country and the difficulty is that they do not get any chance of being employed. The controlling authorities of these railways are inaccessible. They live hundreds and hundreds of miles away from Assam, with their headquarters in Calcutta and Chittagong. Though our people cry themselves hoarse, they cry in the wilderness; their cry never reaches the authorities. The railway stations in Assam are veritable colonies of people from outside the province. Even the Assamese names of places have been changed and distorted beyond recognition. The Assamese villagers who use these railways are subjected to all sorts of indignities and inconveniences. I am sorry to have to refer to all these things, but I feel that it is high time the authorities were apprized of the state of affairs obtaining in Assam, and it is also high time that the authorities had got rid of their apathy and indifference to such a matter of vital importance to the people of Assam. Sir, my friend the Honourable Mr. Hossain Imam referred to the representation of the minority communities in the railways and the Honourable Raja Ghezanfar Ali Khan also referred to the same subject. The Leader of the Opposition also talked about the percentages of the various communities in the services. I wish, Sir, I could also say something on that line. But to my great misfortune, far from the Assamese community having a share in the services, I have to inform this House that neither the Hindus in Assam nor the Muhammadans in Assam have any share in these services whatsoever. This is really a very sad state of affairs.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Will you please conclude your speech now.?

THE HONOURABLE SRIJUT HERAMBA PROSAD BARUA: Then, Sir, I have heard with great concern that the selling of fruits by travelling vendors on running trains on the Assam Bengal Railway and on the Bengal Nagpur Railway is going to be stopped. I think it will cause untold suffering and inconvenience to the orthodox section of the passengers, particularly the lower class passengers. As a matter of fact the sale of fruits and of aerated waters is the only catering done for these people. If the selling of fruit is stopped, Sir, it will be a great hardship on the lower class passengers.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: I am afraid you must stop now. There are several other speakers to follow you.

THE HONOURABLE SRIJUT HERAMBA PROSAD BARUA: Then, Sir, I should like to say a word or two with regard to the opening up of new

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lines. I find such a scheme is before the Railway Administration and if such projects are taken up—I understand that there is every likelihood of such projects being taken up in 1936-37—they will be paying to the railways. I would refer to at least one railway, the Pandu-Gauripur Railway in Assam. I hope the authorities will see that this line is started soon.

With these words, Sir, I resume my seat.

THE HONOURABLE MR. V. C. VELLINGIRI GOUNDER (Madras : Non-Muhammadan) : Mr. President, I should like to say a few words on this occasion. I am not going to enter into big questions like policy, administration, revenues, expenditure, capital, the grievances of third class passengers, the unjustified restoration of cuts in salaries, as these have been very sufficiently and ably dealt with by my Honourable friends already. I shall just confine myself to a few matters based upon my observations and experience. Those matters which I will presently point out are after all small items requiring the railway administrations not to meet considerable expenditure but to show more consideration to afford facilities for the public convenience in the areas the railway lines traverse. The object of railway construction is to afford better facilities of transport and travel and development of the areas for better trade, industry and agriculture.

(At this stage the Honourable the President vacated the Chair which was taken by the Honourable Mr. E. Miller.)

It is admitted that big and important towns are enjoying the full benefits by the service of the railway. My only complaint is that such facilities and benefits are, however small, much lacking in small towns and countrysides and villages where railways traverse. The difficulties are want of proper feeder roads, well kept in order, the roads used for cart traffic across railway lines not being well maintained, with easy gradients and approaches. In some places these passages are too narrow to permit loaded country carts to cross safely between the two rail posts. In places near railway stations where the level crossings have gates, the passage is obstructed unduly long by locking them due mostly to the fact that the gatekeeper is made to do other duties and so he has to lock the gates much earlier than the sight of the train and take a longer time to come back and open the gate. It is a common thing that traffic is held up at times for nearly an hour and that frequently in the day. In places near big stations and junctions it is still worse. In some places the level crossing of village cart tracks being neglected and difficult to cross the railway line is left unused by the people. By this the village roads in many places have to take roundabout courses, much to the added loss, discomfort and hindrance to its legitimate straight pathways. Neglect of the drainage on both sides of railway lines causes damage to crops by waterlogging in agricultural lands. Proper fencing is not provided in some places and this gives cattle access to the tracks and they get entangled and die. Then it becomes an accident and an elaborate enquiry is held causing annoyance to all concerned ; yet proper consideration is not paid for future precaution. Where level crossings lie within the distance of interlocking signals and the gatekeeper is charged with other duties, the obstruction caused to the road traffic is great and irritating. In some places even important trunk roads share the same fate. I do not deny for a moment the necessity of providing safety to railway traffic ; but why should the public be put to these difficulties which could be prevented easily. By giving proper attention the railway, State or Company-managed, will not be put to much expenditure as these are

absolute necessities to be set right at once. To summarize what should be actually done is :

- (1) that gate-keepers should not be given other work ;
- (2) that railway level crossing roads should be properly maintained up to a certain distance on both sides ;
- (3) that where there is no gate, the level crossing road should either be made to go by under passage or overbridge to suit the locality ;
- (4) that sufficient breadth should be provided at those crossings, and
- (5) that feeder roads, proper drainage and fencing should be provided and maintained.

The expenditure on these I submit will not make any great reduction of the railway incomes. As the budget is said to be a deficit one, it can be said that even small expenditure may not be found possible. I will ask Honourable Members, and specially Government Members, to consider whether what I have submitted are not bare necessities which should be provided even though they may cost some money. I will strongly point out that making provision for these things is the legitimate duty of the railways.

Before I conclude, I just want to know some information on certain points. Sir, I notice that recently all the bridges, big and small, on the railway lines all over the railways have been renewed at great cost. No doubt it would be a necessity to make them more strong to bear the heavy locomotive engines and similar traffic ; so also the rails. But what I want to know is in what way the old girders and other iron materials have been disposed of or proposed to be disposed of ? Sir, I notice in several places that these old materials are simply stored and allowed to lie there long. May it not be possible to utilize these materials in such useful ways as for bridges, culverts on roads to be constructed by Local Self-Government Departments in such areas where these materials are easily accessible ? I desire to know also, Sir, whether there will be any difficulty in adopting the method that I have suggested, as I think this will be to the mutual advantage and add more to the public good, especially in these days when the country is more and more in need of better facilities of road communication. I think, therefore, that this is a matter to be considered by Government in this road development scheme. Further, I should like to know what arrangements have been made to provide better facilities for the transport of fruits and vegetables by providing cold storage vans for distant travel in the country ? Further, I should also like to know why a separate account was not shown about the earnings and the working expenditure of the district board railways managed by companies, and why the estimated income of the Podanur-Pollachi Railway has gone down ?

Sir, these are the few observations which I have been able to place before Government so that I may be in a position to know where we are, because in some places a large part of the railway is being owned by the district board in the presidency of Madras. I should also be obliged if the Government would be pleased to give us some information about the proposed extension of the railway from Mysore connecting with Coimbatore. As I pointed out, it will be a convenient straight road from Central India to the south. As we are to some extent interested in this communication, I would also like to be favoured with this information.

THE HONOURABLE MR. Y. RANGANAYAKALU NAIDU (Madras : Non-Muhammadan) : Mr. President, Sir, in the first place I congratulate

[Mr. Y. Ranganayakalu Naidu.]

the Honourable the Commerce Member, Sir Joseph Bhore and the Honourable the Chief Commissioner for Railways for not presenting a deficit budget as in previous years. I learn that the control of the Indian railways is to be handed over to the Statutory Railway Authority. Sir, these railways on which India has spent crores of rupees in the initial stages for providing the railway companies with their minimum profits and on which today, is invested as much as Rs. 802 crores of capital at charge are no longer to be subjected to the direct control and supervision of this Legislature. They are to be placed under the forthcoming "Authority" which is being manufactured in England by Parliament. Sir, this change of ownership and control is nothing short of confiscation, if not robbery, of India's greatest asset and pride. In the place of the Governor General in Council, we are to have the future Governor General alone to boss over our most important means of communication. Instead of pursuing, even to a greater extent than at present, the current timid policy of purchasing Indian stores, the future "Authority" will be unfettered in its discretion to import British stores alone. Instead of our railways trying to provide employment to our workers and middle classes, we are to have an Authority which will make it its sole aim to provide employment to British iron and steel and heavy industries workers and employers. In short, India has to be bled white again and to the bone through our own railways. Sir, I for one, cannot approve of this unholy move of Parliament and I sound a note of warning, with all the emphasis I can command, that if Parliament were to persist in this suicidal policy of depriving India of her control over her own railways, the masses cannot but feel extremely agitated and may some day rise in all their stature to do away with this as well as other iniquities. I therefore urge upon this Government the extreme need for its informing Parliament not to meddle with our control of our railways.

Next in point of importance, I wish to draw your attention to the great need for a suitable and handsome reduction in rates and fares. I am glad, Sir, to notice that the reduction of fares, though very slight and almost unnoticeable, on the North Western Railway has induced more than six millions of additional third class passengers to travel. It is a noticeable and gratifying experience that as a result, the Government has lost only five lakhs of rupees, which means that for every rupee lost, as many as 12 more passengers were benefited. Similar reductions, made on every railway are bound to benefit millions of passengers with very little or no loss to the railways and possibly with a considerable profit after one or two years. What is most important for us to remember in this connection is that through such reductions, business will largely be stimulated, habit of travelling can be created and average mileage of travelling of third class passengers can be appreciably increased.

Similarly reductions are needed in the freights chargeable on agricultural commodities in order to stimulate trade in agricultural produce. It is agriculture which has been hit most during this depression and the agriculturist who, after all, has been the mainstay of our railways has a claim upon the railway authorities. I sincerely hope Government will see their way to stimulate agriculture by lowering the freights upon rice, wheat, oil-seeds, copra, etc.

There are many ways of economizing our expenditure upon railways. To think of lowering the wages and salaries of low paid servants is unfair and uneconomical and so I do not protest against the restoration of the salaries cut. But we must learn how to economize in our stores and depreciation reserves. Sir, I find no justification whatsoever for storing 9½ crores worth

of materials and more for years together. These stores are expected to be used but I am afraid, Sir, the Railway Board seems to be keeping its stores filled with materials more for exhibition and ornamentation than for use. This causes loss of interest and reduction in the value of those materials. Again, Sir, we are setting apart much too large sums towards the depreciation reserve fund. I can understand that if we make provision for actual replacement of wear and tear and current renewals. But our depreciation fund charges are much more. What is even worse, is that all that is needed for new construction is not spent out of this fund but most of it is drawn from the new capital at charge, on which we have to pay interest. Thus during the last ten years, we have had to pay on the average 666 lakhs of rupees as interest alone owing to this bad practice. Sir, I suggest that it is these big items of wastage that ought to be properly managed. And strangely enough it is here that our Government seems to be singularly incompetent to help, God only knows why?

Sir, the time has come when we must recognize that railways are to be run not only at a profit but also to help the poor passengers.

THE HONOURABLE THE CHAIRMAN (the Honourable Mr. E. Miller) : Will the Honourable Member kindly make his remarks as brief as possible? The Honourable Member for Commerce is wanted elsewhere very shortly.

THE HONOURABLE MR. Y. RANGANAYAKALU NAIDU : Coming to the question of the grievances of third class passengers, I am constrained to say that the position is getting every day worse and worse. Though we are told that the number of third class passengers has gone down, thereby reducing the pressure upon the accommodation, it is, Sir, a matter of everyday experience with us, the rural masses, that there happens to be on most of the important trains, particularly of the Madras and Southern Mahratta Railway and South Indian Railway, very serious over crowding in third class compartments. Whether this is due to the fact that though there are in stock a very large number of spare carriages, the railway authorities do not attach them to the trains, even when the engines can pull them, I cannot say. Nor is it a consolation to us to be told that on some trains which are not so much used by people, either because they run during the night time or because they run during the non-busy part of the day, there is no over-crowding. The fact remains that there is a general complaint about a serious state of overcrowding which is complained of by various Local Advisory Committees also.

(At this stage the Honourable the President resumed the Chair.)

Well, Sir, this over crowding not only causes much inconvenience but also many quarrels and rows among the passengers with the result that most people have come to dread travelling in trains with their womenfolk and children and wherever buses are available, they get into them. But in most parts there is no other means of travelling and so millions of people are obliged to put up with the insufferable troubles of third class travelling.

Just imagine, Sir, the plight of a poor Indian who is obliged to travel over a distance of 100 miles. An ordinary fast passenger takes at least 5½ hours to cover the distance. Supposing he wants to use the latrine, as he may naturally do, in such a long interval, he finds the latrine so narrow with such a hopelessly narrower outlet that he cannot use it without spoiling the floor, if it has already not been spoiled. Indeed, invariably these latrines are in such an unbearable condition that passengers cannot but be inhaling the putrid atmosphere prevailing in the carriage.

[Mr. Y. Ranganayakalu Naidu.]

Then at every station, a passenger has to try to negotiate with every fresh passenger in order that he may be allowed to sit or stand where he is. In fact very often there is not even sitting accommodation and people will be getting on each other's nerves to such an extent that no one can hope to get even a nap during the night, which as a result is made very long indeed.

No attempt is made at any of the junctions to clean either the latrine or the carriages and one can only imagine the dirty and insufferable condition of the carriages, thanks to the general habits of our people of spitting on the floor and freely smoking and throwing all rubbish on the floor.

During summer no attempt is made in most of the stations to supply passengers with even drinking water, not to speak of providing fans in the carriages.

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Your time is up now. Will you please conclude your remarks?

THE HONOURABLE MR. Y. RANGANAYAKALU NAIDU: For years together, these grievances have been aired here, without producing apparently any effect upon the railway administration. Is it because the Government thinks that the demands and needs of as many as forty-seven and odd crores of third class passengers are negligible? Sir, no other Government in the world can manage to flout so glaringly and callously the wishes of so many passengers as our Government has been doing. This state of things—

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Will you please conclude your speech?

THE HONOURABLE MR. Y. RANGANAYAKALU NAIDU: This state of things is really scandalous and it is high time that even this autocratic Government begins to do something to relieve the sufferings of these poor but numerous passengers who indeed provide our railways with such a large annual income as Rs. 26 crores 79 lakhs of rupees. Otherwise—

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: I assume the Honourable Member has heard me.

THE HONOURABLE MR. Y. RANGANAYAKALU NAIDU: Only a little more, Sir.

One word more. We are quite prepared to concede the legitimate demands of the railway employees but we have also the right to demand of them willing and courteous service, not only to the higher class passengers, who really are able to look after themselves but also to the third class passengers. I feel sure, Sir, that if only the railway employees—

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Order, order. I am sorry I cannot allow you further time.

(Thereupon the Honourable Mr. Y. Ranganayakalu Naidu resumed his seat.)

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT : I will just call upon the Honourable Sir Joseph Bore to reply. Other Members will follow afterwards.

THE HONOURABLE SIR JOSEPH BORE (Member for Commerce and Railways) : Sir, may I begin by expressing my deep appreciation of what has fallen from Honourable Members in the nature of a personal tribute to myself. This is the last occasion upon

4 P.M.

which I shall have the privilege of addressing this House in connection with the railway budget and I have some satisfaction in feeling that the statement we have been able to present to the Legislature this year justifies that sober optimism which has inspired our anticipations for the last two years. At the time, Sir, there were not wanting critics, both inside and outside this House, who felt that our expectations were based on fancies rather than on facts and who thought that our journey through the valley of depression would be much more prolonged than we had provided for. Happily it is now possible for us to say that our outlook, if it erred at all, erred on the side of conservatism, which makes for safety in these matters. Nevertheless we should not give the impression that we believe that the country is launched on a wave of prosperity and that we can now count on the certainty of a rapid recovery. Honourable Members will realize that we have tempered our natural hopes with that caution which is so essential in the administration of so vast a national property as the railways of India. Personally I feel that we have definitely turned the corner, but the movement towards old-time prosperity will I believe still be delayed. It will not be rapid, at any rate to begin with, and it may even be punctuated by temporary setbacks. I feel, Sir, that the years that we have gone through have taught us a valuable lesson. The caution and restraint which I believe have helped us to weather the storm during the past few years have also taught us lessons which will be of inestimable value, whether we are called upon in the future to face prosperity or adversity. The lessons of economy that we have learnt are not ephemeral, to be cast aside with the advent of better days. They are I hope going to be crystallised in our administrative system and I hope they will be reflected in benefits to the administration from year to year. I hope that they will be reflected in a reduction of our expenditure in the future and an increase in our efficiency. Honourable Members are aware that when depression first fell upon us we were able to make the larger and more obvious economies ourselves. But we felt that further economy in the sense of greater efficiency at less cost was possible and should be pursued. The outcome of that was the Pope Enquiry and the results of that enquiry are now available. Honourable Members will I am sure look to have more specific information as to the results of the job analyses which formed so important a feature of Mr. Pope's recommendations. On the East Indian Railway at a cost of something like Rs. 77,000 we were able to effect savings to the extent of Rs. 7 lakhs. On the Great Indian Peninsula at a cost of Rs. 56,000 the savings amounted to Rs. 4,15,000. On the North Western Railway an expenditure of Rs. 32,000 brought us in a saving of Rs. 12,66,000. On the Eastern Bengal Railway an expenditure of Rs. 63,000 brought us in a saving of Rs. 2,14,000; and on the Bombay, Baroda and Central India an expenditure of Rs. 58,000 brought us in a saving of Rs. 3,52,000. The total for all railways shows that an expenditure of something like Rs. 3,36,000 brought us in a total saving of over Rs. 30½ lakhs. When it is remembered that these savings are annual and recurring in nature, it will be realized how valuable were the lines of enquiry suggested by Mr. Pope and how fruitful and effective was the pursuit after economy followed by the railway administrations. The figures that I have given refer to the year 1933-34, and they do not exhaust the possibilities of this particular method.

[Sir Joseph Bhoré.]

There are clear indications that we shall be able to secure further savings of no small magnitude, and I can assure the House that railway administrations will continue to pursue this method until they are satisfied that nothing further is to be got from it.

I have referred, Sir, to this particular aspect of railway administration in order to emphasize the fact that railways are no longer content to meet adversity with the time-honoured method of raising rates and fares. On the contrary, they have made notable reductions both in rates and fares, as experimental measures, and they have sought a much more effective weapon against adversity, the weapon of securing permanent economies and greater efficiency.

Now my Honourable friend Mr. Chari referred to two points, one regarding the re-employment of retrenched staff and the other the employment of domiciled Indians on the Burma Railways. I can give him the assurance that both these points will be borne in mind and investigated.

Then I was asked by another Honourable Member, "What have you done to try and increase your traffic?" The reply to that, Sir, I gave yesterday in another place and perhaps the House will bear with me if I repeat what I said on that occasion. I pointed out that we were perfectly aware that it was absolutely essential for us to continue to do all we could to improve and better our service to the public. I pointed out, however, that the times were hard and that opportunities for making any very large innovations were unfavourable. We had been faced with enormous deficits. We had to face a deficit of Rs. 10 crores and 23 lakhs in 1932-33; of Rs. 7 crores and 96 lakhs in 1933-34; of Rs. 4 crores and 24 lakhs in 1934-35. And I pointed out that even in the year 1935-36 we hoped to do little more than bridge the yawning gulf that had existed between income and expenditure in the previous years. Nevertheless, though these facts show quite clearly that our policy of caution was amply justified and was in fact the only policy we could have adopted, I said we had taken our courage in both hands and we had made large experiments in the matter of reductions, especially with a view to increase facilities to the largest section of our passenger clientele, namely, third class passengers. I pointed out that we had some time ago reduced third class fares on the North Western Railway system. That innovation, Sir, has brought us in so far a net loss, because, though the reduction in fares has resulted in an increase in the number of passengers, the number of passengers has not been sufficient to make up for the loss due to decreased fares and the increased cost of operating our enhanced traffic. I pointed out that nevertheless we were continuing with that experiment, that we had gone so far as to extend it to other systems—to the Great Indian Peninsula and to the Eastern Bengal Railway systems so far at any rate as the issue of cheap return third class fares was concerned. I pointed out also, Sir, that so far as reductions are concerned, we have to bear in mind the one basic consideration, namely, that the material interests of railways must be safeguarded. After all, railways represent the largest of the State's investments and the solvency of the State is intimately bound up with the solvency of railways. Then, Sir, I went on to say that we had not merely reduced passenger third class fares, we had also very largely reduced freight rates and I pointed out that our reductions in respect of certain commodities had been so large that we had drawn upon ourselves the criticism of rival carriers, namely, the shipping companies. I think the House will realize that we have done a very great deal in order to attract traffic to ourselves by this method of reducing rates and fares on an economic basis.

Then, Sir, as regards the representation of minority communities, a point raised by my Honourable friend Raja Ghazanfar Ali Khan, I will only say that very definite instructions have been issued as regards the percentages of Muslim recruitment. The Chief Commissioner will discuss next month with the Agents who are coming here the machinery required to enforce these orders regarding recruitment ; and I can give the assurance that we shall take such steps as may then be found necessary to see that those orders are actually carried out in practice. I can also give my Honourable friend Mr. Miller the assurance which he asked for that no final conclusions will be taken in regard to the re-classification of the goods tariff without the fullest consultation with the representatives of commerce and trade. He raised the question of the competition of railways with shipping companies. This was a matter, Sir, I dealt with at some length in another place yesterday and I would suggest that he read my remarks when they are in print. Then, Sir, my Honourable friend Mr. Banerjee charged us with lack of imagination. Sir, I am sure we cannot charge him with any lack of imagination and I am sure if my Honourable friend has his wish and comes on to these benches he will then become an authority on bankruptcy !

Sir, in the circumstances in which I am addressing the House today, I think it is natural that I should wish to give to the House a very brief resume of the financial position of the railways on the eve of my handing over the administration of this great national asset to my successor. I wish the story could have been brighter, but I think we have the right to congratulate ourselves that it is not far worse. We have weathered the storm far more successfully than have most railways in the world ; and if we bear unmistakable traces of what we have passed through, nevertheless we are sound, in our essential structure. I would like, Sir, to draw a picture until the end of 1935-36, by the end of which time I hope that this dismal tale of deficits will have come to an end and that the railways will be in a position to carry on from the point at which depression fell upon them and blocked for the moment all plans of further development. At the close of 1935-36 we shall be owing to general revenues by way of contribution a sum of Rs. 26 crores. At that time our depreciation fund will stand at something like Rs. 14 crores. The figure at which it should have stood is Rs. 41½ crores had we not borrowed from it to make up our deficits. Those are our outstanding obligations. Against that must be set the fact that we have never failed during all this period to pay interest in full on all the capital at charge. We have during the past five years paid a sum of not less than Rs. 163 crores in interest, and I am sure Honourable Members will agree with me that having regard to what we have passed through during these five years that is an achievement, Sir, which shows beyond doubt the intrinsic strength of the railway position and the care with which railway resources have been husbanded. It would be idle for me to conceal the fact that it has been a bitter disappointment to me and to all those who are associated with me in the work of administering railways in this country that we should have been forced to adopt a purely defensive policy during the past five years. Despite what Mr. Banerjee said, I must here, Sir, say a word of praise for those who have been such loyal helpers to me during these past three dark years. I can only say that I have the deepest appreciation of what they have done. When trade is booming, when business is brisk, when the revenues of railways are expanding and there is plenty of money for development and expansion, it is a comparatively easy matter, Sir, for railwaymen to be enthusiastic in their work ; but it is during the dark days of depression when development is stopped, when depressing economy is the daily watchword and when heavy deficits hang darkly over

[Sir Joseph Bhore.]

the administration that it calls for a large measure of courage and steadfastness that carry on. I would like, Sir, to acknowledge the manner in which all railwaymen from the highest to the humblest have maintained their morale, have helped us to carry out necessary economies and have gone through the long trial to which they have been subjected without loss of efficiency; and if I here, Sir, single out two names for special mention it is because their personal relations with me have brought them into constant contact with me and enabled me to judge of their work and of their worth. My predecessor just before he left paid a tribute to Sir Guthrie Russell and I would like to echo every word of it. (Applause.) His cheerful courage, which has risen superior to all the trials that we have had to face, his loyalty and his eminent reasonableness have been a tower of strength to me. (Applause.) What Sir Guthrie Russell has been on the side of general railway administration Mr. P. R. Rau has been on the financial side. He has had a most difficult task and he has come through with success, if I may say so. I owe to these two officers a real debt of gratitude and Honourable Members will I hope forgive me if I take this opportunity of acknowledging that debt. Honourable Members will also I hope forgive me if I allow the personal note to bulk somewhat largely in my speech today and if I relegate somewhat to the background the criticisms which have fallen from Honourable Members during the day's debate. After all Honourable Members know that nothing that they say in this House falls upon deaf ears. The records of debates are most carefully scrutinized and examined and nothing which calls for action, if this is possible, is ever left uninvestigated or unexamined. (Applause.) It is therefore, Sir, the less important for me to take up all the points which have been made in today's debate.

I may have, Sir, another occasion for addressing this House before I leave and before the Indian Legislature becomes to me a memory of past days. In case, however, I do not, I should like to take this opportunity, Sir, with your permission, of expressing my deep and warm appreciation of the consideration and courtesy I have always received from you and from Honourable Members in this House. I cannot forget that for a brief space I was a Member of this House and I think during one session I discharged the onerous duties which have for so long and so worthily been fulfilled by my Honourable colleague who I am sorry to see is not here today. Honourable Members will realize that it is a little difficult for me to say all I would to the House before I go. I have always regarded them as personal friends and not as possible political opponents. I trust I have borne their mild castigation with due fortitude and I have never ceased, Sir, to appreciate the courteous hearing I have always been certain of receiving when I have addressed this House. I venture to express the hope that when my Honourable friend, Sir Guthrie Russell, next year presents his statement to this House it will not be clouded by the shadow of deficits which have haunted its predecessors for so many years and that it will foreshadow an era of new prosperity to India and its railways. (Applause.)

THE HONOURABLE THE PRESIDENT: Before I adjourn the House I desire wholeheartedly to associate myself with the tribute which has fallen from Honourable Members for our esteemed friend, Sir Joseph Bhore. This House has been in contact with him for a period of nearly five years. For a brief period he was the Leader of this House and then we discovered his great talents, his sobriety of judgment and his capacity for work. When three years ago as the first Indian he was put in charge of one of the most important departments of the Government of India, the Commerce and

Railways, we all expected that as the first Indian he would distinguish himself in that office and bring credit to Indians. Our expectation has been more than fulfilled. During the past three years during which he has held that office, he has served the Government with great distinction and his achievements are of no small order and well known to you all. He has battled during the last three years under most difficult circumstances, to use his own words, against shrinking traffic and dwindling profits. It was his capacity, his courage and his sound judgment, together with the valued assistance which two of his colleagues, Sir Guthrie Russell and Mr. Rau, rendered, which have helped to put the finances of the railways on a sound basis. I can only say on your behalf that we shall miss him and his occasional visits to this House very much. However, we hope that in his retirement he will have all possible happiness. I expect that he is not going to remain unoccupied after his retirement and we all wish him all possible manner of happiness and prosperity. (Applause.)

The Council then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Monday, the 25th February, 1935.