

18th February 1937

**THE
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY DEBATES**

(Official Report)

Volume I, 1937

(25th January to 19th February, 1937)

**FIFTH SESSION
OF THE
FIFTH LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,
1937**



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M89LAD

Legislative Assembly.

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MR. M. GHILASUDDIN, M.L.A.

MR. MATHURADAS VISSANJI, M.L.A.

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Thursday, 18th February 1937.

The Assembly met in the Assembly Chamber of the Council House at Eleven of the Clock, Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim) in the Chair.

STATEMENTS LAID ON THE TABLE.

Information promised in reply to starred questions Nos. 1322, and 1323 asked by Seth Haji Abdoola Haroon on the 15th October, 1936.

EXAMINATION FOR RECRUITMENT OF CLERKS IN THE DELHI GENERAL POST OFFICE.

Question No. 1322.—(a) One.

(b) No.

(c) The Postmaster was given suitable instructions for future guidance.

EXAMINATION FOR RECRUITMENT OF CLERKS IN THE DELHI GENERAL POST OFFICE.

Question No. 1323.—(a) Yes, but the paper was copied by a single candidate.

(b) Yes.

(c) (i) Mr. Jagdish Ram.

(ii) Mr. Balbir Singh.

(iii) Mr. Shanti Prakash Dusajh. It is, however, not a fact that the Postmaster Delhi admitted the candidate to the examination.

(d) Yes, but the candidate was not turned out of the examination hall; he was not admitted to the examination at all.

(e) No.

(f) No. The Postmaster's orderly peon was induced by Mr. Balbir Singh, the candidate who copied the paper, to show him the book from which the English piece for dictation was to be set, and both confessed their guilt in writing during the enquiry held into the matter.

(g) Government see no need for any independent investigation. The real offenders, having confessed their guilt, have already been suitably dealt with and in view of the facts before them, Government do not consider that any further enquiry is called for.

Information promised in reply to part (a) of Dr. Ziauddin Ahmad's starred questions Nos. 228 and 232 on the 25th January, 1937.

COLLISION AT BARHAN STATION ON THE EAST INDIAN RAILWAY.

Question No. 228.—(a) One Station Master, two Assistant Station Masters six pointsmen, two porters, one waterman, one sweeper.

The Station Master and the two Assistant Station Masters are qualified in the duties of an Assistant Station Master; two of them have also passed in block working and one in goods accounts.

The six pointsmen have all passed in the duties of a pointsman. The remainder do not need any special qualification for their work.

PUTTING OF LUGGAGE VANS BEHIND PASSENGER CARRIAGES IN PARCEL EXPRESS.

Question No. 232.—(a) Yes, as with the normal layout of yards at stations, it is more convenient for luggage vans to be attached or detached, as may be required, from the rear than from the front. Attachment of luggage vans in the rear also enables shunting to be performed while the engine is watering at stations, and further facilitates the handling of parcels and luggage by the guard who travels in the rear brakevan.

Information promised in reply to Mr. Lalchand Navalrai's starred question No. 312 on the 26th January, 1937.

CATERING IN REFRESHMENT ROOMS AND DINING CARS ON THE NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY.

(a) to (d). The Agent, North Western Railway, states that the present contractors began their work on the North Western Railway over 14 years' ago and that no record is now available from which the information asked for in parts (b), (c) and (d) of the question could be given. No applications have been called for since then.

(e) Messrs. Spencer and Company, which is a European firm. The contract has not been given for any fixed period, but is terminable on six months' notice given by either party. In the opinion of the North Western Railway Administration, the firm was considered to be the most reliable and best equipped to give the public a good service.

Information promised in reply to starred question No. 358, asked by Qazi Muhammad Ahmad Kazmi on the 3rd February, 1937.

PROVISION OF LATRINE FITTED COACHES ON NIGHT TRAINS ON THE SHAHDARA SAHARANPUR LIGHT RAILWAY.

The percentage of lower class carriages fitted with latrines on night trains on the Shahdara (Delhi) Saharanpur Light Railway has been increased from 30 to 80.

THE RAILWAY BUDGET—GENERAL DISCUSSION.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Before the general discussion of the railway budget begins, I have to fix a time limit for the speeches. The usual practice has been to fix a quarter of an hour for each speech, but the discretion is left to the Chair to relax that rule in special cases. If that is the desire of the House, we shall go on according to the usual practice, and it will depend on the number of speakers whether the time limit will be strictly enforced today or not. I have no doubt every speaker will have ample opportunity to express his views on the budget. I may also remind the House that, in the discussion of the general budget, the speeches will have to deal with the budget as a whole and any question of principle that is involved in it. Now, there will be the general discussion of the budget.

Sir Muhammad Yakub (Rohilkund and Kumaon Divisions: Muhammadan Rural): Mr. President, although the time limit for the general discussion of the budget is usually 15 minutes, you will kindly take into consideration the fact that there are very few Members in the House who are expected to take part in the debate.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): I have suggested that.

Sir Muhammad Yakub: Taking this fact into consideration, I hope you will give a little more time to any speaker who wants to speak for more than 15 minutes.

Lieut Colonel Sir Henry Gidney (Nominated Non-Official): Sir, as I listened to the speech of the Honourable Member—it seemed colourless from the point of view of detailed facts and figures—I could see that his tongue was, in a large measure, tied, as are ours, waiting for the judgment and advice of the Wedgwood Committee Report. The pity of it is that this Report will not be out, I hear, till about April—too late—and for this reason one hesitates to offer any criticisms or advice on problems on which the Wedgwood Committee are sure to report.

Before I deal with the chief topic of my speech, I desire to congratulate the Honourable Member on the able way in which he has been able to balance his budget for the year under review and to show a small surplus. At the same time, one cannot withhold a large measure of credit to his Financial wizard, Sir Raghavendra Rau, for the clever way in which he has, and intends doing, by a complete change in the system of allocation, re-adjusted his various liabilities. Anyhow, Sir, it is very pleasing to this House, as no doubt it must be to the Railway Board, to feel that the Railway administration in India has, at long last, turned the corner of their troubles. But one is seriously tempted to ask, since the Honourable Member, with his financial jugglery, has been able to turn a deficit into a credit budget, what need was there for bringing out the Wedgwood Committee? Surely, if the Railway Board has been able, after many years of failure, to, at least, balance its budget, there was no need for specialistic advice, such as the Wedgwood Committee. I take it, the Railway Board claims to possess experts in charge of its various departments. It certainly has an expert Financial Commissioner, and other Members of the Board are reckoned as specialists; but, evidently, they are only superficialists, otherwise why the need to bring out, at such great cost, the Wedgwood Committee? I have nothing to say against the personnel of this Committee, who, one and all, are well recognised railway experts and whose report this House is anxiously and with great confidence awaiting, but does the Railway Board, after all these years, consider itself so incompetent as to need another Committee to show them how to manage the railways in India?

I now come to the chief topic of my speech. I feel, Sir, that no apology is needed from me for referring again to the precarious present and future position of the Anglo-Indian community employed on railways. This House will remember the speeches I delivered last year on this subject, on the 26th February and the 18th March, 1936, as also the Honourable Member's reply to my speech of the 18th March. In those speeches, I referred in great detail to the terrible re-action the new scales of pay were having on Anglo-Indian railway employees, and, despite what the Honourable Member said that officials had suffered more than subordinates under these scales of pay, I proved beyond doubt that it was the Anglo-Indian community alone, of all communities employed on railways, who had suffered so much by these new scales and which amounted to an all round reduction of from 50 to 60 per cent. in initial salaries

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and 40 to 60 per cent. in the maximum salaries—and I again challenge official contradiction that the Anglo-Indian community is the hardest hit by these new scales of pay. And, yet, it is from this community alone that Government demand compulsory enlistment in the Auxiliary Force as a pre-requisite to railway employment, and it is to this community that Government always look for loyalty and help when they are in trouble as has recently been evidenced in the Bengal Nagpur Railway strike which the Anglo-Indian community helped to stop, and certainly saved the situation. Sir, the solution of the economic problem of the Anglo-Indian community has baffled me ever since I entered this Honourable Assembly, more so, since the acceptance by the Government of India of its policy of “no discrimination” and “standardization of wages” on Railways and Posts and Telegraphs. This House is aware of the lonely furrow I have for years ploughed on the floor of this Honourable House, and, I am sure, every one has seen how each year has found Anglo-Indian railway employees being deprived of what was once, not long ago, their well earned privileged position on railways. The wake of Indianisation was threatened with ex-Anglo-Indianisation till the Government Despatch of September, 1928, in which the community was advised to rely for its future economic protection on the acceptance of the position of “Statutory Indians” as defined in the Indian Councils Act, 1870—Victoria XXXIII, Chapter III. Then came the Government of India, Home Department, Resolution of 4th July, 1934, which was the outcome of the community’s efforts at the three Round Table Conferences and the Joint Parliamentary Committee and we were lulled into a sense of “pseudo” security, but I felt that the revised scales of pay which the Railway Board introduced in the latter part of 1934 would eventually defeat the very purpose underlying and stressed in this Resolution, namely, the avoidance of the dislocation of the economic structure of the community which had become welded into these two services in particular. It was for this reason, Sir, and for this reason alone that I, as leader of the Anglo-Indian community, felt it imperative to make an eleventh hour effort and went to England in 1935 to secure statutory safeguards, in order to protect the community from “annihilation”. In all my endeavours, I had always in mind the Government of India Despatch on “Proposals for Indian Constitutional Reform” of September, 1930, to the Secretary of State for India, in which the Government of India categorically and unreservedly placed the responsibility for the protection of the future interests of the Anglo-Indian community employed on railway services on the British Parliament. Let me quote *verbatim* from this despatch. Clause 192, pages 168 and 169, state:

“192. Purposes for which Parliament must retain control.

The purposes in which Parliament must, we think, continue to be interested so far as the railways are concerned fall under the heads of Defence, Finance, the Services and the Anglo-Indian community.

The Anglo-Indian community.

The Anglo-Indian community has in the past rendered very important services to the railways and still holds a large number of posts in particular branches of railway work. The economic life of the community is indeed to a large extent dependent on the opportunities of employment which the railways offer, and its members are gravely apprehensive of what may occur, if and when any change

takes place in the present system of administration and control. In view of the history of the community, a special obligation, we think, rests upon Parliament, before relaxing its own control, to ensure, as far as may be practicable, that the interests of the Anglo-Indian community are protected."

I desire to draw the Honourable Member's special attention to this admission of inability on the part of the Government of India any longer to protect the community and its surrender of this power to the Houses of Parliament. Now, what did this mean? It clearly meant that the Government of India, to whom I am deeply grateful, had tried their utmost to protect the community, but found that political pressure had become so strong as to render them impotent to do so any longer, and, in the year 1930, on the testimony of our services on railways given us by the Simon Commission, it frankly admitted its inability to protect the community, and, in doing so, admitted our past services and the vital necessity of having us employed on railways. It also asked the British Parliament to take upon itself the responsibility of protecting the future of the Anglo-Indian community on railways. Sir, if ever there was a clear abdication of power and authority—and the Railway Board must be associated with this—if ever there was a clear admission of our value as railway servants and if ever there was a clear demand on Parliament to do what the Government of India found themselves unable to do in the year 1930, this Despatch more than expresses and demonstrates. The three Round Table Conferences and the Joint Parliamentary Committee had ever before them the future of the Anglo-Indian community in the Central Services of the Government of India. One has only to read the recommendations of the Services Sub-Committee of the First Round Table Conference and the Report of the Joint Parliamentary Committee to realise the fact that both Houses of Parliament gave very close and considered attention to our economic problem. The outcome of this was that the Government of India issued its Resolution of the 4th July, 1934, giving to the Anglo-Indian community certain reserved percentage on Railways, Posts and Telegraphs and Customs. During my visit to London in 1935, the relative amendments to the Government of India Act, 1935, which were moved and accepted, as a result of my appeal to both Houses of Parliament, were, therefore, acts done by Parliament in the direct fulfilment and discharge of the very responsibility which the Government of India themselves felt compelled, in this Despatch, to place on the shoulders of Parliament. These amendments are to be found in section 242 (2) and (3) of the Government of India Act, 1935. They face one as undeniable evidence of the wishes, the expression, the intentions, and indeed, the order of the Houses of Parliament, and is a correct interpretation of the intention of Parliament which was asked from them by the Government of India as being necessary for the protection of the economic problem of the Anglo-Indian community, especially those employed on railways; and, as such, I beg respectfully to submit that no Government that had surrendered its power by appealing to Parliament as the Government of India so definitely did in their Despatch of November, 1930, and the Government of India, after the passage of the Government of India Act of 1935 cannot refuse to have "due regard" to that section of the Act, without exposing themselves to a serious dereliction of duty. I repeat, this obligation can,

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under no circumstances, be ignored, overlooked, or evaded by the Government of India or by any Honourable Member as is being done today. Sir, this is the tragic position in which the community finds itself placed today and which it is asked to face in its future, i.e., to be statutorily protected and yet given starvation wages which cannot keep body and soul together much less maintain a physical fitness as required for the Auxiliary Force.

Sir, nineteen months have elapsed since the Government of India Act was passed, and the community is not only distressed, but surprised to find that, today, it is where it was prior to the incorporation of the said amendments in the Act of Parliament. The provisions made in the Act appear to have made no difference whatever as far as the community is concerned. All that we have before us today are the statements made by the Honourable Member for Commerce and Railways on the floor of the Legislative Assembly on the 26th February and 18th March, 1936. The trend of these statements was to the effect that, at least in the opinion of this particular Member of the Governor General's Council, though section 242 is of statutory value and must be obeyed, the relative section of the Government of India Act, 1935, did not require of the Government of India to give any special consideration to the Anglo-Indian community, as apart from the other communities of India, particularly in the matter of "remuneration".

The Honourable Member has admitted on the floor of this House that the Government of India are today giving effect to certain parts of section 242, in particular the "specific appointments" and "the numerical percentages" held by the community in these specific appointments. I repeat he has admitted that this is being operated today and I thank him very much for doing so. He has not waited for the new Statutory Railway Board to put this part of section 242 into operation. I ask him if he considered it justifiable, necessary and in compliance with section 242 to operate these parts of the section and has exhibited "due regard" in this respect, why is it that he flounders in the sea of difficulty and refuses to give equal regard, as far as remunerations of these specific posts are concerned? If the words of the section—and I particularly refer to the word "remuneration" of the posts to which the Anglo-Indian community is to be recruited—were not intended to be effective and to be put into operation for the material benefit of the community, which alone is mentioned in this manner in the Act of Parliament, I ask in the name of justice and in the name of common sense, what was the purpose of the Houses of Parliament unanimously passing these amendments and entering them in the Statute-Book of the Government of India Act, 1935? Surely it stands to reason and it must be obvious to the Honourable Member that these sections were passed, and special mention was made of the Anglo-Indian community alone of all the other communities in India (all of whom are recruited to these services) for a specific and exclusively significant purpose? Does the Honourable Member suggest that it was meant to be only ornamental or of academic importance to the Anglo-Indian community, or a pious expression of opinion of Parliament to be ignored or interpreted at the will and pleasure of any Honourable Member? If this were so, I venture to state on the floor of this House that it belies the vehement and enthusiastic denial of Lord Eustace Percy who, speaking on behalf of the British Government in the House of Commons on the 30th July, in reply to Lord Wolmer's

request for an official opinion on the value of section 242 and which Sir Austin Chamberlain said had been loosely described in the House of Lords (Lord Zetland) as being of "declaratory value" only, said:

"To say that all that has no statutory effect and that it is purely a facade would be absurd."

It must, therefore, be quite clear that some definite action was and is, today, definitely demanded of the Government of India in regard, not only to the specific appointments and numerical percentages which have been put into operation, but also in due regard to the remuneration of all the posts to which Anglo-Indians are recruited under paragraph 9 (1) and (2) of the Government of India Home Department Resolution of 4th July, 1934, otherwise this Home Department Resolution is of no material value whatever to the Anglo-Indian community. Sir, in making this statement I shall be prepared to accept the view that it is not the intention of the words "due regard to the remuneration of the posts" to give to Anglo-Indians *exactly the same salaries as they were receiving years ago*; but I do contend that some reasonable advancement, or to use the words of section 242, "due regard" and not "disregard" is clearly indicated—indeed demanded on the revised scales of pay. It certainly did not mean that we should be starved and that our remuneration should be 50 to 60 per cent. less than the old scales. Sir, the Honourable Member, in his reply to my speech on the 18th March, 1936, said that he was "not willing to accept the proposition that the pay of members of any particular community should be regulated by reference to what they choose to regard as their standard of living", though this is being practised today in almost every Department of the Government of India. That a great difference does exist between the standards of living of an Anglo-Indian subordinate and an Indian subordinate, I am sure, not even the Honourable Member would deny, and yet, he threw out my demand for "due regard" being paid to the remuneration of the posts which are held by the community on railways. In other words, as regards "remuneration" he refused to pay any regard to the Statutory order implicit in section 242 of the Government of India Act and which section would otherwise never have found a place in the Act. The Honourable Member further said that "the obligation contained in section 242 is being fully recognised in general terms even now", but he refuses to operate that part of the section which refers to remuneration. He also stated in his interpretation of this section that it did not imply, to use his own words:

"That is in deciding and fixing these percentages they might consider what is the pay of these posts, not that they can play about with the remuneration for such posts and say 'for them the pay shall be a certain amount and for others the pay shall be a different one'."

Sir, this is not only a complete evasion of my demand, but a direct negation of section 242. This cannot remain as such, for the Government of India cannot play about with any section in an Act, passed by the Houses of Parliament, nor can any Honourable Member of Government, in placing his own interpretation, operate a part and not the whole of section 242 as is being done today. The Honourable Member, however, admitted that to ask Anglo-Indians to enter the Loco and Traffic services at the bottom of new scales of pay was a distinct hardship and would, in time, seriously affect recruitment of not only Anglo-Indians, but the better class Indians, and speaking personally, he felt that it might, to some extent, meet this difficulty by direct recruitment of Anglo-Indians and Europeans

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to certain intermediate grades, but subject to the proviso that a similar concession be given to all communities, a concession which will be made on exactly the same principles on which recruitment is made to the lowest grades and he added :

"I think—(again without committing Government to it)—that it is very probable that that is the meaning of the Federal Authority being asked to pay 'due regard' to the remuneration of the posts to which recruitment is being made and for which percentages are being reserved",

and, in offering this solution to me, said : he hoped that I would recognise—to use his own words :

"There was no desire on the part of the Government to evade any of the obligations which are set forth in sub-section 2, section 242, of the Government of India Act."

Sir, if this is the solatium offered to the community as the Honourable Member's interpretation of section 242 in regard to "remuneration", I respectfully refuse to accept it. It is no solatium at all. It is a clear evasion of a crystal clear duty that the Honourable Member must carry out, even though it may be against his principles or conviction. This specific section of the statute Act cannot be evaded, because the remaining words "shall have due regard" implies an injunction to him and the Government of India to pay attention to whatever follows. The Honourable Member then concluded by saying that he agreed with me in my interpretation of the expression as to be found in section 242—"shall have due regard to" and added "the Federal Railway Authority must have due regard to these matters" and again—to use his own words he said :

"I think I have made the position clear, although the question is under examination even with regard to initial scales of pay."

Sir, the Honourable Member did not make the position clear to me, in fact, the situation is more cloudy today after a year's waiting for some relief than it was on the day when the Honourable Member made his speech. I am aware, Sir, that this matter is under the examination of the Government of India. I am also aware that various Departments have been called upon for their opinion, and I have no doubt that the Honourable Member has submitted his own opinion on this matter. I am not in the secrets of the Government, and so I am not aware of what the Honourable Member has said, but I have no reason to think that he has changed his mind since the 18th of March. Now, Sir, I respectfully call upon the Honourable Member to be good enough to state on the floor of this House what, if any, decision he has arrived at on this matter and whether or not he is prepared to operate, in its entirety, section 242 with due regard to the "remuneration" of posts held by the Anglo-Indian community in the railway services? The Honourable Member can, of course, decline to give me this information; but if he does, the community on the railways will then know exactly where they stand and will be able to take whatever action they think necessary for their future relation with the railway services. Let me, however, ask the Honourable Member to remember that, in his policy of "no discrimination" and "standardization of wages on railways", he is offering not only the Anglo-Indian community, but all other communities employed on railway services, a common grievance which is bound, sooner or later, to result in a common action and I need hardly stress what this may mean to the Railway administration in India.

It may be said, that section 242 is faulty in wording and construction. Even admitting this, I ask, can the Honourable Member deny on the floor of this House that, with all its faults, it is a Statutory direction and it clearly enjoins the Government of India that due regard must be paid to our past associations on the Railways and Posts and Telegraphs in specific connection (among other matters) with our "remuneration"? Moreover, none will deny that this section must have some specific value and purport attached to it, be it declaratory, mandatory or Statutory, otherwise why did the Houses of Parliament pass it and incorporate it in the Government of India Act, 1935, which none can deny is a Statutory enactment which the Government of India cannot evade or refuse to operate correctly. And, yet, Sir, this is exactly what one is witnessing today. A Member of the Governor General's Council, because he does not agree with the principle underlying section 242, puts his own interpretation to it and offers direct recruitment in intermediate grades as a Sop to Cerberus, instead of giving "due regard" to the remunerations of the posts the community occupies in railways. He also, though he admits it has a Statutory value, refuses to place or operate any value, declaratory, statutory, or mandatory, on this section as far as our remuneration is concerned, and, therefore, contravenes this section of the Act. I submit, Sir, that this behest of the British Parliament cannot be ignored on any ground whatever, except by the annulment of the relative section of the Government of India Act, 1935, and this the Government of India are powerless to do.

Sir, this is my complaint against the Government of India. My request to the Honourable Member, therefore, is to let me know on the floor of this House after a year's consideration, the views he holds on the matter today and what he intends doing in response to my demand.

I have, in my previous representations, referred to some of the grounds put forward by the Honourable Member in charge of Commerce and Railways in support of his contention, and I have categorically refuted them with counter arguments. It is, therefore, unnecessary for me again to refer to them in detail. The first of these was the policy of "no discrimination" to which the Government of India are said to be committed. I have quoted many instances including our conscription into the Auxiliary Force, where discrimination has been shown even by the existing Government. Foremost among such instances is the high grants-in-aid allowed by Provincial Governments and the Government of India for the education of the Anglo-Indian community. In any event, it must be realised—indeed it cannot be denied, nor ignored—that a higher authority, the British Parliament, by a section in the Government of India Act, having pledged itself to a policy of discrimination in favour of the Anglo-Indian community, this plea of the Government of India of refusal on the ground of no discrimination and standardisation of wages cannot hold water any longer.

The second of the objections raised is that there has been no fall in Anglo-Indian recruitment even on the revised scales of pay. I have not got statistics to satisfy myself in this regard, but I would again point out that this is entirely due to the undeniable fact that the parents of the young recruits are, in the majority of cases, today, in receipt of the old higher scales of pay and are financially in a position to supplement the meagre incomes of their sons and so enable them to exist. Within 10 or 15 years time, the very opposite position will obtain, i.e., 90 per cent. of parents will, themselves, be on the new starvation scales of wages and be quite unable to maintain their sons, and we will be forcibly drawn out of railway

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service. Moreover, I submit the problem of unemployment among the educated youth of India (including Anglo-Indians) is, today, so acute that even if Government offered these appointments on a lower salary than they are offering today, say at Rs. 20, instead of at Rs. 90, there may be a sufficient supply of recruits to meet the demand. The suggestion, therefore, that the fixation of the initial pay of these posts must be regulated by the principle of supply and demand is monstrously inhuman, because it amounts to trafficking at cheap market rates on the poverty of the youth of India. Even so, I am informed that, although the North Western Railway advertised in December, 1935, for 50 posts of Station Masters and 30 Commercial Group students, of which three of the former and one of the latter were definitely reserved for Anglo-Indians, no candidates of the community offered for recruitment. Again, young men of the Anglo-Indian community, who, today, join these appointments, frequently resign them shortly afterwards. In the Allahabad Division of the East Indian Railway, I believe, out of the eleven boys who were recently recruited as firemen, ten either resigned or left their appointments soon afterwards, and I have no doubt there are many such instances in other parts of India. In short, history is repeating itself, and the community is being driven out of such service.

A similar position, I am informed, obtains particularly in the Bombay and Bengal Circles of the Posts and Telegraphs Departments, as far as the Anglo-Indian recruitment to the various branches of this Department is concerned.

To any one who is familiar with the conditions of living of the Anglo-Indian community in India, it must be apparent that the revised scales of pay are, in truth, starvation wages for its members. Even a body of people (the British Parliament) seven thousand miles away realised this and took the unique and unprecedented step of statutorily protecting the economic structure—in particular the remuneration of the Anglo-Indian community by specially and significantly referring to the form which such protection should take. My greatest surprise is that a Government which is on the spot, and with its full knowledge of our difficulties, should be so recalcitrant in giving effect to the intentions of Parliament, so clearly expressed in section 242 (2) and (3) of the Government of India Act, 1935.

In any case, I would point out that, if there is any doubt regarding the intention of any section of the Government of India Act, 1935, none but the Houses of Parliament can clarify such doubt. I feel I owe it to my community personally to obtain an authoritative declaration on this matter from the British Parliament, but, before doing so, I shall be grateful for a clear statement from the Honourable Member.

In conclusion, I am constrained to state that, if an Act of Parliament can be so easily misinterpreted by the Government of India, as at present constituted, I tremble to think of the future of the community or of any minority community, when a further instalment of responsibility, as envisaged in the Government of India Act, 1935, is placed in the hands of Federal Ministers and Legislatures.

Sir, having dealt with my chief topic, I shall now conclude with a few general observations, and resume my seat.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The Honourable Member has already spoken for half an hour.

Lieut.-Colonel Sir Henry Gidney: I will not say much. If the Government of India want honestly to economise and obtain money, they can do it without depriving railway subordinates of adequate wages and privileges. This House knows that the Railway Board has recently been withdrawing the privileges and reducing the pay of their subordinates. I again warn the Honourable Member in his desire to balance the budget to cry a halt in his headlong rush for economy at all costs at the expense of the railway subordinates. Let me tell him he has gone too far already. Let me advise him, in all humility, to retrace his steps, otherwise he will be faced with an unified opposition of such magnitude that the Government of India and the Railway Board will be impotent to combat it.

When I heard the Honourable Member refer to his experiment of the air conditioning of five first class carriages at a cost of 2½ lakhs, my soul rebelled within itself to think that here we have a Department that is squandering money on luxuries, while thousands of its staff are hungering for a proper meal. Does he know—and I say it on the floor of the House that many Anglo-Indian "Cleaners" on small pittances of Rs. 10, Rs. 12 or Rs. 15 on the railways in Calcutta have to depend on the public soup kitchens for their bread and butter? Let us have in place of this financial extravagance more of the human touch, without which no railway can properly function and prosper. Let us see more evidence on the part of the administration to give a decent wage for a decent day's work and not waste their money in cooling their first class passengers. There are many other ways in which honest economy can be effected. Let me mention a few in conclusion. Come to some practical agreement with the various motor services that are competing with railways; abolish your Divisional system which has been a source of enormous and useless expenditure on the part of the Railway Board and return to the District system which is working so successfully and at less cost in most Company-managed Railways; stop recruitment of your officials from England and promote your worthy subordinates, as obtains in all English railways, so that they can rise to the highest official appointment on Indian railways; make use of your Lower Gazetted Officers and promote them freely into the Junior Scale; have the courage to acknowledge that the separation of audit from accounts has been a failure and an expensive experiment. Instead of depriving your subordinates of their hard earned privileges, apply this deprivation more to your officials who, with their higher salaries, can more easily afford to pay for these privileges; reduce the number of saloons for officials and the number of officers' Rest Houses. Exercise a more careful control on all new constructions and do not allow so much money to fall into the hands of contractors. Make a start to manufacture your own locomotives and wagons in this country and so give relief to the thousands who are, today, drowning in the sea of unemployment owing to retrenchment on railways; improve the time tables of your trains so as to secure connections at junctions, utilise the large amount of surplus land which railways possess today and which is lying fallow; amalgamate your railways. The British Railway Act of 1921 amalgamated 27 constituent companies and 91 subsidiary companies into four groups. We, in India, should do the same and enter into a pact with the motor services and purchase most of the stores through the Stores Department of the Government of India. To effect your economies at the expense of your subordinates is dishonest economy and let me warn the Honourable Member that, unless this is stopped, he is riding for a serious fall. Railway employees of all communities are, today, up in arms against this deprivation of privileges

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which, by their long usage, are rightly claimed by them as "vested interests". Let me quote a few: increase in house rent, reduction in passes, reduction in leave rules, alteration of overtime, deprivation of allowances, juggling with new scales of pay on employees who were in railway employ before 1931, reduction in educational grants, etc. These are but a few instances which are rendering employment on railways a drudgery. Today the cry of all railway communities enlisted on the new scales of pay is "Give us this day our daily bread"; but the railways are giving us stones instead, and these subordinates stand today in a worse position than criminals in jail: the criminal has a few hours well regulated labour extracted from him, but he has clean habitation, clean clothes and good and sufficient food. What is given to the railway subordinates on the new scales? Stones. Does the Railway Board call this the human touch? It is not the human touch: it is the inhuman touch. It is not "regard" it is utter "disregard".

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The Chair must ask the Honourable Member to conclude his speech. He has much exceeded his time limit.

Sir Muhammad Yakub: Mr. President, I will not start by following the example set by my Honourable friend, the gallant Colonel, Sir Henry Gidney. I will not utilise this opportunity for bemoaning the lot of the Muslim youth and trying to bring forward before the House a discussion on the representation of different communities in the services. Not because my community has got no grievances in this respect, not because the Muslim youth is not in need of railway service more than any member of the community to which my friend, the gallant Colonel belongs; but because I think that, during the last five or six years, we, in this House, have done all that was possible to be obtained in order to safeguard the interests of the minority communities. Parliament have issued instructions in this direction and the Government of India have also issued their distinct communiqués and instructions in order to regulate the proportion of the different minority communities; and I think we should now allow Government a little time to act upon these rules which have been issued a year ago. Let us wait and see what is the result of these instructions, and then there will be time to criticise, if any criticism is required, on the action of the Government in this respect.

Then, again, new reforms are now coming in the country and the power will soon be passing from the hands of the British bureaucrat into the hands of the people of our own country; and it behoves us that we should start with a clean slate without having any distrust or misgivings as regards the people of our own country. Let us see how the power, which is going to be vested in the people of our country, is to be utilised, and let us see how the majority community does justice to the minority communities, and then we will see what can be done.

The railway administration in India touches the bulk of the population of the country. India is a vast country where it takes five or six days, by the fastest train, to travel from one end of the country to the other, and, therefore, the interest which is shown by the people of the country in railway affairs is not to be wondered at.

Sir, the budget which the Honourable the Railway Member placed before the House, the other day, shows that there has been improvement in the income throughout the year. During the last two years, since Sir Muhammad Zafrullah Khan took over the portfolio of the Railways, there has been a steady increase in the income of the Railways, and, in addition, he has been able to effect several other improvements in the railway system. Sir, the Honourable Sir Muhammad Zafrullah Khan is not an expert railway man, nor does he even belong to the cadre of the I. C. S. which is considered to be the master of all trades and all branches of the administration in this country. He came directly from public life, and, during the two years he has held the portfolio of Commerce and Railways, he has fully justified his appointment, and has proved, beyond all doubt, in what way a man who comes directly from public life can handle even a difficult portfolio with success and to the advantage to the country. Sir, I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate him on his achievement, and also the members of his staff, particularly his Financial Commissioner, Sir Raghavendra Rao, and here I also join others in offering the Financial Commissioner for Railways my congratulations on the distinction which has been conferred on him recently.

But, Sir, the railway budget discloses that the income of the railways is not yet sufficient to make full contribution to the general budget of the country, and, if, within the next two or three years, the Railways are unable to pay the full quota of their contribution to the general budget of India, I think a very serious position will be reached. Today India stands more in need of financial improvement and stability than it did at any other time. We know that democracy itself is a very costly machinery, and with the reforms that will soon be coming in the Centre as well, I think the expenditure of the Government of India will increase, for which provision will have to be made in the budget of the Government of India. So far as taxation is concerned, we know very well that the last straw has been laid on the camel's back, and there is no more room for further taxation. Therefore, the finances of the Government of India can only be improved by devising means to improve the income of the railways, trade and commerce of the country. The railway budget is, therefore, of very great importance to the House, and we have got to scrutinise each and every item to find out where extravagance is practised, or where there is room for economy or for retrenchment.

An objectionable feature of the railway budget has, for a long time, been the high rate of the depreciation fund. Attention has several times been drawn to this point that the rate fixed for the apportionment of the depreciation fund is very high. I am glad that the Honourable the Railway Member has decided to write-off the so-called debt from the depreciation fund, and I hope that the scale or rate of allocating the depreciation fund will also be reviewed and re-examined, and the amount of the depreciation fund will be fixed at a reasonably low rate.

Sir, the process of retrenchment which was started several years ago still continues, and many low paid members of the Indian staff are axed every year, even at the expense of efficiency, but the real vulnerable points have not been touched, and we find that huge wastage on overhead charges is still going on, and the accumulation of highest paid officers still continues. In this connection, I would also refer to the point, which was

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mentioned by my friend, Colonel Gidney, namely, the system of administration by Divisional Superintendents. It has been proved beyond all doubt that the present system is extremely expensive, and it has proved a complete failure. The officers are heaped up one upon the other, and the public finds it very difficult to approach the railway officers in order to place their grievances before them. In this connection, Sir, with your permission, I would like to read a few lines from the *Railway Times* of January, the 28rd, 1937. It says this at page 2:

"We have always stoutly held that the retrenchment and demotion of the lowly paid clerical staff and manual workers is an inhuman measure in the face of the steady increase in the number of officers in recent years. The case is well worth the closest examination of the Wedgwood Committee. To take the case of the N. W. Railway alone we find that it was in the last quarter of 1925 that several of the old districts were abolished, and in their stead seven divisions created, namely Rawalpindi, Lahore, Ferozepore, Delhi, Multan, Karachi, and Quetta. At the head of each division we have today a Divisional Superintendent, an official representing one of the four branches of the service,—Loco., Traffic, Carriage and Engineering. Then follow a string of his lieutenants under the various designations of D. B. O., A. B. O., A. T. O., D. P. O., and A. P. O., from the different branches of the service."

Sir, all the letters of the alphabet in the English language are finished in mentioning the abbreviations of these highly paid officials who do nothing but sign huge files. (Laughter.)

Now, I shall continue to read the rest:

"Whereas, before the introduction of this new scheme, each district was both efficiently and economically run with but three experienced officers of the same branch, under the control of an Agent."

I hope, Sir, the Honourable the Railway Member will pay his serious attention to this fact and the Railways will soon go back to the older, cheaper and the more convenient and efficient system of management through the district officers.

Sir, the difficult situation created by the rail-road competition has been recognised by everybody in this country. Even the Honourable the Railway Member laid stress upon its seriousness in his budget speech, but the causes which have diverted the traffic from the rail towards the road have not been fully scrutinised and remedied. My Honourable friend, Sir Henry Gidney, has mentioned some of them. For instance, as he has mentioned, the time tables are prepared without taking into consideration the convenience of the passengers. For example, I find that, between Moradabad and Aligarh, there is no train between 6 A.M. and 6 P.M. Again on branch lines particularly, there are no mail or express trains, and the train service is so slow that it takes double the time in going by train which is taken up by travelling in a motor car. For instance, Moradabad, my own home, is only 100 miles from Delhi, and, by all the three trains which run between Moradabad and Delhi, it takes 5½ hours to reach Moradabad from Delhi, while, if we travel in a motor car or a bus, the same distance could be covered within three hours. The result is that the bulk of the traffic from Moradabad, Amroha, Gurmukhteswar, Hapur and Gajroula, is all diverted from the railways to the road. Even if one fast express train is run, at a convenient time, between Moradabad and Delhi, I have no doubt that a good deal of the traffic, which is diverted to the road, will again return to the railways. Then, the railways do not care for the conveniences of the passengers. I am giving a very small example. For

years we had a through bogie, first and second class, between Delhi and Lucknow *via* Moradabad. This has recently been, I understand, discontinued. The result is that if a passenger wants to go from Delhi to Lucknow *via* Moradabad, he will have to get down at about 11 at night at Moradabad and will have to wait until 2 A.M., in order to catch the next train for Lucknow. This is very inconvenient, and I hope that the railway authorities will pay attention to the matter and this grievance will be removed. Road traffic cannot be stopped by leaving the roads to the mercy of inefficient and corrupt local bodies. On the other hand, if the treatment of the passengers by the lower railway staff is improved and the corruption in goods traffic is stopped, and the business man is not harassed too much while loading and unloading his goods, I think a good deal of traffic will be regained and the receipts under the head of goods traffic would be much larger than they have been up to this time.

Another point worthy of consideration by the Government of India is what I may call the extreme decentralisation or extreme autonomy. What I meant is that the orders which are passed by the Divisional Superintendents or by any other Divisional Officer are never scrutinised, revised or interfered with, either by the Railway Agents or by the Members of the Railway Board. The fact is, the real man who bosses the whole show is not the Divisional Superintendent, but the Superintendent of the office of the Divisional Superintendent or the head of the office of these different branches. The orders which are passed by him are final orders, and the grievances of the public or the railway staff are not looked into and remedied by the Agents or by the Members of the Railway Board. The Agents have themselves become so autonomous and so independent that they do not care a bit for the orders which are issued by the Railway Board, and, in the same way, the Divisional Superintendents have no regard or care for the orders which are passed by the Agents. It is high time that this bogey of the man on the spot were abolished, and both the Agents and the Members of the Railway Board paid more attention to questions of detail and personal grievances. The grievances of the low paid railway officials are not looked into by the Agents and by the Members of the Railway Board, with the result that there is a good deal of dissatisfaction and resentment among these officials, and their security of service which is so necessary for loyalty and efficiency of work is lost.

I am glad that the construction programmes, which were in abeyance for several years, have now been taken in hand. I do not grudge that Sind should be the first to benefit by the construction of new railways, but I hope that other lines, and particularly the two railway lines in Rohilkund, of which a survey was made some years ago, will also be taken in hand.

Recently, an anomaly has been introduced by the railways which is causing the greatest resentment to the travelling public, and it is this. Up to this time, the Indian refreshment rooms, like the European refreshment rooms, were given to people without charging any licence fee. Of course, the contractors of the European refreshment rooms had many more concessions and facilities than those of the Indian refreshment rooms; the contractors of the European refreshment rooms were given crockery, cutlery and other things free, and, even for the breakage, they got, I understand, 25 per cent. from the railways, while the contractors of the Indian refreshment rooms have no such concessions and no such facilities. But recently the railways have started giving contracts of the Indian refreshment rooms to contractors on a system of auction, that is, to the

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highest bidder. They want to make money in this way. The concomitant result will be that the price of the food which is supplied to Indian passengers will be very much increased. I am told that the contract of the Hindu Refreshment Room at Delhi Station has been given on Rs. 7,000 per year, although the income derived by the contractor of this refreshment room was calculated to be between Rs. 2,000 and Rs. 3,000 a year.

Mr. N. M. Joshi (Nominated Non-Official): It is exploitation.

Sir Muhammad Yakub: What will be the result? The result is he will have not only to make up the Rs. 7,000 which he has given to the railway, but he will also earn his profit, and, for this purpose, the price of the food supplied to the Indian passenger will become exorbitant, and, as a result, more traffic will be diverted from the railway to the road. I do not suggest that the invidious distinction between the European and Indian refreshment room contractors should be removed by adopting a system of giving contracts of European refreshment rooms as well and thus placing them on an equality; what I mean to say is that this method of taxing the food of the passengers is highly objectionable, and that it must immediately be stopped.

I have now almost finished what I had to say about the railway budget, but I cannot conclude my general remarks without reiterating
12 Noon. the feelings of resentment and disappointment of the Indians in not appointing any Indian on the Railway Inquiry Committee. I carefully heard the explanation which was given by the Honourable the Railway Member, the other day, when this point was under discussion during the Demand for Supplementary Grants, but even his forceful advocacy and eloquence could not convince me of the justice of the action which they have taken. I may assume, for the sake of argument, that an Indian expert would not have been so efficient as the European experts are, but there is no reason why Indians should be deprived of an opportunity of getting training in the matter of this expert inquiry. If one or two Indian gentlemen had been appointed on this Commission, they would have gained experience and become experts themselves, and, in future, India would have benefited by their knowledge and experience. Now, these people have come from outside. They will conduct an inquiry, and will make a report, good, bad or indifferent, and so much money has been wasted for nothing. If some Indian members had been associated with this Committee, in future, if not at present, we would have gained considerably by their experience and by their knowledge. I hope, Sir, that this will be the last time when a blunder of this kind has been made, and, I am sure, that in future no important Committee, or even an unimportant Committee, will be appointed in which the Indian community will be ignored and only foreigners will be appointed.

Lastly, I cannot close without expressing my feelings of disgust and without entering my strong protest on the appointment of an expert from South Africa on this Railway Inquiry Committee. As I said the other day, the treatment meted out by the South African Government towards the Indians is so shameful and insulting that no self-respecting Indian can ever associate himself with the appointment of any man from South

Africa. howsoever efficient and expert he may be, on any Committee in India. It is insulting to our self-respect, and I enter a strong protest upon this appointment. With these words, I close my remarks.

Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta (Chittagong and Rajshahi Divisions: Non-Muhammadan Rural): Sir, after successive years of chronic deficit, we have this year a surplus budget. Better crops and higher prices have given us better earnings, with the result that there is a surplus, although it is a nominal figure of 15 lakhs. Any way, it is not a deficit budget. But, the budget before us is after all an orthodox budget of the most stereotyped character. It is something like the balance sheet of a public company, showing the profits and losses of the year. But the railway system in India is a national asset in which the taxpayers of India have invested about 800 crores of rupees. Therefore, it is not to be looked upon as a mere money making business. It is something more. It has a higher and a nobler duty to perform, and that is that it should encourage the Indian industries and agriculture through the medium of freights and fares. Our charge against the railway system is—it is an old grievance—that there are lower rates imposed for traffic to and from the ports than for internal traffic.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: It is quite the reverse. They charge more for internal traffic than the traffic to and from the ports.

Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta: That is precisely what I am submitting. In other words, the policy is calculated to encourage the export of raw materials and to encourage the import of manufactured foreign goods. That is the gravamen of the charge which has been made for a long time. In August, 1935, that was the charge that was brought against the railways by the Public Accounts Committee. This is what they said:

"The Committee desired that the Railway Department should examine and send a note to the Committee to show whether there is any basis for the allegation generally made that the rates of freight at present charged operate in such a way as to help the export of raw materials and the import of foreign manufactured goods to the detriment of Indian industries".

What is the answer? We have now got the answer from the Railway Board. It appears at page 50 of the Report of the Public Accounts Committee of 1934-35. I have gone through it carefully. The Railway Board admits that that was the position some time before. There is the clearest admission that that was the policy some years ago, but it is said that times have changed and the policy has also been altered. They say that conditions have materially altered within the last quarter of a century, and the policy has also been altered. But they have been constrained to admit that there are still special rates quoted for traffic to and from the ports. Their answer to the special rates is this: Oh, it is not deliberately done. There is no intention of serving British or foreign interests, but it is the inevitable result of certain circumstances, and their explanation is that, in some cases, the special rates for traffic to and from the ports are due to competition with shipping companies, and, in some other cases, it is due to the anxiety of the railway company to encourage some industries and save them from competition, but they say this. Their justification, to use the words of the Railway Board, is that if railways are not permitted to quote special rates, then they would inevitably lose the traffic within competitive areas or else be forced to lose revenue on traffic in areas where there was no competition. In other words, in

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plain English, the answer is that if we do not have the special rates for ports, the result will be a loss of revenue in those areas where there is no competition. Speaking for myself, I do not think that is an explanation which can be accepted. You can sustain an annual loss of about two crores of rupees on strategic lines, but you are not prepared to concede even the port rates for internal traffic.

Mr. Muhammad Nauman (Patna and Chota Nagpur *cum* Orissa: Muhammadan): Do you mean that the rates from a port and to a port should not be favourable?

Mr. N. M. Joshi: "Should not be *more* favourable?"

Mr. Muhammad Nauman: Do you mean that the export trade should not be encouraged and no facilities should be offered by railways?

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): If the Honourable Member wishes to address any question, he must rise in his seat.

Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta: These are complicated questions. We can discuss only the general policy.

The Honourable Sir Muhammad Zafrullah Khan (Member for Commerce and Railways): I have not been able to follow exactly what the Honourable Member wishes to stress. Does he want that the present rates of freight to and from the ports should be raised, or should be lowered, in comparison with the rates applicable to internal traffic?

Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta: I say, in the first place, the rates to and from the ports should not be lower than the rates on internal traffic.

The Honourable Sir Muhammad Zafrullah Khan: But the Honourable Member started by saying that they should not be higher—when he was interrupted by Mr. Joshi.

Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta: That must have been a slip. I mean that the policy of encouraging the export of raw materials and the import of foreign goods should be abandoned. That is my plea. As I understand it, the charge is not wholly repudiated. As regards the past policy, it is admitted; as regards the policy at present, half the charge is admitted, and, then, it is said that there is good reason for it.

The Honourable Sir Muhammad Zafrullah Khan: Perhaps the Honourable Member will excuse another interruption. Surely he has no objection to lower rates of freight to the ports? Does he object to lower rates of freight from the ports only? Am I right? Surely the Honourable Member does not want to discourage exports?

Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta: As I have said, there must be, from the very nature of things, exceptions to the general rule. I am now speaking of the general policy. Speaking generally, I do contend that the rates should not be such as to encourage the export of raw materials.

The Honourable Sir Muhammad Zafrullah Khan: "Should not"?

Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta: Speaking generally, I say that. Now, in support of my contention, I shall give some figures. So far as the rates on cotton are concerned, I find some figures given by the Railway Board themselves, and those figures support my case. For instance, cotton rates from Navsari to Howrah, a distance of 1,168 miles, are Rs. 2-1-9 per maund, whereas from that place to Cawnpore, a distance of only 891 miles, the rate per maund is Rs. 2-8-2. Then, again, from Broach to Howrah, a distance of 1,191 miles, the rate is Rs. 2-4-7 per maund, whereas from the same place to Cawnpore (a distance of 701 miles), the rate is Rs. 2-5-4. And, therefore, it is said in this report of the Railway Board to the Public Accounts Committee:

"It will be seen that, although the distance to Cawnpore is 337 miles less than to Howrah and from Broach to Cawnpore 430 miles less, yet the freight rates to Cawnpore are 0-6-5 pies more from Navsari and nine pies more from Broach than they are to Howrah."

I have other figures as to cotton from other places for instance, from Surat to Calcutta and from Surat to Cawnpore. From Surat to Calcutta, a distance of 1,155 miles, the rate per maund is Rs. 2-2-8, whereas from Surat to Cawnpore, a distance of 825 miles, the rate is higher, *viz.*, Rs. 2-7-2. Again, from Balasar to Calcutta, a distance of 1,192 miles, the rate per maund is Rs. 2-4-8, whereas from that place to Cawnpore, although the distance is very much less, *viz.*, 870 miles, the rate is higher, *viz.*, Rs. 2-9-5. It is very interesting to find that from Bombay to Cawnpore the rate is Rs. 2-3-9 per maund, and from Cawnpore to Bombay, by the same line and for the same distance, the rate is Rs. 1-7-11 per maund. This preposterous disparity was pointed out by Mr. Gavin Jones, the representative of the United Provinces Chamber of Commerce in the United Provinces Council. I may also mention this that the Bombay spinner gets his cotton from Lyallpur at Rs. 3-13-4 per maund, *i.e.*, at a cheaper rate than the rate at which the Cawnpore spinner gets his cotton from the same place. That is about cotton. I shall illustrate my point by reference to the rate on wheat. There, again, the freight policy encourages export through ports and obstructs the internal distribution and free movement from places of production to the various markets within the country. Now, Sir, as regards wheat, I find that the rates quoted from the Punjab to Calcutta are lower than the rates quoted from the Punjab to Cawnpore or to Lucknow. The same remark applies to another port, *viz.*, Karachi. That was the position before. Recently, that situation has been aggravated by the reduction of about 10 to 82 per cent from the 1st May, 1933, over the East Indian Railway for traffic from certain North Western Railway stations to Calcutta, so as to make it Re. 1-4-0. The same thing has happened with the reduction of about 10 per cent from the 1st May, 1933, over the East Indian Railway from stations in the United Provinces to Calcutta. There has also been a reduction varying from 20 per cent to 40 per cent from December, 1933, over the Bombay, Baroda and Central India Railway from North Western Railway stations to Bombay. The North Western Railway have notified a rebate of 25 per cent of the railway freight charges on wheat carried to Karachi for export. This is about wheat.

Now, I come to other articles, for instance, piecegoods. I have got here some figures which have been collected and lent to me by a kind

[Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta.]

friend. We find that the memorandum, submitted by the Upper India Chamber of Commerce to the Railway Inquiry Committee, states:

"Piecegoods the value of which is more than twice of that of raw cotton are carried 663 miles from Cawnpore to Howrah at the rate of Rs. 1-1-0 per maund, while the cotton from which the same piecegoods might have been made is carried from Khandwa to Cawnpore for approximately the same distance at more than twice the rate, that is, Rs. 2-4-0, a fact which destroys the whole basis of the rating structure."

Then, Sir, I shall give the rates of hides, an article in which my friend, Mr. Muhammad Nauman, is interested. I find that the freight of a full wagon carrying hides from Muzaffarpur to Cawnpore with a minimum weight of 270 maunds for 398 miles is Rs. 251 odd, whereas from Cawnpore to Howrah the freight of a full wagon for a distance of 663 miles is Rs. 264 odd.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The Chair hopes the Honourable Member will remember that the general discussion is confined to a discussion of the general features of the budget and the principles involved in it. The Chair takes it that the Honourable Member is giving these figures by way of illustration, but this should not be carried too far.

Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta: I shall not give any more figures, Sir. I wanted to give these figures only to show that the policy of the railway system with regard to industry is as I have stated. Instead of multiplying the figures, I might say generally that an examination of the freight rates with regard to hides, the chemical industry, wheat and other commodities, reveals the same story, namely, the consistent policy of the encouragement of export of raw materials and the encouragement of the imported goods from abroad. We find that this view is supported by an American writer who is expected to take a detached and dispassionate view in these matters. In a book called "The Development of Capitalist Enterprise in India" by Daniel H. Buchanan, it is said on page 185:

"As in other aspects of Indian administration, the motives of imperialism, both economic and political, have been mingled with those of sound government and even philanthropy. Commercial considerations have had much weight and the strongest criticism which can be offered is that there was no definite aim, as in Germany and Japan, of internal industrial development. As in other matters of general policy, the commercial interests of the United Kingdom tended somewhat to blind officials to the real needs of India."

Again, on another page, he goes on to say:

"The only ground for complaint is upon the assumption, which is quite natural, that Indian manufacturers had a right to favour from the national railways. This, in any systematic way, they surely have not received. Partly because of their unwillingness to wait and partly because of their concern for British interests, railway authorities have paid little attention to Indian industrialisation."

Coming nearer home, we find that the Bombay Chamber of Commerce have made the following remark in their memorandum which they submitted to the Railway Inquiry Committee:

"Railway freights at present appear designed to facilitate the transport of cotton for export rather than to further an increased consumption in the interior."

May I call the attention of the House to the words "at present". The case of the Bombay Chamber of Commerce is that, even at the present day, the railway freight is designed to facilitate the transport of cotton for export rather than for an increased consumption in the interior. Similarly, we find that the Upper India Chamber of Commerce has also submitted a memorandum to the Railway Inquiry Committee in which they say :

"When the railway rating system, as now in use, was built up, India would seem to have been looked upon as essentially an importing and exporting country and this view still seems to be governing the rating system. India is, however, fast developing into a manufacturing country of importance and this change has naturally brought about a change in the direction of the movement or transport of her raw materials, as well as of the manufactured goods. The railway rating structure, therefore, requires very careful investigation with a view to bringing it in the line with present day conditions."

I need hardly point out that this Chamber is a European Chamber. Need I point out that this Chamber repudiates in most unmistakable language the theory of the Railway Board that the old policy has now been reversed :

Lastly, Sir, I have got a very interesting opinion on this point which absolutely supports my contention from no other person than the Agent of the B. N. Railway, I mean Mr. V. E. D. Jarrard, who spoke about this time last year before the Railway Conference. This is what he said :

"In recent years trading conditions all over the world have changed. There has been no difficulty regarding production but no adequate system of distribution has yet been devised and it is the method and cost of distribution by railways of production throughout India which the commercial people question. We have to realise and visualise the vast change in Indian trading conditions brought about by the protectionist policy of the Government of India which in itself, to my mind, justifies a complete review of the railway freight rating policy. India is bent on developing its own industries and the success or otherwise of this development of internal trade largely depends on an adequate scheme of distribution among a population with restricted purchasing power."

The Honourable Sir Muhammad Zafrullah Khan: I hope Mr. Jarrard's exposition of the position satisfies the Honourable Member.

Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta: We want a complete review of the railway rates policy. He condemns the present policy, and he says that, in view of the altered condition, the railway freight policy should be entirely reviewed. I am asking for that review.

The Honourable Sir Muhammad Zafrullah Khan: The Honourable Member is reinforcing what Mr. Jarrard has said.

Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta: If I am able to understand the plain English of Mr. Jarrard, I find that he endorses my view absolutely without any reservation whatsoever.

The Honourable Sir Muhammad Zafrullah Khan: I am very glad to find such complete accord between Mr. Jarrard and the Honourable Member on this matter.

Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta: I do not know what he means by complete review. That is quite a different matter. He says that we have to realise and visualise the vast changes in Indian trading conditions brought about by the protectionist policy. He says that the railway rate policy also should be altered accordingly. I certainly agree with Mr. Jarrard

[Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta.]

in his denunciation of the present railway policy. I hope that the Honourable the Railway Member will accept this. We find that this complaint was made even before the Industrial Commission. They say:

"The governing principle which, we think, should be followed in railway rating, so far as it affects industries, is that internal traffic should be rated as nearly as possible on an equality with traffic of the same class and over similar distances to and from the ports."

That was the recommendation of the Indian Industrial Commission. This was endorsed by the Indian Fiscal Commission in 1922. I shall be glad to hear from the Honourable the Railway Member whether any effect has been given, either wholly or partially, to this recommendation of the Industrial Commission and the Indian Fiscal Commission. Sir, we have got one portfolio for these two Departments, Railway and Commerce, one Member for these two Departments. It appears to me from the policy that has been followed that the Member for Railways is a Member for Indian railways, but the Member for Commerce is not a Member for Indian commerce, but for British or foreign commerce. This is the point I wanted to stress.

With regard to other matters in the budget, we find that a very cheerful account is given. The Honourable Member says:

"As an example of what railways are doing to prepare for the future, I would mention one experiment we intend to try out this hot weather. I refer to our scheme to run an experimental air conditioned coach on one of our daily mail services. . . . our proposal is in the first instance to run one first class coach on each train of a particular service."

I have got sometimes the habit of travelling first class, and, therefore, I am glad about this experiment. But may I seriously ask the Honourable the Railway Member whether it is a matter worth mentioning when speaking of the future of Indian railways? After all, how many people does it affect? Five coaches have been ordered at a cost of 2½ lakhs.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The Honourable Member has already taken half an hour. He must conclude now.

Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta: I shall conclude presently. This is merely increasing the amenities of the first class passengers. It would have been very appropriate not to make mention at all about this, but to do this without the knowledge of the people of this country who will certainly not welcome this expensive luxury.

Sir Leslie Hudson (Bombay: European): In rising to take part in the general discussion on the railway budget, I do so under two difficulties; in the first place, the Honourable Member has forestalled a good deal of criticism by presenting us with a balanced budget, and, in the second place, many of the more general points of criticism which we might otherwise have found it convenient to raise today must be postponed, because they relate to those very matters in respect of which the Wedgwood Committee of Inquiry is about to report. I have no desire today to press the Government to discuss matters relating to the administration and organisation of the railways which they would, for obvious reasons, prefer to discuss after they have received the recommendations of the Wedgwood Committee and not before. In the same sense, the European Group prefer to see what the Wedgwood Committee has to say before they proceed further

with the expression of any views on general policy which they may hold. Honourable Members who raise matters relating to the larger issues of railway policy will not, therefore, at this stage, expect me to follow them in discussing those matters.

Sir, no one will question the fact that the budget which the Railway Member presented two days ago is the most cheerful we have had for a number of years. It is a budget which encourages us to hope that it pre-
sages a return to those better conditions which have been so long postponed, and we are reinforced in that hope by the knowledge that the figures which have been given to us are based on the new system of accounting recently introduced and that had it not been for this reform in the accounts the actual improvement, so far as the figures go, would have been even better than it is. I should like, therefore, to congratulate the Honourable Member on the fact that his second budget is so much more satisfactory than his first inasmuch as he has succeeded in converting a prospective deficit of Rs. 3½ crores for the current year into an estimated surplus of Rs. 15 lakhs. While this unexpected change in the results for the current year at first sight gives grounds for a more optimistic forecast for next year, we agree that there is no justification, as things are today, for exaggerating the importance of the improvement that has taken place during the past three or four months in the financial position of the railways. To take one item alone in which there must have been a considerable improvement in the railway revenues during the past year. I refer to the export of wheat from Karachi which for the first time for several years has reached very considerable figures. That export, as is well-known, is due entirely to the world market rate for wheat and it cannot be looked upon as a certainty or even a probability that a continuance of that export may be expected. So far as we are concerned, therefore, we commend the caution which the Railway Member has shown in his estimates for next year, and we agree entirely with his sentiment that the railways cannot by reason of an estimated surplus relax in any way their efforts to improve their financial position still further by economies in expenditure and increases in earnings.

The House will perhaps remember that when I spoke in railway budget discussions last year I referred to the question of over-capitalisation and expressed the anxiety we felt on that matter and the importance we attached to an expert enquiry into the position before it deteriorated further. Since that time the Wedgwood Committee has been appointed and we shall shortly have the benefit of the advice it may have to offer. In the meantime, we have taken note of the Honourable Member's proposals in regard to the Depreciation Fund. We are a little doubtful of what the Honourable Member means when he says that the object of these proposals is to "reduce over-capitalisation", but we agree that they will have the effect of checking over-capitalisation and to that extent they go part of the way to meet the points we pressed a year ago and to demonstrate the validity of the criticism we then made.

Before I turn to the other matters, I should like to make a brief reference to the proposal mentioned in the budget speech to write off the liabilities of the railways in respect of their accumulated arrears of contributions to the general revenues and to cancel the borrowings from the Depreciation Fund to meet deficits. In that connection we notice that the Financial Commissioner has a Resolution on the paper which will

[Sir Leslie Hudson.]

come before us for discussion later on, and while I do not wish to anticipate any discussion that may take place at a later stage, I cannot refrain from reminding the House that a year ago we pressed for a thorough revision of the present Separation Convention for the very reasons that the Honourable Member now puts forward, namely, that the railways cannot resume current contributions to General Revenues within any reasonable period that can be foreseen. If the House cares to look up the debates last year, it will see that the words used by the Honourable Member the other day in this connection are almost identical with those I used then. Perhaps the House will forgive me if I do a thing I don't much care about doing and that is quoting extracts from my own speeches. This is what I said last year:

"If we look at the matter with the eyes of realists, I think we shall have to agree that the expectation that the railways will be able to make any substantial contributions to the Central Revenues is not likely to be realised for a great many years, or, at any rate, within any measurable distance of time. If that principle is accepted, steps should be taken to place the relationship between Railway and Government finances on a basis more closely related to the facts as they are today."

The Honourable Member's budget speech this year shows that he realises the necessity for making adjustments to meet the position to which I drew attention last year, and seeing that the relationship between the Railway and the Government finance is governed by the Separation Convention, what we should now like to know is why only the accumulated arrears of contributions are being dealt with instead of tackling the bigger problem of revising the Convention. I hope the Honourable Member when he replies will see his way clear to explain the reason for the limited Resolution which the Financial Commissioner has put on the paper.

Well, Sir, I propose to leave that matter there for the moment. I come now to another aspect of the railway problem and one which has a very close bearing upon the revenue position, namely, publicity. I do not know what other Honourable Members think about the present publicity efforts of the railways, but we are inclined to feel that there is a great deal of room for improvement in this direction and that the railways are by no means taking the fullest advantage of all the possibilities for popularising railway travel and attracting new sources of revenue. If I may say so, it would not perhaps be a bad thing if the Members of this House received automatically a copy of the Report of the Railway Board and in the same sense it may be a good plan to publish an abridged edition of that report in the form of an attractive brochure for the information of the public. I mention that because, as some Honourable Members may know, the London Passenger Transport Board recently issued for the price of a shilling an attractively devised report of its activities which became a bestseller in England. I believe I am right in saying that the Railways in the United Kingdom regard their Publicity Departments as the most important link in the organisation. It is the Publicity Departments which keep in touch with the public, and it is largely a consequence of their efforts or lack of effort whether the railway mindedness of the public increases or diminishes. The Honourable Member had to inform us two days ago that the railway receipts from passenger traffic were Rs. 60 lakhs less than had been anticipated. Well, Sir, that seems to me to indicate that there is urgent need for a little more enterprise and imagination in the Publicity Departments of Indian Railways. If the Honourable Member's problems are to be solved, the railways will not only have

to retain their present passenger traffic but they will have to attract fresh custom and one of the best methods of inducing the public to use the railways is by improved publicity and advertising. It is a good old adage: "It pays to advertise".

There is another matter which in some ways is equally as important as railway publicity and that is the facilities the railways offer to the business community. The Honourable Member will get all the encouragement we can give him in his efforts to improve and expand the co-operation between the commercial departments and the business community. There are numerous small ways in which the service provided by the commercial departments can be improved. Honourable Members will perhaps be familiar with instances where the arrival of goods at their destination is not notified to the consignee with the result that demurrage is often incurred. The use of the railways for the conveyance of parcels is not likely to be encouraged if payment of demurrage is demanded because the consignee is ignorant and kept in ignorance of the time of arrival of his parcel. There are also cases where when parcels despatched freight paid are re-weighed at their destination where, whether owing to discrepancy in the machines used for weighment or some other reason, they are found to have been incorrectly weighed at the despatching station and carriage or freightage on the excess is demanded. The public ought not to be made to suffer in such cases, for the mistakes, whether *bona fide* or not of railway servants. These are perhaps small matters, but they are matters in which the railway service to the public breaks down, and while they would cost very little to put right, they would go a long way towards increasing the popularity of the railways.

There is one other matter to which I wish to refer before I resume my seat. The House has listened today to the speech of my Honourable friend, Sir Henry Gidney. He referred in particular to the status and pay of the Anglo-Indian employees on the railways in the light of the decision of Parliament as expressed in section 242 of the Government of India Act. He reminded the House that he raised this matter a year ago, and I will take it from my Honourable friend that he would not have referred to it again this year, if he had received some assurance that effect would be given to what is clearly the mandate contained in the section of the Act which he mentioned. The members of the European Group, who considered this matter at their meeting yesterday morning, have asked me to add that they are disturbed by the position as stated by Sir Henry Gidney, and they hope that the Honourable Member, when he replies, will be able to remove their present apprehensions.

Other points which have occurred to us are the cost of the Railway Rates Advisory Committee which, in the case of last year amounted to Rs. 80,000 for the consideration of four items only which seems on the face of it to be rather out of proportion.

The cost of the conduct of Railway Audit and Accounts also seems high, but this is probably a matter which will be dealt with in the Wedgwood Committee Report, and I do not propose to discuss this at length today. Before I sit down, I should like to add my tribute of congratulation to my Honourable friend, Sir Raghavendra Rau. All of us in this House who have had the pleasure and helpful assistance that he has so freely given us during the past five years were very glad to see the distinction that has been conferred upon him.

Mr. Muhammad Nauman: Sir, I congratulate the Honourable Member for Railways for having, at last, presented a surplus budget for the railways this time. The prolonged deficit for many years was creating a feeling in the country that the railways would probably continue to be a burden on the general revenues for all time to come. I pointed out last year that the depression had ended for all practical purposes in 1934-35,—that was the feeling in commercial circles. But the Honourable the Commerce Member did not appreciate my forecast then and merely said that my optimism was not evidenced in his Department. I am glad that my statement has proved to be true and that the improvement in economic conditions has resulted in bigger revenues and relieved the deficit which had been a chronic factor in the railway budget for many years.

I must thank the Honourable Member for his detailed and lucid statement, and, although I propose to criticise some of his measures, I fully appreciate the difficulties of his Department under circumstances. I think the idea of change "in providing that capital should generally be charged only with that part of the cost of an asset renewed which represents a definite improvement, that all renewals and replacements should be charged to the *depreciation fund* (including renewals of non-wasting assets, which had hitherto been treated as part of the working expenses), and that all sums received from the disposal of assets replaced should be credited to the depreciation fund", is probably well founded and will make accounting more in order and more businesslike.

The Honourable Sir Zafrullah Khan has stated that commercial lines are expected to show a surplus of just over Rs. 2 crores; but he did not make mention of any efforts which were made by the railways to improve conditions of traffic except in coal and wheat, where he has stated that appreciable encouragement and facilities have been afforded. I must confess to a feeling of surprise at the neglect of other commodities. Last year and the year before, I definitely stated the deplorable conditions of hides and skins trade and the apathy of railways in this connection. I said that, owing to the exorbitant rates, the trade itself had deteriorated. World depression, commencing from 1929-30, made such serious changes in the level of prices for all commodities originating in every country that all Governments and railways did something to improve conditions; but the skin and hides trade of this country received no attention from the railways up till now. The Government of India gave some relief to the skins trade by taking off the five per cent. duty in 1935 and thereby saved the trade from any serious ruin; but the railways, in spite of all representations, have taken no notice of the serious situation which has arisen out of the high and disproportionate rates. May I ask the Honourable Member, through you, Sir, if he and his Board and the different Agents of the railways have ever done anything for this trade? Did they ever start any inquiry on the lines which I have been suggesting for two years? Besides me, the different Chambers of Commerce also have made suggestions at different times but with no results. Did they ever consult commercial bodies in this country in regard to this matter as other matters of rate and tariffs? Here I have to give a short reply to the advice which our Deputy President has just now given to the railways in his speech. He thinks that the encouragement of the export and import trade by the railways should not be allowed and to this I seriously object. I may be wrong according to Mr. Datta, our Deputy President, but the concensus of

opinion on this side is that the export and import trade should certainly be encouraged for the economic development of any country by every possible means; and what Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta has suggested appears to me to be absolutely out of the way and is detrimental to the general prosperity of this land which mostly depends on the export of her such raw materials which she cannot consume for her own industry and her own use.

Sardar Sant Singh (West Punjab: Sikh): At the expense of your own industries?

Mr. Muhammad Nauman: There is no question of that. If you have got an industry, you develop it, but if you cannot consume them fully, you have to send them out. As for cotton, if you cannot use all your cotton, do you mean to say you should change over the land to the production of wheat and let cotton growers get one-fourth of the value of the yield in value?

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The Honourable Member had better address the Chair.

Mr. Muhammad Nauman: With your permission, Sir, I just want to say this that the idea of railway rates not being favourable from port to port is an absolutely erroneous one if he wants the economic uplift in this country. What do we mean by trade and commerce? Exchange of a certain commodity with an individual or a country or a province is termed trade and commerce, and this is necessary. If trade and commerce does not exist the commodities will not move and no country in the world can remain solvent with such stagnant condition. Of course, you can stress on the system of exchange or barter and on the question of trade balance; but you cannot say that we will not export outside and sell our goods and we will not buy other's goods. You have to sell your surplus stock and buy your requirements. The theory of no export and no import would have been good in Asoka's time, but not now in the twentieth century. . . .

Sardar Sant Singh: You want to send raw hides and get Batta's shoe?

Mr. Muhammad Nauman: No. If certain people think they do not want to send their surplus stock of raw hides, they are mistaken. They have to do it, otherwise those hides will perish for no value return. They cannot manufacture the entire stock of shoes this country requires. The Railway administration here is carried on in a spirit of bureaucracy and not in a spirit of business, and this apathy towards trade is also one of the results. Last year, I gave enough data for inquiry into the matter of the skins and hides trade, but not a word of reply has come yet. I stressed the fact that Madras, being one of the chief centres for the tanning industry, required hides from different parts of India. Here, again, I would draw the attention of my friend, Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta, through you, Sir, to the fact that Madras is a large trading centre for hides and skins. We cannot send goods to Madras except from Calcutta, and Calcutta being an emporium for the hides and skins market, it is absolutely essential that the rates should be comparatively cheaper so as to make the leather tanned in Madras more paying and less expensive. . . .

Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta: You have entirely misunderstood me.

Mr. Muhammad Nauman: I have not. Sir, from Calcutta the steamship companies carry goods to Madras at comparatively cheaper rates, and this fact has not evidently been taken into consideration by the Railway Member as yet. Madras, being a huge industrial centre for hides and skins, imports huge quantities of hides and skins from Calcutta, and the steamship companies carry them at reduced rates, while the railways have failed to give any concession even in their own interest. In 1936 I also said that in spite of the fact that the value of hides and skins per piece and by weight had decreased on an average of about 200 per cent. Since 1918-19, the freight continues to be the same as in 1918-19. Everything was brought to pre-war level rates, but railways constantly neglected to do anything for reducing the freight on skins and hides. The exorbitant rate of freight between Cawnpore, Allahabad, Lucknow and Calcutta for small consignments has practically finished the trade between the cities in the United Provinces and Calcutta. Of course, I need hardly point out that this is a distinct loss to the trade of skins at Calcutta, because export to foreign countries is not possible. It makes the commodities expensive in the initial stage. Madras finished goods become more expensive by this exorbitant freight rate on hides and skins. In short, the inequitable adjustment of freight rates for hides and skins and for some other raw commodities has been one of the chief factors for the deterioration of the trade of this country. I hold the railways solely responsible for this deterioration and neglect. Lastly, I may suggest in this connection that the freight on skins and hides should be reduced to the extent of at least seventy-five per cent. of the present rate, and opinions should be invited from the Muslim Chamber of Commerce, Calcutta, the Skins and Hides Merchants Association, Calcutta, the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, and such other allied bodies in Cawnpore and other places as well. Sir, this is a trade in which the Muslims are predominantly interested, and I appeal to the Honourable the Railway Member, not merely in the name of my whole community, but also in my capacity as a representative of Muslims, and as one closely connected with trade and commerce of my country, to investigate into the matter and see whether the hides and skins trade can be relieved of the burden at the earliest possible moment. It has been made easier now with a "surplus budget".

Now, Sir, we come to the question of passenger traffic. The Honourable the Railway Member has stated that the passenger traffic has not come up to the mark and he is rather disappointed, but there are so many factors which he has not taken into account. Even the attitude of the railway staff has not changed in the least. The more we talk of courtesies in the railway staff, the less we find it in them. During company-management, a few years ago, the railway staff used to be dealt with more seriously for discourtesies shown to passengers, but now an irrelevant explanation is enough reply for any complaint from a passenger. Every merchant in Calcutta, and probably in other places as well, has to pay a fixed *bakshish* to the booking babu and the staff at the time of loading and unloading at both ends of stations, and no effort is made to check this evil practice as yet.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: Why do you give them *bakshish*?

Mr. Muhammad Nauman: I shall explain it presently. Merchants are blamed for payment of *bakshish*, but the amount of inconvenience that will arise by resentment is not easily realised, and no attempt is made to check

this abominable practice. Normally 50 per cent. of the staff of the railways indulge in all sorts of bribery and corruption,—and, at whose cost? At the cost of the general public, both ignorant and educated. Every effort is being made to penalise the "ticketless passenger", and even legislation is suggested on lines which probably do not exist in other civilised countries of the world, but no effort is made to remove corruption in the railway staff. I have been asked sometimes for a suggestion by the railway authorities, and I think the simplest and most urgent measure for checking the evil is to start dismissing every railway servant against whom there is a reasonable complaint from a respectable person. . . .

Mr. N. M. Joshi: Who are respectable?

Mr. Muhammad Nauman: Respectable are those who think themselves to be respectable and are respected by others. I know, Sir, that even berth reservation clerks require a *bakshish* of eight annas to reserve a berth for a passenger, otherwise they put fictitious labels and say that all compartments were booked before hand. This has happened with some of my friends in Patna, and, on one occasion, I myself had that experience. It was reported to the authorities, but I do not know as yet if any action has ever been taken against the man concerned. This is one of the relevant factors which has contributed to the depression of the railway revenues, so far as the passenger traffic is concerned.

Then, the Honourable the Railway Member said that the receipts from passenger traffic have been disappointing, and he further stated that different railways had devised different means for improving the earnings of the railways, but they have not met with considerable success. There are many factors which require a thorough investigation before any appreciable results can be expected. Sir, comfort of the third class passengers has been the crust of the railway debate for many years. Improved third class coaches were shown to Members of the Railway Advisory Committee, but whether they are running or not, and where they are running is not yet known to us. We do not know on what lines these improved third class coaches are used and how they have been welcomed by the travelling public.

Here we come to the question of the rail-road competition. Lorry services are sometimes more conveniently timed, although it must be admitted, in all fairness, they are less efficient. The public get the conveyances at short intervals, and they also get a little more courtesy from the bus drivers and conductors of the lorries. As the lorry service is run on business lines, it is to the interest of owners to see that their business is paying them, and this they cannot do without the goodwill of the public, and therefore, those in charge of the lorries are always very courteous and obliging to the passengers, whereas the railway servants think that they are members of a bureaucratic organisation, whether the train service is paying or not, whether the passengers do get comfort or not, they will get their salaries all right at the end of the month, and, therefore, they are not at all careful to be even a little courteous to the travelling public. Again, local timings of trains are sometimes so absurd that it compels people to use motor service. I know, in Patna side, the local train service for about three months or more was so inconvenient that the litigant public sometimes found it impossible to return the same day even from such courts as Barh and Behar, which lie at a comfortable distance of only

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about 50 miles. The public of Patna made serious complaints to the authorities concerned, and the press of the province was full of articles, but no notice of any kind was taken by the authorities till such times when they themselves discovered their mistake after some experience of loss in local income.

Another small factor which may also be mentioned is the question of price of the time table. The price of the time table has been increased from two annas to six annas. Of course, the enhanced price of the time table is justified by the fact that they contain some additional information, but how many people, I ask, require this additional information of rules and tariffs? The expenses on time tables, in my opinion, should be treated as expenditure incurred on advertisement, and they should be so cheap that they may be available at a reasonable price to the travelling public. I think the price should be fixed at about half an anna (six pies). I did bring this matter to the notice of the authorities of the E. I. Railway, but I have not so far found any change made in the price of the same. Moreover, time tables are prepared without consulting the public of the area or without consulting their convenience. You have the lorries which require no time tables and the timings are on everybody's lips in the locality. Cheapness of fare is also one of the factors, although not so very important, but I think this has to be seriously investigated by an enquiry into the local conditions. Of course, it is never fashionable or even comfortable for the higher or the middle class public to travel in lorries, but they do so only in such circumstances when the railways cannot meet the demands of regulated timings. Cheaper return tickets for short distances should be introduced, which, I think, will be popular. Shuttle trains are sometimes very convenient, but efforts should be made to arrange timings in a way that it would give shorter intervals between two trains and specially places where lorry passenger service is being run. Rail-road competition is a subject by itself, and I will not take the time of the House in discussing all the aspects of this competition here, but will do so on my cut motion which I have given particularly to discuss this part. I may simply say that "un-economic bus competition" is not the only factor in the deterioration of passenger traffic as the Honourable Member thinks, but is one of the many factors, and, of course, important, but bus service, not being efficient and comfortable as yet, can be easily overcome if serious effort is at all made by the railways. The Honourable Member has said in his speech:

"Better corps and higher prices have combined to give us a considerably increased traffic."

This is just all right, but he has failed to point out how he and his Board have contributed towards this improvement. Did the railways make any serious effort to encourage the moving of commercial commodities? They have just moved, because the world factors were in favour. Crop in America failed. Australian wheat had suffered, and demand in Europe increased probably for reasons of "international situation", and the Indian peasantry could make use of the circumstances and export of commodities increased. The rebate on coal and wheat are the only two instances where effort has been made to support commerce, but what percentage of income do these commodities form? If an average of ten years is to be taken, not more than 15 per cent. in value of traffic freight. Oilseeds have improved by 81 per cent. or about, and why? Has any part, worth the name, been

played by the railways in this improvement? In London and other parts of the world, the Board of Trade is always consulted and special meetings are arranged for discussing the fixing of tariff rates. And what have we here? A regulated order of the railways, so called "Statute-book", which either you obey or cry in wilderness.

Now, we come to discuss the question of expenses, which the Honourable Member is very happy in stating:

"In the accounts, however, owing to the change in allocation, already referred to by me, the total working expenses will appear at a figure which is $\frac{1}{2}$ crore below the budget estimate."

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The Honourable Member has exceeded his time limit already.

Mr. Muhammad Nauman: I will finish in two minutes, Sir. My Honourable friend, Sir Muhammad Yakub, has already said that the working expenses are too high and the administration is too heavy, that there are too many *Burra Sahibs*, too many fat salaries which are mostly sinecures. I wanted to see an Agent, and for that purpose I had to inform his Secretary, then to the Deputy Secretary, and so on, and I was able to see the Agent after about 15 minutes, as if I was seeking for an interview with His Excellency the Governor or the Viceroy.

An Honourable Member: Were you a Member of the Assembly then?

Mr. Muhammad Nauman: This was only about two or three months ago. Of course, I was a Member of the Assembly.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: You must thank your stars that you were not made to wait for half an hour.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The Chair would ask the Honourable Member to conclude his speech now.

Mr. Muhammad Nauman: I do appreciate the idea of air conditioned coaches as an experiment which the Honourable Member has promised to introduce very soon, and they will be appreciated by the general public too.

Finally, I beg to enter my protest against the elimination of Indians on the personnel of the Wedgwood Committee, and I endorse my Honourable friend, Sir Muhammad Yakub's opinion that we feel very much insulted when a South African expert has been taken in preference to any Indian. This is a Committee of such people who are ignorant of Indian conditions, and their report will be equally a book of theories in this country. With these few words, I resume my seat, Sir.

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

The Assembly re-assembled after Lunch at Half Past Two of the Clock, Mr. Deputy President (Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta) in the Chair.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: Mr. Deputy President, I would like to follow the example of several Honourable Members that spoke this morning in offering my congratulations to the Honourable the Railway Member for his good luck in being able to balance his budget. I would very much like to

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congratulate him upon the soundness of his policy, instead of congratulating him upon his good luck. Unfortunately I cannot do so, for I feel that the policy which the Honourable the Railway Member is following is not a sound one. I would like to examine the policy which he has been following in administering the Indian railways. I would have very much liked to deal with this question by quoting figures. But I would like to bring to the notice of the Honourable the Railway Member that, in spite of my desire to study some of the statistics regarding railway administration, having got this Red Volume only this morning, I am unable to do so. I hope, Sir, the Honourable Member will give some attention to the publication of these reports a little more in time than he has been able to do this year. I shall now examine the present policy of the Honourable Member in administering our railways. I may also incidentally state what, in my humble judgment, is the sound policy which we should follow in administering the Indian railways.

For a proper understanding of the subject, I may be permitted to state what was the origin of the Indian railways. The Indian railways were not started to provide transport facilities for the Indian people. The origin of the Indian railways lies in the desire of the British people to find lucrative investment for their capital. That was the origin of the railways. While starting the railways and finding lucrative investment for their capital, they also desired that, if the railways were built in India, there would be a great market for some of their manufactured goods and there will be ample scope for the employment of the British people in this country. I admit that, whatever may have been the origin of the Indian railways, the present policy of the Government of India is to treat the Indian railways as an Indian public utility service. It is true that they also state that, although the Indian railways are a public utility service, still they ought to conduct the Indian railways on what they call commercial lines. Although this is the present policy of the Government of India, I am sorry to say that the traces of the old policy involved in the origin of the Indian railways still persist in the administration by the Government of India of the Indian railways. While dealing with the several aspects of the policy, I shall show what those traces of the origin are in the administration of the Indian railways. Admitting for a moment that the policy, which the Government of India have enunciated in treating the Indian railways as a public utility service to be conducted on commercial lines is a sound one, I feel that even that is not done by the Government of India in a proper manner. If the Indian railways are a public utility service, it is necessary, in order that the fullest advantage should be given to the people of the country of that public utility, that these public utility services should be under public control. Unfortunately our railways in India were built originally by some companies. Most of the capital belongs to the Indian people. Still, even now the management continues to be in the hands of some companies. The Legislature and the Indian people have expressed a desire that, as soon as the present contracts of the companies will be terminated, these railway lines should be taken over by the State under its own management. The Honourable Member for Railways has not done that, and, during this year, in spite of the Resolution of the Legislature, when the contracts of the two railway lines could be terminated, the Honourable the Railway Member failed to take over those lines under State control. Taking for granted that all the lines are brought under State control, under the present constitution,

the Indian railways cannot give us the fullest benefit of a public utility service so long as the Government of India are not responsible to the Legislature and to the Indian people. You will remember, Mr. Deputy President, that sometime ago the Indian Legislature passed a Resolution recommending to the Government of India that instead of importing locomotives from abroad, we should manufacture locomotives in this country. The Honourable Member, not being responsible to the Legislature and to the Indian people, told the Legislature very plainly that he was not going to give effect to that recommendation. Mr. Deputy President, when the Honourable Member and the Government of India are not responsible to the Legislature, the Indian people cannot get the fullest advantage of the public utility service which is being conducted in the name of the Indian people. Sir, if a public utility is to serve its fullest object, not only should its administration be in the interests of those people for whom the public utility has been started, but that public utility should serve the interests of the country in other ways also. There is nothing wrong in our expecting the Indian railways to help in the establishment of other subsidiary industries the help of which the Indian railways require. At present, on account of the traces of the old policy, the Government of India import not less than six crores rupees worth of railway stores from abroad. It is true that they purchase stores worth nine crores of rupees locally also, but, at the same time, if the Government of India followed the policy of getting all the stores in India, and if they had tried that during the last seventy-five years, I am quite sure that India could have produced all those stores by this time. Then, Sir, not only could India have got a good transport service, but this transport service would have helped in the establishment of several other industries in this country. I, therefore, feel that in this respect the people of this country do not get the fullest benefit from this public utility service.

Then, I would like to examine the policy that the Government of India have been following in providing a transport service for the people of this country. I shall first take the goods traffic. Some Members and you, Sir, particularly, drew attention this morning to the fact that the Government of India pay greater attention to the transport of imported and exported goods than to the development of the internal trade of this country. Sir, it is not our intention that the railways should not carry goods which are imported into this country, nor is it our intention to say that the railways should not give facilities to those goods which we export, but what we do insist upon is this. After all, the import and export trade of the country can only be smaller in extent than the internal trade of the country. We, therefore, want the Government of India to pay much greater attention to the development of the internal communications and of the internal trade than they do at present. That is, Sir, our demand. Unfortunately, the Government of India, on account of the traces of the origin of the railways, still persist in paying greater attention to the import and the export trade than to the internal trade of this country. I admit, Mr. Deputy President, that recently the Government of India have given facilities to some organised industries, such as the coal industry, to wheat, to the steel industry, etc., but organised industries do not fill the whole bulk of the country's trade,—which is much larger than that provided for by the organised industries alone. What we, therefore, want the Government of India to do is to pay greater attention to the development of the internal trade, and not only of the organised industries, but even of the unorganised industries

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as well. We produce goods in towns which are not big organised industries. We produce goods in villages which certainly are not organised industries, but if these goods are carried from village to town and from one town to another, the country will benefit, and the railways will benefit too if they pay attention to carrying this trade. I, therefore, feel that the Government of India should follow the policy of paying sufficient and adequate attention to the development of the internal communications of this country and to the development of the internal trade. Mr. Deputy President, if you compare the prices of some articles—not articles of big import and export, but articles in which trade is going on within the country—you will find that there is sometimes a great difference between the price of the article where it is produced and the price of that very article in a place not very distant. We want that anything produced at any place in this country should be carried to other parts of the country, and if the communications are good and cheap, there cannot be any great difference between the prices at the place of origin of that article and the prices prevailing at the places where the articles are consumed. I feel, therefore, that the Government of India should pay attention to this aspect of the policy.

Sir, a complaint has been made of the competition between rail and road. Mr. Deputy President, I am not one of those who believe in unrestricted competition between the different means of communication, but I believe in this that this country has not even today sufficient means of communication and transport, and there is enough scope in this country for both the railways and the buses and even the bullock-carts. (Hear, hear.) I feel, Sir, that if there is a proper co-ordination between roads and the railways and other means of transportation, and if the Government of India give proper attention to communications between villages and villages and villages and towns, there would be enough scope both for the railways, the buses and sometimes even for the bullock-carts. (Hear, hear.) I would, therefore, like the Government of India, instead of merely reviling the bus conductors, to make efforts to co-ordinate the different means of transportation, so that not only will there not be profitless and wreckless competition between these two means of transport, but the country will gain by having sufficient means of communication between all parts.

Mr. Deputy President, I shall now turn to the other object of Indian railways, viz., to provide a cheap and a comfortable means of transport for the people of this country. In this matter also, there are the traces of the old policy. The Indian railways at one time were considered to be intended for the transport for the British people in this country, and attention was paid to the needs of that community. If the first class travel was made comfortable—the class by which the Britishers in this country travelled—then the Government of India were satisfied. It is true that recently many Indians, Indians who are wealthy and who have got political influence have begun to travel by first class and second class, and, therefore, the Government of India are quite willing to give them the benefit which they used to give only to the Britishers. Sir, the first and the second classes are intended for the Britishers as well as wealthy Indians.

The Honourable Sir Muhammad Zafrullah Khan: Also for Members of the Legislature.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: I shall show, Sir, that while they give disproportionate attention to the needs of and to the provision of all sorts of facilities for,

the first and the second class passengers, they utterly neglect the third class passengers. Mr. Deputy President, in 1935-36, the Indian Railways got Rs. 26 crores from third class traffic and they got two crores of rupees from the first and second class traffic. The report for 1935-36 also states that the Indian railways carried 45 lakhs of first and second class passengers. At the same time, they carried 49 crores of third class passengers. Now, Sir, if you take the proportion of the money which the Indian railways receive from the third class passengers and the money which they receive from the first and second class passengers, you will find that the Government of India receive from third class 13 times the amount which they receive from the first and second class passengers. The number of third class passengers is 100 times the number of passengers carried by the first and the second classes. If the facilities given by the Indian railways for the third class passengers are to be compared with the facilities given to the first and second class passengers, there must be some reasonable proportion between those facilities. I shall not deal with this subject at great length, because I shall have another opportunity of dealing with this subject later on, but I ask you to picture to yourself a railway station, say, in a town like Poona or Bombay, and ask yourself how much space is given for the waiting room of the third class passengers and ask yourself whether the space given for the third class passengers is at least 13 times as large as the space given for the waiting rooms of the first and second class passengers, if not 100 times which is their due. I want to ask the Railway Member why the third class passengers should not insist upon 13 times space being given to them for their waiting rooms.

Then, Sir, take the refreshment rooms at a railway station. I ask you, Mr. Deputy President, whether in your experience you have found any place where the third class passengers have been given 13 times as large a place for their refreshment rooms as the first and the second class people have got, leaving aside the proportion of 100 times for the present? This is the policy of the Government of India. They neglect the third class passengers which give them the largest amount of money and they waste their money in giving facilities to people who do not give them sufficient amount of money. Take any other aspect of railway travel, and you will find that the third class passengers are neglected. Take, for instance, trains. The fastest train which runs between Bombay and Delhi is the Frontier Mail, and not a single third class carriage is attached to that train.

An Honourable Member: There is accommodation for servants in the third class.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: If you are a servant of a wealthy Indian or a wealthy European, you can travel by the fastest train, but if you are an independent man, you cannot travel by the Frontier Mail.

Then, we have a train, called the Deccan Queen, which runs between Poona and Bombay.

An Honourable Member: It is cancelled now.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: It is cancelled, because the Railway administration insisted that no third class passengers should travel by that train. They ran the train for several years at a loss. At last they could not bear the loss and cancelled it. I am quite sure that if the railways of this country had been run on commercial lines, any Agent having little brains would have thought that this train would have paid its way if it had been reserved for third class passengers. But the railways cannot do that. The

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Indian railways are not intended primarily for the third class passengers; they are primarily intended for the first and the second class passengers. A train will rather be cancelled than allowed to carry third class passengers. That is the policy of the Government of India. Is there any wonder that the Government are unable to fulfil the terms of the convention which they once adopted? And now we are asked to be content to write off the money which is due to the Indian tax-payer, because the Indian railways cannot pay.

I shall now speak only a few words about the policy of the Government of India in the matter of the administration of the Indian railways. I stated that when the Indian railways were started, it was a means of providing employment for the middle classes in Great Britain. Well, Sir, times have changed, and the Government of India have also changed their policy. It is true that now it is not only the Britishers who get the higher employments and who are paid quite well for doing their work in those appointments but some Indians also get the fat jobs. But the fact remains that even after a policy of Indianisation of 12 years, the number of the Britishers in the service of the Indian railways has not gone down very much. The proportion has gone down, I admit, but still the number of the British people, who are employed on the Indian railways can be counted by thousands. My complaint is not that not only Britishers are employed, but we have to pay them more, the British Parliament has decided that if you bring people from Great Britain, whatever may be their worth, you must pay them more. The Indian may do as good a work as the Britisher does, but the Britisher must be paid more. May I ask you whether this is a commercial policy? Will any commercial undertaking employ men from abroad whose work can be done by people in the country and pay them more? Sir, the Indian railways are not run even on commercial lines. As regards the policy of the Indian railways in the matter of the treatment of their employees, what do we find? The Indian railways not only give employment to some Britishers, but the community to which my Honourable friend, Colonel Sir Henry Gidney, belongs has almost a monopoly of Indian railways. Let me assure my Honourable friend, Colonel Sir Henry Gidney, that I do not grudge them employment on the Indian railways. The Anglo-Indians are as good as Indians as we are, and they have a right for employment on the Indian railways. But I ask my Honourable friend, Colonel Sir Henry Gidney, whether he thinks that there will be any Indian who will tolerate racial discrimination on the Indian railways, simply because Parliament, in its wisdom, thought it proper to make that discrimination? I am sorry that my friend, Colonel Sir Henry Gidney, whose advocacy of his community I admire, but about the wisdom of which I have grave doubts, has failed to take note of one thing. I want to ask him whether he is going to insist upon racial discrimination in the matter of the treatment given to his community in this country?

Lieut.-Colonel Sir Henry Gidney: All I want is a living wage. I ask for nothing more in the operation of section 242.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: If he is asking for a racial discrimination on the ground that the Parliament has sanctioned it, there will be no Indian who will agree to that policy. If he wants proper wages for the members of his community, he has every right to ask them. Let him join us in asking for better treatment of the railway employees, and, I am quite sure, along with the other railway employees, his community will benefit.

Lieut.-Colonel Sir Henry Gidney: Why don't you demand a higher wage? Join me in this demand and refuse to accept the new scales.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: I am prepared to ask for a higher wage for all; I am not prepared to ask for a higher wage for one community only, on the ground that the Parliament has sanctioned higher wages for his community. I would like to say also one more word to my Honourable friend, Colonel Sir Henry Gidney. He said that the Government of India should take into consideration the loyalty of his community. He made an appeal to the Government of India on a very wrong issue. If the Anglo-Indian employees of the Indian railways are going to prosper on Indian railways, let me assure my Honourable friend that they can only do so if they co-operate with the other sections of the railway employees.

Lieut.-Colonel Sir Henry Gidney: Then you co-operate with me.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: I am quite prepared to co-operate with the Honourable Member. The Indian employees are quite willing to co-operate with the Anglo-Indian employees. They can both prosper by co-operation, and not by one community blacklegging, as we call it in our trade unions, the other community.

Mr. Deputy President, I do not wish to speak on this question very long but, Sir, in the matter of treatment of the employees on the Indian railways, there is one point which I would like to refer. I mentioned that the Government of India did not acquire those Company-managed railways the contracts of which could be terminated last year. The Honourable the Railway Member recently may have seen the disadvantage of keeping the Indian railways under Company-management. There was recently a strike on the Bengal Nagpur Railway, and let me take this opportunity of thanking very sincerely the Honourable Member in charge of Railways and the Honourable Member in charge of the Department of Industries and Labour for helping us in the settlement of that strike. But, Sir, I am quite sure, these two Members of the Government of India must have felt in their heart of hearts that if this Bengal Nagpur Railway had been a State Railway, the dispute could have been settled much earlier. I, therefore, want them to consider this aspect of the question when they begin to take decision on the question of acquiring Company-managed railways for management under the State.

Mr. Deputy President (Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta): The Honourable Member has spoken for more than 80 minutes.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: I shall not take much longer time, but, Sir, I wish to say that the policy which the Government of India are following in the treatment of their employees is a wrong one. They try to give facilities and concessions to those people who have already got quite sufficient. The higher servants are paid more than they ought to be. Not only are they paid more, but they are given additional benefits more than the other people. Take the pass rules. The officers who have got enough money to travel with their own money are given much larger number of passes than the poor subordinates. Now, why should there be any discrimination in this. The higher officers are paid provident fund, but take the lowest paid man. He cannot join the provident fund. An officer getting two thousand rupees can easily save money for his future. Therefore, a provident fund is a luxury to him, but a man who is paid Rs. 10 cannot join a provident

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fund which should be a great boon to him. He cannot join it, because he is paid less. I feel that the policy of the Government of India is a wrong one. The whole policy of the Government of India is to favour the wealthy and the middle classes at the expense of the poor people of this country. There was a complaint by one of the Members, who is not here just now, about the subordinate railway servants taking bribes. I do not approve of bribes. I detest taking bribes, but if the railway subordinate takes bribes, who is to blame—the Government of India which favour one class at the cost of another. The Government of India favour first and second class passengers at the cost of the third class passenger. They favour the higher paid employees at the cost of the lower paid employees. If that is not corruption, may I ask, what is? I am quite prepared to admit that, as a result of that corruption, favouring one class at the expense of another, money does not pass into the hands of the Honourable Member. But it is true that the money passes into the pockets of the people whom he favours, from the pockets of the class which he does not favour. May I ask you, who teaches the subordinate employees taking bribes—the Government of India which follow the policy of favouritism which, in other words, is a policy of corruption. I, therefore, feel that if the Government of India want to uproot bribery and corruption, they must stop the policy of favouring one class at the expense of another. I hope the Government of India will change their policy. I do not wish to take up any more time. I thank you very much for not only giving me my allotted quota of time, but even a little more.

Mr. M. Ghiasuddin (Punjab Landholders): Mr. Deputy President, I must congratulate the Honourable the Railway Member for presenting us with a surplus budget. This relief to the taxpayers has come at a moment when the limit had almost been reached, and the public and this House had given up the hope that never the time would come when the railways would not remain a burden to the general revenues. India is not the only country which is faced with a deficit railway budget, but since this rail-road competition has come in, it is the position in several countries. It is one of the inevitable results of the development of other ways of communication. The competition of road and air has played havoc with the finances of many railways in all parts of the world, but, all the same, as my Honourable friend, Mr. Joshi, has pointed out, roads can be made allies of the railways. At present, roads are considered the arch enemies of the railways and a sort of nightmare to the Department of the Honourable the Railway Member; but, I submit, with a little more foresight and imagination, these very lorries and road buses can be turned into feeders for the railway traffic. If the railways operate their own buses and start traffic between the towns which are not exactly on the railway lines but on the metalled roads, and issue direct tickets from those towns to other places which are not connected by the railways but are on the metalled roads, and if there is a direct rail-road co-ordinated service, my submission is that these buses will be of use to the railways and the finances of the railways will improve on that account.

Sir, a point has been made by a good many speakers, who spoke before me, that a great deal of traffic was diverted from the railways to roads on account of corruption among the railway employees. We are told fantastic stories about station masters who earn more money than the Honourable the Railway Member himself. I do not know how far

those stories are true, but I would request the authorities to go into this matter fully and see whether or not there is any justification for those stories. A little *bukashik* is, of course,—I do not say permissible,—but prevalent, in every part of the world and in all railways. If you tip a fellow half a crown in England, probably in his stiff-necked English way he will be thankful; and on the French railways a much be-medalled and heavily moustached railway conductor or guard will be so thankful for a ten franc note that you will probably have the embarrassing thought that he was going to kiss you! And no wonder that a rupee to a reservation clerk here is equally welcome. But, as regards other corruption, I think the railway authorities should go into that matter more thoroughly.

There is another public complaint which I would respectfully bring to the notice of the Railway Member, and that is the nuisance of level crossings. A good many accidents take place there, and great delay is caused to the motoring public at these level crossings. Just now, while coming from Lahore to Delhi, I was stopped three times on my way by the same train, because a car would go faster than a railway train, and, by the time you reach the next level crossing, it is closed to all of us for the same train to pass. A good many accidents also happen at those crossings. So it would be better if some money were spent and a gradual improvement made in that direction. There should be bridges or subways to do away with the nuisance of level crossings. There are other accidents also prevalent on the railways, and I say with great regret that the rate of mortality in these railway accidents is very much on the increase. This can be diminished if steel coaches were built instead of these wooden coaches which at present are in use, because, if there is a collision, these steel coaches will be able to stand the shock much better, and, therefore, will be much safer than the wooden coaches.

Sir, our railway revenues can be increased a good deal if our railways were properly advertised. In these days, one sees a good many railway posters, but all in the wrong place. For one thing these posters are written all in English and are posted at wayside stations. And, then, you see the beautiful scenery of Kashmir, and underneath it is written, "Visit India". Of course, if a person has come as far as a wayside station in the heart of India, what is the use of inviting him to visit India? That shows how money is being wasted in advertisements. I am not against advertisements, and nobody should be, because a great deal of business is done through advertisements. But this is the wrong way of advertising, and I think our railways should be advertised in a more proper fashion.

Sir, a good many Honourable Members have spoken about the top-heavy administration of our railways. Of course, that is true. The whole administration of India is top-heavy, and I am sorry to say that our Indian railways are no exception to this general rule. But there is one more way in which money is wasted, and that is the over-profiteering by our railway contractors. This over-profiteering by the contractors is prevalent everywhere, and the railways are no exception in this respect. I think the authorities should show a little more stringency when giving contracts, and the supervision should be done in a better and more efficient way.

Sir, there are some railway tracks which are so obsolete that the sooner they are done away with, the better, and these railway tracks are a burden to the general revenues. One railway to which I should like to draw the attention of the Railway Member is the Kalka Simla Railway

[Mr. M. Ghiasuddin.]

under his very nose. That railway has been running at a loss; and no wonder, because it is so uncomfortable, so slow and so smoky (if I may use the word), that unless it is electrified nobody would like to travel in it, now that motors are available. And the worst feature about this railway is that, when the weather is damp, the smoke gets into the carriages, and it never gets out during the whole of 56 miles of journey; and if no improvement is possible the sooner this railway is done away with, the better.

Another point relates to the woes of the third class passengers; during the period of office of the Honourable the Railway Member, who takes pride in travelling third class himself, if the Honourable Member would only take the trouble of visiting any station during the hot weather and see how women and children are packed almost to suffocation in those carriages, I am sure, his heart would melt, and, instead of spending money on first and second class carriages for which ice cans and other things are also provided, he would see that more trains are started with third class accommodation and thus relieve the congestion in those trains. Sir, the sheds and waiting rooms for third class passengers are like infernos, because they have roofs of tin only in most places, and it looks as if they are specially made to accumulate as much heat as they can during the hot weather. Sir, I congratulate the Honourable the Railway Member on his promise that new air conditioned coaches would be started, but I wish the experiment had been made with third class coaches, instead of first and second class ones, because those are the people who require them most.

As for the Wedgwood Committee, I also join the chorus of protest against the exclusion of an Indian Member from that Committee. The very fact that Indians are excluded from that Committee is very demoralising at a time when we are demanding Indianisation in every branch of Government service; it is really demoralising to have a committee set up and Indians excluded from it. Our people would have at least gained some working experience sitting by, and coming into contact with, those experts, and also got the knowledge of the working of the railways.

In the end, I congratulate Sir Raghavendra Rau on his Knighthood which he thoroughly deserved as a recognition of the services he has rendered to the finances of the railways. I am sure, the whole House will join me in congratulating him.

Raja Sir Vasudeva Raja (Madras: Landholders): Sir, it is satisfactory and is a matter for gratification that the Railway Member has been able to show, after all, a surplus budget this year. The finances of the Railways have been causing considerable anxiety during the past few years, and it is, therefore, encouraging to know that it has turned the corner, and things look bright for the future.

There are just one or two things which I should like to bring to the notice of the Government while I speak on this budget. It does not, I regret to note, provide for any substantial new constructions during this year. The Government are probably afraid of launching into new big schemes for one reason or another. But I think the caution is not justified at the present moment. Money is cheap and can be got for less than three per cent., labour also is cheap and so also are materials. If there was any time that was most propitious for taking up new schemes it

is now. In the past, when new schemes were undertaken, money was dear, and labour and material were costly, and that was why the lines undertaken at such a time proved to be less remunerative. But it will not be so at a time like this when money can be borrowed at a very low rate. In my opinion, this is just the time when the previous losses can be made good by taking up the construction of new lines which would be remunerative and absolutely necessary. If you look at the Railway Map of India, anybody can see how well Northern India is supplied with railway systems and how much gap there is in South India. If railway lines cannot be undertaken on a large scale, at least those that are absolutely necessary should be taken up and should not be postponed. The opening of a first class harbour in Cochin makes it imperative to have certain railway extensions there to meet the growing demands of railway communication consequent on the extensive traffic. Not only that, the harbour itself may suffer in its income but for a few more lines of extension. The Harbour Expert and Administrative Officer, Mr. Bristow, has been expressing vehemently that a short connection between Trichur and Pollachi, and a rail from Mettupalayam to Mysore are indispensable

The Honourable Sir Muhammad Zafrullah Khan: There is a railway already from Chamrajnagar to Mysore. You do not want another one?

Raja Sir Vasudeva Rajah: A railway to Nanjengode. In his words:

"Both of these connections are now imperatively necessary to the success of the Cochin Harbour. Indeed it was questionable whether the scheme should ever have been started without having first a clear agreement on the subject."

He further says that the urgency of taking up the question is proved beyond doubt and he hoped that serious and favourable consideration would be given to it. In the light of such an expert opinion coming from Mr. Bristow to whom great credit is due for his far sight and ability in bringing the Harbour to a successful completion, I urge that the construction of these small lines should not be further put off. The policy of not undertaking them now must be characterised as "Penny wise and pound foolish". I do hope that the Railway Member will give me an assuring reply in this matter. I know he has himself seen the harbour and has studied the question in all its aspects. As such I am surprised that he has not included them in this year's budget. From what I know, both the Cochin and Mysore Governments are also keen to get these extensions.

Another point, I would mention, is the omission in his speech to any reference to the third class passengers. Does it mean that everything has been done for the comfort of the third class passengers? Last year, we heard a lot about a new type of third class coaches, and some Members of the Assembly were even shown those coaches at the New Delhi Railway Station, and, since then, nothing has been heard of, and the model still remains a model. More urgent than the further comforts to be provided for the first class passengers such as air-conditioning arrangement, I think, is the provision of more comfort and accommodation to the third class passengers from whom the bulk of revenue is obtained. I hope this matter also will engage the serious attention of the Honourable the Railway Member.

[Raja Sir Vasudeva Rajah.]

It is noticeable from the budget that more economy is maintained in the working expenses of the railways in the past years without affecting the efficiency in any way. In view of the satisfactory feature of the finances of the railways as evidenced by the budget, the tribute paid to the ability and efficiency of Sir Raghavendra Rau by the Railway Member is perfectly justified, and I have pleasure in endorsing the same.

Dr. F. X. DeSouza (Nominated Non-Official): Mr. Deputy President, this is the first budget after a lapse of six years which has been presented to the House as a surplus budget. An estimated deficit of Rs. 3.44 crores has been suddenly converted into a surplus budget of 15 lakhs. While due credit is to be given to the Honourable the Railway Member and his able assistant, Sir Raghavendra Rau, the Financial Commissioner, whom I take this opportunity of congratulating on the distinction that has been conferred upon him, he being the first person from my part of the world who has been knighted,—I say while due credit is to be given to these gentlemen for the favourable results that have been achieved, I think they would be the first to admit that these results have been just as much due to luck as to good management. Until the beginning of January last, the prospects were very gloomy. Suddenly there was a spurt in goods traffic. There was a rise of as much as four crores caused by the transport of food grains, of cotton and of oilseeds.

While the Honourable the Railway Member in his opening speech naturally expressed satisfaction at the favourable results achieved, it was quite clear from the tone of his speech that there was not much jubilation in his satisfaction. He realised that in these favourable results there was no indication of permanent prosperity having come back to the country. He felt that these favourable results were due to rumours of sudden warfare. I understand from persons competent to judge that the spurt appeared suddenly and has abated as suddenly. What contributed to the somewhat subdued tone in which the Honourable the Railway Member expressed his jubilation was the fact that the passenger traffic showed no improvement at all. On the contrary, there was a lag of as much as Rs. 60 lakhs in the passenger traffic, and I think we all know that it is the passenger traffic which is the barometer of a country's prosperity. Now, Sir, what are the reasons which have contributed to this lag in the passenger traffic? Whenever the question of passenger traffic is mentioned, the Railway Administration trot out two bogeys, and they are the ticketless traveller and the motor competition. Now, talking about these two bogeys, the Honourable the Chief Commissioner for Railways, speaking in the other House, the other day, said:

"In the debates in the Legislature and the correspondence in the press where the subject has been the ticketless traveller or road competition, there has been a tendency to shelve both these problems on the ground that the loss from ticketless traveller and motor competition were mere excuses put forward by the Railways to hide their own inefficiency."

It is a case which reminds me of the old adage. *Qui s'excuse s'accuse*. As to the loss incurred by railways on account of ticketless travel, speaking on the Railway (Amendment) Bill, the other day, I showed that the alleged loss of 50 lakhs of rupees was a mere myth, that it was a mere figment of the railway imagination; at the outside the loss could be computed at nothing higher than Rs. 30,000 per year. I do not for a moment

deny that some loss has been caused to the railways by competition from motor buses, but no figures have been put forward, no statistics have been placed before the House to compute the loss except the bare statement made by the Honourable the Railway Member who, I think, in the course of last year's debate, said that the loss amounted to three crores of rupees. But I shall presently show that, in spite of this competition, there are indirect benefits resulting to the country, from which the railways also will eventually benefit, and in order to show what they are, I shall put before the House certain pertinent considerations.

You, Sir, this morning elaborated the point that the general policy in respect of freights and rates adopted by the railways has been dictated by the consideration that they were more concerned with the export trade of raw materials and less with the import trade of manufactured articles. You complained, and justly complained. . . .

[At this stage, Mr. President (the Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim) resumed the Chair.]

The Honourable the Deputy President complained and justly complained this morning that the requirements of the internal trade of the country were neglected, and that the communications for carrying on the internal trade were also neglected by the policy adopted by the railway authorities. This aspect of the case has also received support from the strong advocacy this afternoon of my Honourable friend, Mr. Joshi. This indifference to the internal trade of the country, this indifference to the agriculture of this country, has contributed to the success of the motor competition on the roads. It is the failure of the railways to accommodate their policy of construction, to adjust their policy of freight and rates, to keep pace with the growing economic changing needs of the country that has made the competition with the motor bus such a serious factor.

Sir, it is said that in spite of this competition, this House should support the railway authorities in their policy of keeping the motor bus under State control, because the State have sunk 800 crores of this country's money in railways which is a national asset, and it is asked why should this bus competition be allowed to jeopardise the return from this investment? Sir, I ask this question: Are you going to cut off access to markets by the rural masses? Are you going to stop their communication with the nearest market, simply because the bond-holders or shareholders of these 800 crores of money may get their pound of flesh in the shape of dividends? There can only be one answer to this question. If you say that the bond-holders are bound to get their pound of flesh,—all right, give them their pound of flesh, but let the general taxpayer, including the capitalist and the manufacturer, pay his share. Why should the rural masses alone be made to bear the burden of this iniquitous demand? Sir, I protest most strongly against any policy or against any attempt to crush the internal trade of the country that is proposed to be taken by the railway authorities

The Honourable Sir Muhammad Zafrullah Khan: What is the Honourable Member referring to as the measure intended to be taken by the railways?

Dr. F. X. DeSouza: I shall explain it presently, Sir. In this connection, I consider that the observation made, the other day, by the Honourable the Finance Member, in the course of the debate on the Road

[Dr. F. X. DeSouza.]

Resolution, has a very sinister import, In the debate on roads, the Honourable the Finance Member said that 800 crores of the country's money was at stake, and he would not allow the Provincial Governments to develop any roads which would come into competition with the railways, so as to affect the earnings of the railways. It is this attitude to which I take the strongest exception.

Sir, it is not denied that motor transport indirectly may benefit, and probably will benefit, the railways in the long run. The Honourable Sir Guthrie Russell, speaking the other day in the Council of State, said that motor transport may create its own traffic, and the resulting increase in the trade may be of great benefit to the railways. Now, speaking on the subject of competition between the rail and the road, which has arisen in many a country, I would refer to a volume which has just been published by the International Chamber of Commerce, and this volume is called "The Road and Rail in Forty Countries", and, in this volume, it has been shown in what manner in these different countries this conflict between the road and rail has been attempted to be solved. You should improve your finances by the provision of increased amenities to railway passengers, by reduction of freights and by other means of persuasion, and not by means of compulsory legislation as is proposed to be done in this country.

May I know how much more time I have? I do not want to exceed my time limit.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The Honourable Member may go on.

Dr. F. X. DeSouza: Let me come to the third class passenger, and here Mr. Joshi will forgive me if he thinks that I am intruding on his province.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: The more the better.

Dr. F. X. DeSouza: In opening the meeting of the Indian Railway Conference Association, His Excellency the Governor General said:

"It is the duty of all railway administrations to ascertain what the public want and to do their utmost to provide it, more especially now that other forms of transport are rising up in competition. The services both for passenger and freight must be speeded up and passenger amenities must be improved especially those provided for the humblest class of traveller who forms the bulk of India's travelling public."

How does the Honourable the Railway Member propose to implement this promise held out by His Excellency the Governor General? By shelving the new design for third class carriage, and by promising the third class passenger, possibly on Greek Kalends, an air conditioned carriage! Air conditioned carriage indeed! He wants elbow room to sit. Give him better facilities for feeding, give him more lavatories where he can ease himself during long journeys. But really this promise of air conditioned carriage, is adding insult to injury. In my long journeys, I could not help noticing the very large number of first class carriages and some second class carriages which go perfectly empty while the third class passengers are packed like sardines. It used to be said in England in the olden days—I do not know whether it is done even now or not—that only Princes and fools travel first. (Laughter.) But in this country it is only

the highly paid Government official that travels first. The Indian gentry, however wealthy they might be, travel only second. Now, I ask, what is the need of having three classes in a railway train in this country?

An Honourable Member: There are four classes.

Dr. F. X. DeSouza: Yes, four classes. Why not have only two as they have in England or on the continent? Why not have only first class and third class, and let those who really want extra comfort have an air conditioned carriage like that promised by the Honourable the Railway Member and pay for it. As for the present second class carriages, it has become almost as bad as the third class.

The Honourable Sir Muhammad Zafrullah Khan: By parity of reasoning, the third class is as good as the present second class. (Laughter.)

Dr. F. X. DeSouza: The other day, I saw a friend of mine travelling second class from Bombay to Delhi, and I found that in his compartment there were eight passengers.

The Honourable Sir Muhammad Zafrullah Khan: Were you travelling first?

Dr. F. X. DeSouza: Yes. I was travelling at Government expense, but I do not always travel

The Honourable Sir Muhammad Zafrullah Khan: I am not in the least objecting. I was thinking of what they say in England. (Laughter.)

Dr. F. X. DeSouza: There were eight persons travelling in that compartment, and my friend was the only ticket holder, and the rest were passholders, and, among the passholders, there was a cinema troupe and they carried with them their paraphernalia—their cooking utensils, their fowls, and it was really most disgusting. In second class, a respectable man who has paid the fare is compelled to travel in those conditions! I ask my Honourable friend to protect the second class passengers in future from this sort of molestation.

The Honourable Sir Muhammad Zafrullah Khan: That has been restricted a good deal.

Dr. F. X. DeSouza: Thank you for small mercies, but still a good deal more has to be done. I do not wish to detain the House any longer as my time is up. All I wish to remark is that, from my study of all that has happened in the past, I feel that the Railway Board, as at present constituted, is out of touch with public opinion. It holds its deliberations entirely in secrecy. It hates the idea of the fierce light of publicity beating upon its deliberations.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: The Central Advisory Council met only twice in the year.

Dr. F. X. DeSouza: Exactly. I draw your attention to what my Honourable friend, Mr. Joshi, has remarked about the Advisory Council having met only twice in the year. The Railway Board is the Star Chamber.

The Honourable Sir Muhammad Zafrullah Khan: I am afraid that your friend forgets that the local Advisory Committees who advise the Agents meet every month.

Dr. F. X. DeSouza: At any rate, the Railway Board, as I have said, is the Star Chamber of the Government of India administration. The attitude of the Railway Board towards the ticketless traveller shows how unsympathetic it is to public opinion in spite of the fact that that Bill of theirs has met with a howl of execration from one part of the country to the other. With regard to management of the finances, the progress of the Railway Board has been like the rake's progress. But, Sir, Hogarth's rake ended his days in Fleetwood Prison, but the Railway Board hopes to end its days in the splendid isolation of the Statutory Railway Authority. Sir, it is from this aspect of the case that I wish to consider the Resolution which my Honourable friend, Sir Raghavendra Rau, is going to place before the House in a few days, to cancel all the liabilities of the railways to the public revenues.

An Honourable Member: This is a repudiation of debt.

The Honourable Sir Muhammad Zafrullah Khan: Why not consider it when it does come before you?

Dr. F. X. DeSouza: That liability for past debts to the public revenues is the one hold that this Assembly will have in future over the railway administration, and this House must exercise great caution before it passes the Resolution my Honourable friend proposes to move. With these words, I resume my seat.

Sardar Sant Singh: No doubt it is a great relief to hear a budget speech announcing a surplus in the railway finances after so many years of depression. But, in spite of this fact, I refuse to offer my bouquet of flowers. A good many congratulations have been showered on him from all sides of the House, but I look at the matter from a different point of view. The Honourable Member, who occupies the position of Railway Member, is the first Indian who has come from the public life of India, and, as such, we expected that he will give us in his speech some national outlook, a different picture from that which has been presented to us since the railway finances were separated from the general revenues. But I find that his speech suffers from at least one serious omission, and that omission is not to take note of the great criticism which has been levelled upon the appointment of the Wedgwood Committee. On the occasion of the last supplementary demand, I gave expression to my views that the non-inclusion of Indians on that Committee was one of those serious blunders of which the Indian public has been complaining on many an occasion. I do not want to repeat the same arguments once more, but I will add that this serious omission from the budget speech, coming as it does from an erstwhile public man, either shows that he has not treated the demand of the public with that respect which we expect from our public men when they are raised to high positions or he had nothing to say in justification of the policy. However, we expected that he would say something about this in the budget speech.

The Honourable Sir Muhammad Zafrullah Khan: I replied to the debate on that occasion, though the reply may not have satisfied my Honourable friend. Did he expect me to repeat it over again in my budget speech?

Sardar Sant Singh: I hope that the matter was of greater importance than to be disposed of in a supplementary grant debate.

The Honourable Sir Muhammad Zafrullah Khan: Then, it should not have been raised on that occasion.

Sardar Sant Singh: In the budget, we should have expected to hear something more, because, in my opinion, the appointment of an outside committee of experts by implication suggests that, in spite of our vast system of railways and the big amounts of money that we spend, we have not got any capable experts who would be able to manage the organisation in a proper manner. Not only that. The words which he used in his speech were that the Government of India were willing to accept advice from whichever quarter it came. That showed a sort of inferiority complex about the Indian railways. I think, Sir, that in place of that he should have rather protested against that idea of our railways being inferior in any way to the other systems of the world. However, about this Wedgwood Committee I will add one or two words. The first is this. I understand that the members of this Committee are on the eve of leaving the shores of India. Yet none of the members of this Committee have considered it necessary to consult the Railway Standing Finance Committee or the Railway Advisory Committees. What sort of a report they are going to produce I cannot say, but the fact remains that a representative body of this House has not been consulted during their stay here, and I understand that none of the local advisory committees have been consulted either. I hope that this omission will not affect the report one way or the other, but I must point out that this is a serious omission.

Coming to the second point, I want to draw the attention of the House once more to the problem of the Indianisation of the railway service. In the budget speech, there is no mention as to how far the principle of Indianisation of railway services has been acted upon during the past year. We are not given any facts to show how many Indians have been appointed to the higher posts and how many have been superseded by the Europeans in the services.

The Honourable Sir Muhammad Zafrullah Khan: What does the Honourable Member mean?

Sardar Sant Singh: I will explain myself. I put certain questions in the Simla Session drawing the attention of the Honourable Member as to the supersessions that had taken place on the North Western Railway in the superior Indian cadre. In spite of certain promises held out to certain Indian officers, when they were transferred to the outlying districts outside Lahore, we find that the policy of the Railway Board has undergone a sudden change, and some junior European officers were put up above their heads. I think the Railway Board knows about that case sufficiently well. But I have still a serious complaint to make in that respect. In their zeal to promote the European officer over the heads of the Indian officers, I am informed that having found no excuse they have given some remarks about the service of those Indian officers which are not very creditable to them, not that they deserved them, but because they wanted to justify their policy of supersession. This is adding insult to injury. I hope the Honourable the Railway Member will see that the policy of Indianisation does not come to an end by the appointment of the Honourable Member as Member in charge of Railways. No doubt charity begins at home, but surely it does not end there. I will ask him that it should

[Sardar Sant Singh.]

be the duty of the Government, at any rate of the Railway Member, so long as he is in his place to tell us from year to year, how many posts have been Indianised during the course of the year.

The Honourable Sir Muhammad Zafrullah Khan: That is to be found in the annual report. Posts are not Indianised. Recruitment to the superior posts takes place in a certain proportion, which I explained to the House last year—75 Indians to 25 Europeans, and that is being kept up.

Sardar Sant Singh: I am very thankful to the Honourable Member for having enlightened us as to the percentage of the new posts that are to be Indianised, but the question still remains—how many have been actually taken into the service during the course of a year.

Then comes another question, and that is the question of discrimination. A vacancy has fallen in the Railway Board by the transfer of Sir Raghavendra Rau from the post of Financial Commissioner of Railways. Will he tell us whether this post will be filled up by an Indian or by a European? (A Voice: "He has already filled it up.")

Lieut.-Colonel Sir Henry Gidney: Why not by an Anglo-Indian?

Sardar Sant Singh: I will deal with Anglo-Indians very shortly. I thought the bubble was already pricked by my friend, Mr. Jcshi.

Lieut.-Colonel Sir Henry Gidney: Why not prick his bubble?

Mr. N. M. Joshi: Anglo-Indians are Indians.

Sardar Sant Singh: Why in this respect is there this retrogression?

4 P.M. If my Honourable friend will excuse me, I will point out one more fact which looks like a discrimination. Two Members of the Railway Board have been successively granted extensions of their service in the Railway Board, but no extension was granted to the Honourable Sir Raghavendra Rau. Why? This does seem to be a discrimination against him. From the Indian point of view, dealing with the question as an Indian, as I do, I would certainly say that there is some change of policy of which we are not aware.

Lieut.-Colonel Sir Henry Gidney: He did not want an extension, being fed up already.

Sardar Sant Singh: I do not know whether the Honourable Member wanted it himself or not, but it looks like that.

The Honourable Sir Muhammad Zafrullah Khan: Who is the second Member of the Railway Board that the Honourable Member referred to?

Sardar Sant Singh: Sir Alan Parsons was the first Member.

The Honourable Sir Muhammad Zafrullah Khan: I thought the Honourable Member meant two Members of the present Board.

Sardar Sant Singh: The third point in this connection is the transfer of about one and three-fourths crores of rupees to the Burma Railways out of the Depreciation Fund. From my Honourable friend's speech, I find that this proportion is to the total amount of the Depreciation Fund

as it should be today if no borrowing had taken place from the Depreciation Fund. That is about Rs. 47 crores. In his speech, the Honourable Member said:

"Our total borrowing from the Fund will be reduced to Rs. 31½ crores, and, but for these borrowings, the actual balance in the Depreciation Fund would have amounted to nearly Rs. 47 crores. Of this balance, about Rs. 1½ crores represents accumulations in respect of the Burma Railways and will be handed over to Burma on the 1st April next on its separation from India."

May I ask if the Depreciation Fund has been reduced to about 11 crores, and, if the Resolution is to be moved that the borrowing should be wiped off, why should not Burma get her share of 11 crores instead of 47 crores? May I ask him, if the Honourable Member has not been careful enough, not to be over-reached by his neighbour, Sir James Grigg, the master of the finances? He is not in his seat, otherwise I would have asked him—by what calculations has he reached this figure of Rs. 1½ crores which they want to hand over to Burma? Is it not at the expense of the Indian Railways? I hope my friend will look into the figures once more and will find out that the portion which goes to the share of Burma is much less in amount than as it has been allocated. Coming to his recommendation about air-conditioning some first-class carriages as an experimental measure, may I ask him if he has taken the climatic conditions of India into consideration? Or is he not presenting the travellers with pneumonia, probably, as the outcome of travel in these conditions? Here Sir Henry Gidney's services are most desirable. He can give us valuable advice. In the temperature of India, when a person travels in a carriage like a first class air-conditioned carriage with even temperature from Bombay to Lahore, and, while the carriage has to be opened many times at stoppage stations, is it not the case that instead of providing comforts to the passengers, it may add to his difficulties? (A Voice: "Not compulsory.") No doubt that is true, but it is a temptation which may be resorted to by any new arrival in India. No doubt, Sir, he has consulted probably the history of the United States of America Railways on this point.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The Honourable Member is approaching the end of his time limit.

The Honourable Sir Muhammad Zafrullah Khan: The Honourable Member has some experience of air-conditioning, surely, in this Chamber, and I do not think he has ever been in danger of falling a victim to pneumonia?

Sardar Sant Singh: Did the Railway Board look into the similar experiment made in the United Kingdom, where it was a failure? Sir, before spending a lot of money on this experiment, they should have more data to go by. The next point, which I want to deal with at this stage, is the corruption in services. Here, replying to the debate last year, the Honourable Member said:

"I have nowhere taken up the attitude that, if there is corruption among railway employees, it is the fault of the public, and, therefore, the public alone are to blame. As a matter of fact, dealing with this matter, again, I was careful enough to say that cases of underweightment and misdeclaration of goods were due either to the negligence or to the fraud of railway employees."

[Sardar Sant Singh.]

I want to draw the attention of the House to this fact that there can be no doubt that there are certain conditions prevailing on the Railways at this time which can be tackled and the corruption can be uprooted. Does he not know that in the public offices, stations are actually auctioned to the highest bidder to men who are the employees of the Railways? Does he not know that there is actually a competition to get a particular station, and that money flows freely in the open, without there being any secrecy at all?

The Honourable Sir Muhammad Zafrullah Khan: If the Honourable Member will give me the last instance, I shall certainly take drastic action.

Sardar Sant Singh: I think the best course will be for the Honourable Member to appoint a sub-committee of this House which can gather the facts and figures. Go to every station, ask anybody in the station, and he will tell that this is the case in such and such offices.

An Honourable Member: Nobody will admit that.

Sardar Sant Singh: And yet nobody will admit that. Sir, this is a strange country where a thing is done in the public light, known to everybody, and yet the officers refuse to admit

The Honourable Sir Muhammad Zafrullah Khan: Sir, I really do not know where we stand. One Honourable Member says, "if I ask anybody, he will tell me that this is the case"; another Honourable Member says, "nobody will admit"!

Sardar Sant Singh: May I offer my friend the hospitality of my car to take him to the railway station and ask several persons who, I am quite sure, will admit that this thing is going on. Sir, this is a public scandal, and nobody can doubt it. Take the Engineering Department. Who does not know that percentages have been fixed—from 5 up to 15 per cent., from the Executive Engineer down to the Overseer; everybody's share is fixed. (Laughter.) Can they deny that the evil does not exist? Sir, it does exist, but they say it is the public which is to blame.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The Honourable Member has exceeded his time limit, and he must conclude now.

Sardar Sant Singh: My submission is, Sir, that if they cannot uproot corruption from the public services, then they had better abdicate and let others come forward to govern this country.

I do not want to take any more time of the House although I have got certain other points to make. Before I sit down, I will just say one word to my Honourable friend, Sir Henry Gidney. His speech was of a type as though he was threatening the Government some time and pleading to them at another time, but all the time, we know, he was playing a part which was not meant only for the Government, but for the audience in the country at large. As a matter of fact, if any discrimination of the kind which he advocates is carried on, it will not be wrong to say that such a discrimination will cause the greatest bitterness in the country.

Mr. Umar Aly Shah (North Madras: Muhammadan): "Mr. President, I want to put before the House some grievances in connection with the railways in India. When these railways were started for the first time, money was collected from peasants and other Indians in the name of cess. Nearly 800 crores have been spent upon these railways, but they are not yet even self-supporting. In the beginning the experts made some mistake. They did not spread railways all over India as they ought to have done in order to connect every town and village. India is poor; if a poor man or peasant wants to go from his village or town for a train, it will take more than an hour to reach the railway station. 90 per cent. are of this nature. During the summer and the rains, passengers do suffer immensely. I want to know whether these railways are intended for the general public, or for the army. Then enough accommodation is not provided for third class passengers, nor do the railways look after their convenience. Another thing, which I would like to bring to the notice of the Railway Member, is that, though we have so many facilities at big railway stations, for example, the fruit stalls, book stalls, sweets stalls, there are no facilities for the purchase of postal articles. If a passenger wants to post a postcard or a letter at the railway station in the mail, it is not possible for him to do so, unless he is prepared to pay the late fee. I, therefore, want that railway passengers should be given the facility to post their letters at railway stations in the mails without any late fee providing also facilities to procure postcards and covers on the platform at important stations.

The next thing, which I want to mention, is that some proportion should be fixed for the railway employment of different communities. At present, it is not possible for me to know how many Muslim employees are on different railways. The other day, in connection with some question, my Honourable friend, Bhai Parma Nand, gave some figures of Muslim employees. May I ask him if there is any difference between a Muhammadan and a Hindu or between a Parsi and a Christian? He belongs to the Hindu Mahasabha, and he should know that the Hindu religion advocates toleration and equality. His own religion says in Vedic literature:

*"Athma Vath Sarvabhoothani."
 "A Thasmath Jayathe Prano Manas Sarvendriyanicha.
 Kham Vayurjyothi Rapaha Prudhivi Viswasya Dharini."
 "Para Sbhava Karmani Naprasamsayeth Nagarihyeth,
 Viswamahatmakam Pasyam Prakruthi: Karushe Nacha."*

It means that there is no difference between human beings as they come from the same elements. You should not criticise any person, because all human being are the same. All creation has been coming from two parts, i.e., energy and matter; but there is no other difference. I know my friend, Bhai Parma Nand, is not a religious revolutionary or a nationalist revolutionary or a political revolutionary. The other day, he said that he was a communal revolutionary, to which I attach no meaning.

Then, Sir, there are some booking clerks who will not give any facilities to the passengers. The same remarks apply with equal force to the ticket collectors. If a passenger purchases half a ticket for his child, these ticket collectors will say that he ought to have purchased the full ticket. If a child is only two years of age and no ticket has been purchased for him, they will make him out to be more than three years and compel the poor fellow to purchase a half ticket for him. Much has been said about ticketless travellers, but if you can properly check them, there will be no trouble. I have often noticed that tickets are not issued to the passengers

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in time, with the result that they get into the train without tickets. I request the Railway Member to help these poor third class passengers in any way he can.

The Honourable Sir Muhammad Zafrullah Khan: Sir, I am very grateful to Honourable Members for having expressed their gratification at the prospect of a surplus budget. Some of them have gone further and have congratulated me upon my good luck in this respect. It is perfectly true that to a very large extent railway earnings depend upon economic conditions and the recent fluctuations in those conditions, adverse or favourable, cannot be attributed to the efforts or lack of effort of any single individual, or of any single Government, and, therefore, Honourable Members were justified in using the expression "good luck" in this connection. I do hope, however, that the House will appreciate that these matters are not entirely and purely matters of luck. During prosperous years, it is no less the duty of those who are in charge of the Department to continue to strive after economy in expenditure and increase in earnings and the promotion of amenities as it is their duty during adverse periods to watch over these matters. That must be clearly understood, and, therefore, to the extent to which any deterioration or any rise in the earnings can be attributed to the lack of such efforts or watchfulness in these directions, the administration may deserve condemnation or felicitation; but I realise myself, no less than anybody else, that a good deal of the recent fluctuations, that we have experienced, are due to factors over which neither I, nor the Railway Board, nor the Railway Administrations, nor even the Government of India, by themselves had any appreciable control, and that, therefore, it is only just and fair, to attribute our solvency during the current year largely to an improvement in these factors, but I do hope that Honourable Members will also remember that, if it is a matter of good luck to be in the position in which the railways find themselves this year, it may be a matter of comparative bad luck to find themselves in the position in which they found themselves at the end of last year, and that, therefore, if the entire credit for this year's results cannot be attributed to efforts on the part of the railways, the entire blame for the results of last year could also not be laid at the door of the railways.

Now, Sir, coming to the criticisms offered on the budget, I shall first take up the question raised by my Honourable friend, Sir Henry Gidney, as it falls into a separate class by itself and has not much relation to the other matters that have been discussed during the course of the day. Sir Henry Gidney has quoted extensively from my speeches of last year dealing with this matter, and I should have thought that he would have realised from a perusal of those speeches that the matter could not profitably be carried any further during the course of the discussions this year, and that perhaps it would have been wiser, pending a final decision of the matter by Government, to let the matter rest where it stood last year. I realise his great anxiety on behalf of his community, and I sympathise with him in his anxiety, but I am afraid I am not in a position today any more than I was last year, to give him any categorical assurance with regard to the matter he has mentioned. I am afraid he brought me into the matter a little too pointedly possibly seeking to draw a distinction between the Railway Member and the Government of India, but I do assure him that, it would not be justifiable to draw that distinction. I warned him last year that I could not give him the decision of the Government on the matter as no decision had yet been arrived at, but I told him that I was willing

to look into certain matters in the meantime which might afford a solution of the difficulties with which his people were faced. He says that does not satisfy him. It may be that my suggestion does not go far enough, but a decision on the question raised by him has not yet been reached, and, therefore, it cannot be communicated to him. Lest, however, any misunderstanding should arise from the references that he made to me and certain inferences that he sought to draw from what I had said or had left unsaid on previous occasions, may I again briefly restate the position. Sir Henry Gidney has referred to section 242 of the Government of India Act. I told him last year,—and I repeat it this year, that this section would become operative only when this part of the Act is brought into force; obviously it cannot become operative at any earlier date. The principle of the section, however, has been accepted and is being given effect to even now. The difference between the position as it exists today and the position as my friend, Sir Henry Gidney, would wish to see it is that he seeks to place a certain interpretation upon one part of this section which he is asking Government to accept as the correct interpretation of that part of the section. Government have arrived at no final decision in this matter, and, therefore, I am unable to tell him whether Government are or are not prepared to accept Sir Henry Gidney's interpretation as the correct interpretation which that part of the section is capable of bearing. He seeks to draw the conclusion from one part of this section that the Federal Railway Authority should fix for the members of his community, when holding certain posts, a remuneration which should have reference not to considerations of supply and demand or the qualifications required for performing the duties and functions attaching to those posts, but also to some standard of living which Sir Henry Gidney has in mind. I pointed out to him last year that, so far as that was concerned, speaking entirely on my own, I was not able to see eye to eye with him, that is to say, it did not appear to me that that was an interpretation which the language of the section was reasonably capable of bearing. I am afraid, I am still unconvinced that that is the true meaning of the section but I repeat that so long as Government have not come to any final decision on the matter, it would really serve no useful purpose to discuss on the floor of the House the interpretation that ought to be placed upon the terms of this section. It is a profitless discussion, but, Sir Henry Gidney insists upon a reply. If he wants an alternative interpretation of this part of the section, I venture to offer him one. The section says that the Federal Railway Authority, in making appointments to certain kinds of posts, shall have regard to certain matters. As a general proposition, that having been laid down by Statute, the Federal Railway Authority must have regard to those matters, and the Government of India are already giving due weight to those matters. Sir Henry Gidney himself admits that, with regard to other factors mentioned in the section, he has no grievance. His difference with Government is over the matter of remuneration. He says that "have regard to the remuneration of those posts" means that the remuneration attaching to certain posts, when held by members of his community, should be raised and brought in accord with his ideas of what it should be. A perfectly reasonable construction of the section would be: "Look at the category and remuneration of posts to which members of this particular community have in the past been largely recruited; and keeping in mind the past association of the community with that category of posts, you should carry out your obligation of making recruitment to such posts by ensuring that they should continue largely to be recruited into those categories. Your obligation will not be discharged in the spirit if you offer to

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take them into entirely different categories carrying different rates of pay which may be unsuited to them and say "These are open to you and we are willing to give you your percentage in these categories". This could only be in the nature of a direction; for the Statute could not have set out different categories of posts and said: "A certain community have held a certain percentage of posts in this category and in that category, and you should, therefore, continue to recruit them into those categories in accordance with those proportions". Now, that is one interpretation, and I venture to think, not an unreasonable one. For if it were desirable to argue here and now whether the interpretation that Sir Henry Gidney seeks to place on the section is or is not a reasonable one it might well be urged that if Parliament had intended that a discriminatory scale of remuneration should be paid to the members of a particular community, when holding certain posts, then the expression used would not have been "shall have due regard to the remuneration of those posts", because the remuneration of those posts means the remuneration that those posts carry, the remuneration that is attached to them. The Statute would then have said: "It shall be their duty to determine the remuneration of the posts to which members of this community are appointed". I need not, however, labour this point any further. As I have said, this discussion has been provoked by Sir Henry Gidney's desire to have the matter settled on the floor of this House, but I am afraid it cannot be settled on the floor of this House. Government have it under consideration, and, as soon as a decision is arrived at, I have no doubt, it will be communicated to Sir Henry Gidney.

Sir Henry Gidney darkly hinted at the situation that might arise on Government's refusal to accept the interpretation that he seeks to place upon the section. He threatens that if this interpretation is not accepted, there will be a common grievance between his community and other communities who supply recruits to the railway services, and that common action would be taken. I have understood that one of the grounds on which special treatment has in the past been asked for by the Anglo-Indian community is,—at any rate it used often to be put forward by Sir Henry Gidney during discussions in the Round Table Conferences and the Joint Select Committee,—that members of this community could be particularly relied upon during times of trouble to stand by the administration. By uttering threats of common action, this morning, Sir Henry Gidney has completely destroyed that argument.

Now, Sir, coming to the criticisms of the budget, may I, before I go on to specific matters, repeat in one or two sentences what I said during the discussions on the railway budget last year? There is no attitude in any quarter on the railway side that things are as perfect as they can be on the railways. I felt that some part of the criticism of Honourable Members was based perhaps upon the feeling or the misapprehension that on this side that kind of attitude had been adopted. Nobody, who has any responsibility for the running of such a vast system of transport, can possibly take up that attitude. Even after all that is possible today has been done,—and I would be the last to claim that that had been done,—there would still be room for improvement as time passed. Therefore, a good deal of the criticism with regard to specific matters may well be justified. On the other hand, when Honourable Members are in a critical mood, I am afraid they fail to make sufficient allowance for other factors which either may possibly not be within their knowledge or which they are pleased to

ignore, because they might feel that perhaps the criticism or argument would be weakened if an allowance were made for those factors. Take for instance, Sir Muhammad Yakub's general criticism and the specific instances that he gave in support of that criticism. He said that a good deal of improvement could be made in time-tables. I have myself sometimes noticed that a certain amount of improvement might be possible. I have then brought certain suggestions to the notice of the particular administration concerned. When the matter is looked into, I discover that I had completely ignored some connections and had focussed my attention only on certain others, and that there are real practical difficulties in the way of the adjustments that I have suggested or that have been suggested to me and which I had asked the administrations to look into. They have pointed out in their turn that if one connection is disturbed at one place, perhaps three or four will be affected at other places. But occasional improvement is possible, and such improvement is made; which leads me to believe that if more attention were paid to these matters, time-tables could be framed which would be a considerable improvement upon those that are in operation at present. Honourable Members will recollect that, along with certain other matters, I brought this to the attention of the Agents on the last occasion when they were in Delhi for the sittings of the Conference. But when Sir Muhammad Yakub went on to give instances in this connection, he pitched upon two which, on the face of them, indicated lack of consideration of these matters, but in respect of which there is a certain amount of explanation. For instance, he said that at one time a through carriage used to run between Lucknow and Delhi *via* Moradabad, and that it has now ceased to run. It has ceased to run on that route, because another through carriage has started running between Lucknow and Delhi *via* Cawnpore. The object of the through carriage was to give a through connection between Lucknow and Delhi in either direction. It was found that a more convenient and quicker service could be provided by arranging to run this carriage *via* Cawnpore. That is a complete answer to that piece of criticism; that so far as the convenience itself is concerned, it has been improved. Nevertheless, the East Indian Railway are being asked to look into the question of restoring this through carriage between Lucknow and Delhi *via* Moradabad; that is to say, the new service that has been started *via* Cawnpore should continue, and they should see whether it would not be possible to restore the original service also.

Another instance selected by Sir Muhammad Yakub was that the distance between Moradabad and Delhi was 100 miles, and that the service between the two places was very slow: he said it took 5 or 5½ hours. I imagine it should be possible to accelerate at least some of these services: but it is not correct that the time taken is 5 or 5½ hours: as a matter of fact, the slowest service takes nearly five hours—4h. 55m., and the quickest takes an hour less—3h. 58m. I do not say that is an ideal state of things, but it is not as bad as the Honourable Member tried to make out, though as I have said, all these matters are capable of improvement and are being gradually improved. Railways are a department of which almost everybody has some experience, and, therefore, there is always a volume of suggestions forthcoming, and they are all welcome; but all suggestions are not feasible or practicable, and those that are feasible and practicable cannot all be carried into effect immediately.

With regard to certain other matters, I have been warned that these will be taken up next week during the discussion on demands, and that, therefore, the detailed criticism and suggestions of Honourable Members will

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be placed before the House on that occasion. I shall, therefore, refrain from dealing with those matters in detail, and shall refer to some aspects of them only.

With regard to bigger matters of policy, I may state that there is a good deal of difference of opinion concerning them. Matters of policy always will evoke differences, and, therefore, it is not possible to meet all criticism with regard to policy; if I were so minded, I could meet the criticism of one Member by the counter criticism of another. But let me state this, in regard to matters of that kind, that wherever we find that a certain system or a certain policy is defective in some respects and that the advantages which might be attributed to that system or policy do not more than counterbalance the defect, we ourselves take action. When Honourable Members make suggestions, every one of these suggestions is examined and eventually put up to me, and I am able to apply my mind and such intelligence and experience, that I possess, to the matter and decide whether the change is or is not worthwhile. Honourable Members' criticisms of last year have all been tabulated here with Honourable Members' names against them, and the dates on which they spoke, the pages of the reports where the suggestions appear, and the action, if any, taken upon them. It, therefore, is not necessary for me this afternoon to go into these questions and repeat what I said last year, except to give the assurance that nothing that has been said today and that might be said during the next week, when the demands come under discussion, will be overlooked. Where I have any information to impart to Honourable Members on these matters, I shall give that information either this afternoon or during the discussions next week.

Now, as regards treatment of third class passengers, corruption amongst staff, and so on, I may give some general information to Honourable Members. That, again, is a matter which Honourable Members will realise cannot be set right in the course of a day or a year or even two or three years. But what can be done is to try to persuade those who actually come in contact with that class of passenger to change their attitude, to take on an attitude of greater helpfulness, greater kindliness, greater courtesy towards people who, by the very lack of means and facilities which are available to others, are in a helpless condition whenever they travel away from their homes. I do assure Honourable Members that I have not let slip any opportunity of impressing that point of view upon those upon whom lies the direct responsibility of administering the different railway systems of India. I am assured that they in turn are doing whatever is possible to see that there is a real change of attitude in these matters, and I am beginning to observe the results of that change and have been assured by people who ought to know that there is some change in that respect. Let us hope that the change will be progressive, and we shall begin to see the results of it more and more as time passes. I will be able to furnish details when this aspect of the question is discussed next week. Different railways have adopted different kinds of devices and all of them are having a certain amount of effect. Corruption is a more difficult matter to deal with, and let me be quite frank about it. There is such a host of allegations with regard to this matter that it would be unreasonable to say that it was all mere suspicion or imagination. There must be real grievances in that respect for such a volume of complaints to arise, but I do hope Honourable Members will realise the difficulty of the administration also. One Honourable Member has made an allegation which goes

very much further than anything that we had even second hand knowledge of, namely, that stations are openly auctioned in the sense that if anybody wants to be transferred to a particular station he has to pay a great deal of consideration to get there, the implication being that he wants to get to that particular station, because there may be a good deal of loading and unloading of goods at that station and he would get a share out of the total pool of ill-gotten gains of the railway staff at that station. If there is open auctioning of that kind going on, how is it that it is not possible to cite specific instances with evidence to support them? In view of what Honourable Members have been trying to impress upon me, my own attitude, in dealing with personal cases, is that I start with a bias against the man who has been punished for dishonesty. When I am dealing with such matters, I am not acting in a judicial capacity, and, therefore, it is quite open to me to start with a bias against the man who has been punished, and I make that presumption in view of the repeated allegations made on the floor of this House. In other matters if I find that too severe a view has been taken, I sometimes suggest that the matter might be reconsidered, but with regard to corruption, that is my own attitude. I shall certainly be prepared to do more if more is suggested. If any practical means of reducing corruption and ultimately stopping it are suggested, I shall certainly be willing to consider them. I said last year that if particulars are given, individual cases would be looked into, for I do not regard this as a small matter; the complaints have assumed such volume that the evil must be of large proportions, and that being so, I regard it as a matter of national importance, and even in individual cases when something is sent up, which is supported by evidence which can be tested, I assure Honourable Members that the matter would be carefully looked into.

Another complaint by Sir Muhammad Yakub was that the Divisional System had led to too much decentralisation and that there was not enough supervision by the Railway Board over Agents and by Agents over their Divisional Officers. I am afraid, I am unable to appreciate whether the criticism is well founded, and, for this reason, that I have, on the other hand, heard a good deal of criticism that there is too much interference by the Railway Board with Agents. It is the duty of Agents to keep in touch with everything that goes on on their systems, but with regard to the Railway Board two distinct policies are advocated; one is that the Railway Board should not interfere too much in matters of detail, and the other is that it should carry on very strict supervision of railway administrations. If specific instances were given, it would perhaps be possible to discover whether the one grievance or the other has any justification behind it.

Then, a criticism has been made by one Honourable Member with regard to new constructions. I have, in my speech introducing the budget, given reasons for not embarking upon large programmes of expenditure. It may be that we are on the threshold of a prolonged period of prosperity and if that turns out to be the case, there will be ample time for the Railway Board to take up the consideration of such projects as may hold out hopes of turning out to be remunerative, and all these factors of cheap money and cheap labour might then be taken into account, though I doubt whether labour will continue to be cheap for long. Materials required for the construction of new lines are certainly no longer cheap; they are going up in prices very rapidly.

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The Honourable the Deputy President alluded to the vexed question of railway rating policy. That is a complex question. I am sure, Honourable Members do not expect that I should enter into a discussion of rating policy on the floor of the House, but may I remind the Honourable the Deputy President that he himself pointed out that the railways were not unconscious of the change that had taken place in the kind of traffic offering for carriage by railways. As a matter of fact, I said in my budget speech last year that the character of that traffic was changing; and that a good deal of long distance traffic to and from the ports was now swinging over to internal traffic, so that we are not unconscious of the change. He himself has referred to certain observations made by the Agent of the B. N. Railway about the change that is taking place, and the need of adjustment, but the adjustment will have to be gradual. If any sudden adjustment were attempted, I am afraid we might dislocate the traffic altogether. The railways must continue to watch any changes of that kind and adjust themselves to the different conditions that have arisen and may arise.

Then, the Honourable the Deputy President was pleased to observe that:

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he felt that I had referred in my speech to a matter which really should not have been considered worthy of mention in a budget speech. He referred to our experiment in respect of air conditioned coaches. He said that an expenditure of two lakhs and 40 thousand was not worth mentioning in a budget speech. Another Honourable Member, who spoke later, thought we were risking a great deal of money,—two lakhs and 40 thousand, without knowing whether the experiment will or will not succeed. He thought it was a huge burden upon the finances of the railways. In any case, if it had not been mentioned, we may have been blamed afterwards that we had undertaken expenditure along a new line without taking the House into our confidence. The Honourable the Deputy President thought that we should have introduced these coaches without anybody being any the wiser for it. But, from the mere point of view of publicity, it would not be desirable that a change of that kind should be introduced without anybody being the wiser for it. Apart, however, from that, I should have thought that Honourable Members would be interested, and for this reason. It is a small matter so far as the initial expenditure is concerned, Rs 2,40,000, but it is a big experiment in the sense that if, from the scientific as well as from the financial point of view, it justifies itself—and I can express no opinion upon it at this stage—but if it does justify itself, it is bound to revolutionise railway travel in India. I have told Honourable Members what the conditions in an air conditioned coach would be. They can themselves, when the weather gets a little hotter and dustier, attempt to make an estimate of what the difference would be if all the dust and cinders and other undesirable objects were excluded from their carriages and an equable temperature were maintained throughout the journey. Again, if the experiment is financially as well as scientifically successful, then it would be practical politics to run on the faster trains third class air conditioned coaches, provided in their case also, as in the higher class of coaches, there are a sufficient number of people willing to pay a surcharge for the additional comfort. The surcharge would no doubt be graduated according to the different classes of carriages. We are hoping that it will not be too heavy even in the case of the first class, where, apart from air conditioning, it may be possible to provide other

amenities, for instance, pillows, sheets, beddings and all that, so also in the case of the third class, if any tendency is shown to take advantage of these coaches when they can be provided, I do not think the surcharge would be either prohibitive or heavy. I would not wish to commit myself to any definite estimate before the experiment is tried out. But, as soon as the experiment is tried out next summer, it would be possible to make estimates, and I think Honourable Members may take it that, if from other points of view the experiment is successful, there would be no insuperable difficulty in introducing it with regard to third class coaches. Again, I do not want the House to imagine that that would solve the problem of third class travel in India. It would not. It would touch only a fraction of it, that is to say, it would affect only those people who have very long distances to travel and who are able and willing to pay the surcharge. Therefore, this is not an attempt to draw a red herring across the trail, to put off Honourable Members from their very praiseworthy insistence upon greater amenities and facilities for third class passengers. The third class passenger will continue to receive, I hope, more and more attention, and his lot, as time passes, should be less and less uncomfortable. As I have said, details of what is being done in that connection I shall furnish the House with next week. I have got them here, but as Honourable Members have kept some of their detailed criticisms in reserve, perhaps it would be better to deal with it all at one time.

I now come to certain suggestions made by my Honourable friend, Sir Leslie Hudson. He made reference to certain suggestions that he had made last year and he was pleased to observe that to some extent those suggestions had been met and that action that had been taken was along right lines. I need not, therefore, take up those matters; something has been done; and the indications are that something further may be done in those directions. With regard to the rest of his criticism, I am to a very large extent in accord with him. As an instance of lack of publicity effort on the part of railways, he drew attention to the fact that copies of the Railway Board's Report were not made available to Honourable Members as a matter of course. I have a suggestion to make in that connection. Here we are governed by two considerations; one is that we desire, indeed are anxious, to supply as much information to Honourable Members as it may be possible and as they may be desirous of having. On the other hand, we do not want unnecessarily to add to the cost of these publications. And perhaps this suggestion would meet with the wishes of Honourable Members in this connection. If Honourable Members would intimate to the Railway Board—such of them as desire to have these publications—that so long as they are Members of this House they desire that these Reports should be sent to them immediately they are ready for publication they will be supplied with those reports as a matter of course.

Sir Leslie Hudson: Thank you.

The Honourable Sir Muhammad Zafrullah Khan: Other Honourable Members who do not want to wade through these comparatively dry details and are content with the documents that are supplied to them,—they need not take the trouble of sending this intimation and I think that would meet the situation completely. With regard to the other suggestion made by Sir Leslie Hudson that we should have a brochure prepared every year from the Railway Board's Report containing such matter as

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may be of interest to the general public, that I shall look into, but something of that kind is being done even now. A note is prepared from these reports, and translated, I think, into as many as seven languages, and it is put out in the press in different parts of the country in the papers which are more widely read in those parts of the country. If it were issued in the form of a booklet, the language question would cause difficulty. The method at present followed is an inexpensive method of reaching almost everybody who may be interested in these matters, but as I have said, I shall look into that suggestion. There is another suggestion which Sir Leslie Hudson has made, and I think it is a very useful suggestion. I am unable to say what the volume of work involved will be if it is adopted, and, therefore, I cannot express an opinion upon the practicability of it, but off-hand I can say that it is an extremely useful suggestion, namely, that at least in the case of parcels, notice of arrival should be sent to the consignee, so that he does not incur demurrage charges merely for want of knowledge that the consignment has arrived. That is a matter which will also be looked into. I am afraid, I am unable to accept his suggestion that when on reweighment at destination there is a difference found between the weight of the consignment as entered in the railway receipt and the actual weight, that the consignor or consignee should not be called upon to make up the difference in freight. That involves very large questions, and, I am afraid, I could not accept that suggestion.

Sir Leslie Hudson also said that the cost of the Railway Rates Advisory Committee was rather high for the amount of work that it did. The only alternative would be to set up a committee each time there was a matter to be looked into. That would break continuity and the experience gained by members of one committee would not be available to members of the next committee. My immediate reaction to the suggestion is that perhaps the economy would not be worth while and it may even turn out to be no economy at all to set up a committee each time there was something to be investigated.

With regard to Mr. Muhammad Nauman's complaint that the particular trade he is interested in has not been helped by the railways, that is one of those general complaints to which I have already made reference. I am afraid it would be very difficult for me, either during the course of the general discussion or during the course of the discussion on Demands to examine the case of each particular trade in which Honourable Members may be interested and to make pronouncements with regard to them.

Mr. Muhammad Nauman: The Honourable Member has just said that every speech was looked into.

The Honourable Sir Muhammad Zafrullah Khan: That was exactly what I was going to say. When the Honourable Member was speaking, I referred to the note that had been put up to me and I have suggested that though the general question has already been examined, one particular suggestion made by the Honourable Member should be further looked into. But that is not a kind of matter that I can discuss during these debates and give an opinion upon. As I have said, the rates structure is a very delicate matter, and though Honourable Members who are interested in certain kinds of traffic may consider it extremely desirable

that certain changes should be made, from the general point of view it may not be so desirable. I shall again not enter into the vexed question of the heavier kinds of goods being carried by the railways while the more valuable kinds of goods are being filched from them by buses, and that the whole system is in danger of toppling over on account of the cream of the traffic being diverted from the railways to the roads.

Mr. Muhammad Nauman: Perhaps at this point I may inform the Honourable Member that big quantities of hides are being carried from Ranchi directly by motor lorries to Calcutta.

The Honourable Sir Muhammad Zafrullah Khan: I was not here referring to the transport of hides, nor was I suggesting that it was a commodity of small bulk and high value.

There is one small matter which the Honourable Member mentioned and which, I think, is worth pursuing, and that is the price of time tables. He referred to the East Indian Railway time table and said that it was too highly priced. It contains a very large amount of useful information and it could not be said that six annas was too high a price for that publication, but then it is not everybody that wants all that information. Most people would be content with the time and fare tables and a few general rules, and I think that suggestion might be looked into.

I am unable to accept Mr. Joshi's explanation of the original policy behind the construction of railways in India, but I will take up one or two specific questions that he has mentioned. I shall not this afternoon deal with the question of acquiring the two Company-managed railways, for I understand that that might be one of the matters that might come up for discussion next week. Mr. Joshi raised the question of Government's failure to give effect to the Resolution regarding the manufacture of locomotives in India. He said: "Look at the Resolution passed by this House, and here is this callous and unresponsive Railway Member who plainly told us that he would not carry out a Resolution passed by this House". Well, I plead guilty. A Resolution was passed to that effect, and I am afraid Government's decision was that they could not set up, at any rate under present conditions, a factory for manufacturing locomotives in India. I gave detailed reasons for Government's decision on a previous occasion, and I will give them again briefly in half a sentence. Having examined with very great care the material available upon which a decision could be arrived at we found that it would involve us in a loss of several lakhs a year to put up a factory of that kind. Now, I know that Honourable Members have got several replies to that. They say that that does not matter, the extra money spent would be worth while, it would establish another industry in India, it would help labour, it would help certain subsidiary industries; but may I say on that that to begin with it is not possible to assess in money the value of the subsidiary benefits mentioned. Secondly, unless Honourable Members have in mind that general revenues should bear the losses on account of the general benefits that are expected to accrue from such a venture, they cannot expect railways to embark upon a project that is bound to involve them in loss.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: Who will bear the losses of the railways, if there are losses?

The Honourable Sir Muhammad Zafrullah Khan: Eventually the taxpayer must bear all losses but that is not the question. If the railways have to run adequate services at a reasonable cost and they can get locomotives far more cheaply elsewhere than they could possibly be manufactured in India, then Government are perfectly justified in saying that the Railway Department is unable to undertake this experiment. It has sometimes been hinted at that it was in the interests of the British manufacturer, more than anything else, that Government had adopted this attitude. I am afraid, Honourable Members are entirely mistaken in that respect. Last year, we ordered some locomotives from Germany, and I am afraid British manufacturers were not too pleased at that.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: I did not say that.

The Honourable Sir Muhammad Zafrullah Khan: I did not say that the Honourable Member had suggested it, but I well remember having been described as a dishonest tool of Whitehall in this connection. The Railways do not want to help any particular manufacturers outside, but, finding themselves in the financial position in which they do find themselves, they do not feel that they would be justified in spending money merely for securing subsidiary benefits to other interests. Even if the project could be held to be justified on account of these supposed benefits, general revenues must bear the extra cost. That was the sole reason for Government not giving effect to the Resolution.

With regard to rail-road co-ordination, when Mr. Joshi was offering his criticism, I was wondering as to where the difference between us lay. I think, if he will refer to his speech when he gets it in print and compares it with what may have been said either by me or by any other of my Honourable colleagues on this side with regard to this matter, he will find that there is no difference between us. With regard to any specific proposals that may be put forward, there may be a difference of opinion between the different sections of the House as to whether that was or was not a measure which would result in bringing about the desired co-ordination, but, so far as the principles put forward by the Honourable Member are concerned, we are at one and let me state in two sentences the principles that Government have in mind. First, that the money that may become available for developing the communications of India should be so employed as not to duplicate the means of communication but to add to them in the manner best calculated to promote the interests of the country at large, for instance, by opening up new country, by supplementing rather than setting up competitive means of communication and transport. I know there are differences with regard to certain details. Into these, this is not the occasion or the time to enter. Mr. Joshi confined himself to principles, and on principles we have no difference between us whatsoever. And that answers also Dr. DeSouza's criticism, *viz.*, why should the rural masses be deprived of the means of getting their produce to market? Sir, I have not the slightest desire to deprive them of those means; on the contrary, I am extremely anxious that those means should be multiplied. I am anxious that roads should be constructed in rural areas, so that the agriculturists can get their produce more quickly and more easily to the markets; the whole trouble is one concerning competitive roads and the conditions under which other means of transport should compete with railways, and that brings me to the second principle. Government have in mind, namely, the regulation of road transport so as to secure the safety of the people using that form of transport, the safety of those working it

and a fair basis of competition with other forms of transport. Again, there may be differences over details and specific proposals but there will be other opportunities of discussing details. Nobody has any desire to deprive the agriculturist of the means of transporting his produce to the market. We are most anxious that the money available should be applied towards providing those facilities, rather than being spent, as is the case today, largely in duplicating the means of communication. Another matter to which Dr. DeSouza made a reference was third class coaches. He said: "What the third class passenger requires is a little more room, bigger and cleaner latrines. You told us last year of about an improved third class carriage, and we have heard nothing further about it. And now you sing us a song about air-conditioning". Sir, the Honourable Member was not quite just in that criticism. But I do not blame him, for he may not be in possession of all the information on this point. A good deal is being done to secure to the third class passenger exactly the kind of things to which he has made a reference. With regard to the third class coach that Members of the Central Advisory Committee examined last year, I said last year that nothing had been done because nothing could be done till we were in easier times. We find ourselves better off at the end of this year than we had expected, and I may inform Honourable Members that though coaches of that exact type have not yet been built, various improved features are being adopted, and I am hoping that, during the course of next year, coaches embodying all those improvements may also be built. Honourable Members must realise again with regard to this that wholesale replacements are not possible, but a start might be made. In the meantime, certain improvements are already being incorporated into coaches that are being built for certain railways this year, e.g., bigger latrines and improved seats. I shall say nothing with regard to the terms of the Resolution modifying the Separation Convention to which Honourable Members have made references. By referring to it in my budget speech, I wanted to warn Honourable Members that that motion would be coming up so that they may revolve the matter in their minds and be ready with their suggestions with regard to it when it is reached.

Sardar Sant Singh expressed his surprise that I had made no reference to the criticism which he and other Honourable Members had offered with regard to the composition of the Wedgewood Committee. I am still at a loss to understand as to what exactly was desired in that connection. I put forward my explanation of the situation in reply to the debate on the supplementary grant, and if the question is raised again, as I have been warned in the press it will be raised again, I shall place the Government point of view before the House again, but I fail to understand what I was expected to do in this connection when I was preparing my budget speech. Honourable Members surely did not expect that I should take up the time of the House by repeating in my budget speech what I had said only a few days ago. If I had been convinced by the debate that I was wrong and that I had taken a wrong decision, I would have expressed my regret.

Sardar Sant Singh: The Government of India never admit that they are wrong.

The Honourable Sir Muhammad Zafrullah Khan: I have today made several admissions, but there it is. That was a question which was discussed on the floor of the House. Honourable Members put forward their views

[Sir Muhammad Zafrullah Khan.]

on that matter and Government stated their position. Surely, it was not expected that the whole of it should be incorporated into the Budget speech.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The Honourable Member has spoken for 70 minutes already.

The Honourable Sir Muhammad Zafrullah Khan: Sir, I shall try to conclude during the next five minutes. The same Honourable Member raised the objection that 1½ crores were proposed to be paid to Burma as their share of the accumulations in the depreciation fund and that that appeared to have been calculated on the basis of what their share would have been had there been no borrowings from the depreciation fund and that there was no justification for paying them this 1½ crores in full. I am afraid that is not a decision for which the Government of India are entirely responsible. This is a consequence of the decision given by the Amery Committee with regard to the financial adjustment between India and Burma on separation. They thought that the fact that large borrowings had been made from the depreciation fund was irrelevant. Their task was to assign a value to the railways after deduction of the amount set aside for depreciation. Whether that was right or wrong, that is in the nature of a decision binding upon Government and Government were bound to carry it into effect, and, therefore, they will have to set aside that sum for payment to Burma. I noticed in the press this morning that it was described as an alimony being paid to Burma on separation. The correct attitude would be: Pay it and be done with it.

Sardar Sant Singh: In view of this decision of the Amery Committee, cannot the Honourable Member hold Burma responsible for the deficits of the last seven years and deduct that sum?

The Honourable Sir Muhammad Zafrullah Khan: I am afraid it would not be possible to reopen these matters. Certain adjustments have already been arrived at and this is not a single matter by itself which could be dealt with separately. All sorts of claims had to be adjusted. It is part of the general adjustment, and it would not do to reopen it. But the explanation is that it is not a miscalculation as the Honourable Member might have thought when he put forward this criticism.

Sir, I have taken a great deal of the time of the House in dealing with the main heads of criticism that have been put forward, but my apology for doing so is that at the end of a whole day's debate when so many suggestions are put forward, it does take some time to deal with even the principal suggestions.

The Assembly then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Friday, the 19th February, 1937.