

23rd February 1942

THE
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY DEBATES

Official Report

Volume I, 1942

(11th February to 10th March, 1942)

FIFTEENTH SESSION
OF THE
FIFTH LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,
1942



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CORRIGENDA

In the Legislative Assembly Debates, Budget Session, 1942,—

- (1) Volume I, No. 1, dated the 11th February, 1942, page 31, line 20, for "Muslims" read "Muslim";
- (2) Volume I, No. 15, dated the 5th March, 1942, page 708, line 20 from the bottom, for "Suppression" read "Supersession";
- (3) Volume II, No. 5, dated the 17th March, 1942,—
 - (i) page 1207, line 4, delete the full stop after the word "statement"; and
 - (ii) page 1265, lines 5 and 22, for "The Honourable Sir Homi Modi" read "The Honourable Sir Homi Mody";
- (4) Volume II, No. 7, dated the 19th March, 1942, page 1357, line 15 from the bottom, for "The Economist news" read "The Economist news-";
- (5) Volume II, No. 8, dated the 20th March, 1942, page 1422, line 13 from the bottom, delete the second "that" at the end of the line;
- (6) Volume II, No. 9, dated the 23rd March, 1942,—
 - (i) page 1429, line 1, insert the word "is" after the word "blood"; and
 - (ii) page 1457, line 8 from the bottom, read "are" for the word "they";
- (7) Volume II, No. 11, dated the 25th March, 1942, page 1539, line 18 from the bottom, for the word "who" read "why";
- (8) Volume II, No. 13, dated the 1st April, 1942, page 1651, line 21, for the word "attacks" read "attack";
- (9) Volume II, No. 14, dated the 2nd April, 1942,—
 - (i) page 1688, line 17, for "It is given to C class" read "I said that A and B class";
 - (ii) page 1693, line 22, for "Syed Murtuza Sahib Bahadur" read "Maulvi Syed Murtuza Sahib Bahadur"; and
 - (iii) page 1729, line 19 and page 1730, line 9 for "Diwan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar" read "The Honourable Diwan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar".

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

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The Honourable Sir ABDUR RAHIM, K.C.S.I.

Deputy President:

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Sir HENRY RICHARDSON, M.L.A.

Sir COWASJI JEHangIR, Bart., K.C.I.E., O.B.E., M.L.A.

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Mr. JAMNADAS M. MEHTA, M.L.A.

Sir ABDUL HALIM GHUREKAVI M.L.A.

Mr. N. M. JOSHI, M.L.A.

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Monday, 23rd February, 1942

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.

STARRED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

(a) ORAL ANSWERS.

†63*—66*.

ALLEGED RUDE BEHAVIOUR OF MR. FORBES TOWARDS MR. C. M. TRIVEDI.

67. *Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: (a) Will the Defence Secretary please state if his attention has been drawn to the incident published in *Hitawad* and the *Bombay Chronicle*, dated the 21st January, 1942, and the *Maharashtra* of the 22nd January, 1942, concerning the rude and boorish conduct of a military officer, by name Forbes, towards Mr. C. M. Trivedi, Chief Secretary to the Government, Central Provinces and Berar?

(b) What action, if any, has been taken against Mr. Forbes, the military officer referred to above, so that he may not behave in the same rude way towards Indians who are not Government officers?

(c) Is he aware of the discontent and prejudices which such conduct creates among Indians against army officers and which may prejudice the war efforts of the Government as well as of the public?

Sir Gurnath Bewoor: (a) Government have seen the publications mentioned by the Honourable Member.

(b) Mr. Forbes was not a military officer, but a recently discharged corporal of the Royal Engineers. No action appears to have been taken against him by the local authorities, in view no doubt of the apology which Mr. Forbes tendered to Mr. Trivedi who appears to have accepted the same and treated the incident as closed.

(c) Does not arise as the individual concerned in this case was not an employee in the Army.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: Are Government aware that the apology which was tendered was a forced apology in view of the fact that Mr. C. M. Trivedi is a member of the Indian Civil Service, Chief Secretary and in charge of the police portfolio?

Sir Gurnath Bewoor: I am not aware whether it was a forced apology or a voluntary one.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: Is the Honourable Member aware that when he was asked to tender an apology for the first time, Mr. Forbes did not agree to do so?

†For these questions and answers, see pages 400—03 of these Debates.

Sir Gurunath Bewoor: The information which we have got is from the public press, and I find that in the letter which the Honourable Member himself wrote to the *Hitavad*, he says. "I am sorry the incident is closed with an acceptance by Mr. Trivedi of the army officer's apology."

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: And I also further added that, in view of the facts disclosed, the apology was not a voluntary one . . .

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Next question.

ACCIDENT CAUSED TO AN INDIAN LADY BY A MILITARY LORRY.

68. ***Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh:** (a) Will the Defence Secretary please state if his attention has been drawn to the accident deliberately caused to an Indian lady travelling in a tonga by a lorry carrying military cadets referred to in *Hitavad* of the 21st January, 1942?

(b) What steps do Government propose to take in order that the conduct of the military men may be civil?

(c) Are Government aware that such actions of military men are likely to make civil population non-co-operate with them in war efforts?

Sir Gurunath Bewoor: I am collecting the information and will lay it on the table in due course.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: As regards part (b), have not Government ere long issued any instructions for the behaviour of the army officers?

Sir Gurunath Bewoor: I do not know whether the accident alleged has taken place and whether the military were involved, and I must await for further information before doing anything.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: My question is a very general one even if it has no reference to the main question. I want to know whether the conduct of the military was civil. Have any instructions already been issued or are being issued about this?

Sir Gurunath Bewoor: I deny that the conduct of the military is not civil.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: Is this conduct of the officers referred to . .

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Next question.

EXPULSION OF MR. SRI KRISHNA SEHGAL FROM CHERAT CANTONMENT.

69. ***Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh:** (a) Will the Defence Secretary be pleased to state whether it is a fact that one, Mr. Sri Krishna Sehgal, Manager of Brij Lal Oilman Stores at Cherat Cantonment, was expelled from that cantonment by Lieutenant-Colonel G. W. Miller, Officer Commanding the Station, on 29th July, 1940? If so, why?

(b) Is it a fact that Mr. Sri Krishna Sehgal had been living in Cherat Cantonment as a peaceful citizen for nearly 20 years before the issue of this expulsion order and that there was no police report against him?

(c) Is it a fact that Mr. Sri Krishna Sehgal was called upon to show cause against his removal at once and that he wanted 15 days' time to reply after consulting his legal counsel, which time was not given?

(d) Is it a fact that the wife and children of Mr. Sri Krishna Sehgal were also ordered to be expelled from that Cantonment on that very day?

(e) Is it a fact that the wife of Mr. Sri Krishna Sehgal was seriously ill when the order was served and therefore could not be removed without risk to her life?

(f) Is it a fact that Mr. Sri Krishna Sehgal submitted an application on the 25th August, 1940, under section 239(4) of the Cantonment Act, to the Government of India, detailing the hardship to which he was subjected and asking for redress?

(g) Is it a fact that Mr. Sri Krishna received no reply to the above communication till the end of the year 1941?

(h) What step or steps do Government propose to take in the matter?

Sir Gurunath Bewoor: (a), (c), (f), (g) and (h). The Officer Commanding, Cherat, made an order under section 239 of the Cantonments Act to be complied with within 48 hours as he had reason to believe that Mr. Sehgal was likely to do such an act as was likely to cause disloyalty, disaffection or breach of discipline amongst His Majesty's forces. On receipt of Mr. Sehgal's application under section 239(4) of the Act, the District Magistrate, Peshawar, was called on to make an enquiry as prescribed in that section and no occasion to reply separately to Mr. Sehgal arose.

During the course of the enquiry, Mr. Sehgal obtained a decree in the court of the Sub-Judge, Nowshera, declaring the expulsion order *ultra vires* and restraining the Officer Commanding, Cherat, from enforcing it. In view of this decree which rendered the order of the Officer Commanding inoperative, the enquiry by the District Magistrate was not pursued and no further action was taken or is proposed to be taken by the Government of India on Mr. Sehgal's application.

(b) As regards the first part, Government have no information; the reply to the second part is in the negative.

(d) The family of Mr. Sehgal were included in the order. Government understand that the order against them was never enforced but that about four months later, after the institution of the suit by Mr. Sehgal, they left the cantonment of their own accord.

(e) Government have no information.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: May I know, Sir, why the family of Mr. Sehgal was included in the order? Was that family also spreading disaffection?

Sir Gurnath Bewoor: Sir, it was a mistake.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: I am glad to know it. But may I know, Sir, whether, in view of the fact that the family also was wrongly included in the order, any amends were made by Government?

Sir Gurnath Bewoor: The order was never enforced.

REPRESENTATION OF INDIA ON THE PACIFIC WAR COUNCIL, LONDON.

70. *Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: Will the Defence Secretary please state if any steps were taken by the Government of India to secure representation for India on the Pacific War Council established in London? If so, has India got it? If not, why not?

Sir Gurnath Bewoor: This question should have been addressed to the Honourable the Leader of the House; but the Honourable Member is aware that what he desires has already taken place.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: May I know, Sir, whether this representation has been secured as a result of any representations made by the Government of India?

Sir Gurnath Bewoor: As I have said, the question should have been addressed to the Honourable the Leader of the House, and if the Honourable Member wants any further information on this subject, he should put a question to him.

PAUCITY OF HINDU AND MUSLIM PREVENTIVE OFFICERS AT CHITTAGONG CUSTOMS HOUSE.

71. *Shaikh Rafiuddin Ahmad Siddique: (a) Will the Honourable the Finance Member be pleased to place on the table of the House a statement showing the total number of preventive officers in employ at the Chittagong Customs House showing the number of Hindus, Muslims, Anglo-Indians and native Christians separately and the pay drawn by them at present and the date of their appointment?

(b) Is it a fact that the total number of posts held by the Hindus and Muslims is less than half the total posts held by the Anglo-Indians and Christians alone? If so, will the Honourable Member be pleased to state what that is due to?

(c) If the answer to first part of part (b) above be in the affirmative, are Government prepared to give the legitimate shares of the quota to Hindus and Muslims in the services mentioned above in future? If not, why not?

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: (a) A statement is placed on the table.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

Statement showing the number of Preventive Officers employed in the Chittagong Customs House.

No.	Names.	Caste or Race.	Date of appointment to Customs service.	Present Pay.	Remarks.
1	Mr. D. E. Wallace (Chief Inspector).	Anglo-Indian.	10th Aug. 1912	300	These appointments were made when the communal quota was not observed.
2	" T. J. Dougherty, (Inspector).	Do.	27th Feb. 1914	260	
3	" P. A. Baptist . . .	Do.	17th Feb. 1917	250	
4	" G. A. Paul . . .	Do.	24th July 1923	250	
5	" Nurul Huq . . .	Muslim.	1st March 1908	230	
6	" K. P. Chakravaty . . .	Hindu.	1st Feb. 1928 .	220	
7	" E. Gonsalves . . .	Anglo-Indian.	3rd Oct. 1928 .	210	
8	" A. E. Xavier . . .	Do.	1st Feb. 1930 .	210	
9	" B. K. Roy . . .	Hindu.	1st June 1932 .	145	
10	" Md. M. Hossain . . .	Muslim.	1st Sept. 1932 .	145	
11	" M. A. Rahim . . .	Do.	26th Nov. 1934	135	
12	" J. C. Sen . . .	Hindu.	6th Jan. 1936 .	130	
13	" B. E. Williams . . .	Anglo-Indian.	3rd June 1937 .	120	
14	" K. Shamsuzzoha . . .	Muslim.	1st Dec. 1937 .	120	
15	" P. Gonsalves . . .	Anglo-Indian.	Do.	120	
16	" Nurul Islam . . .	Muslim.	9th Feb. 1938 .	120	
17	" J. H. McGowan . . .	Anglo-Indian.	17th March 1941	100	
18	" J. C. Halge . . .	Do.	2nd Jan. 1942 .	100	Temporary sanction by Collector.
19	" G. Hamilton . . .	Do.	17th Jan. 1942.	100	
20	" G. P. Das Gupta . . .	Hindu.	2nd Feb. 1942 .	100	
21	" A. De . . .	Indian Christian	2nd Feb. 1942 .	100	
22	" Md. Abdul Halim . . .	Muslim.	26th Jan. 1942.	100	Temporary sanction by Collector.
23	" C. M. Banerji . . .	Hindu.	6th Feb. 1942 .	100	
Nos. 1 to 8—					
	Hindu . . .	1			
	Muslim . . .	1			
	Anglo-Indians . . .	6			
		8			
Nos. 9 to 23—					
	Hindus . . .	4			
	Muslims . . .	5			(one P. O. is on deputation to the Port of Calcutta).
	Anglo-Indians . . .	5			
	Indian-Christian . . .	1			

PAUCITY OF MUSLIM PREVENTIVE OFFICERS AT CHITTAGONG CUSTOMS HOUSE.

72. *Shaikh Rafuddin Ahmad Siddique: Is the Honourable the Finance Member aware that four vacancies occurred in the preventive service during the last six months in the Chittagong Customs but not a

single Muslim was appointed although Muslim candidates with high academic qualifications, physical and military training, were available?

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: The Honourable Member's information is not correct. One Muslim was appointed.

PAUCITY OF MUSLIM PREVENTIVE OFFICERS AT CHITTAGONG CUSTOMS HOUSE.

73. *Shaikh Rafuddin Ahmad Siddique: Will the Honourable the Finance Member please state the reasons for not appointing a single Muslim in any of the posts of Preventive Officer which occurred during the last six months in the Chittagong Customs?

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: Does not arise in view of the reply given to question No. 72

AIR RAID PRECAUTIONS ARRANGEMENTS IN DELHI.

74. *Sir Syed Raza Ali (on behalf of Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad): (a) Will the Honourable Member for Civil Defence please state what Air Raid Precautions arrangements have the Government of India made in Delhi?

(b) Have they provided tube-wells in New Delhi; if so, how many?

The Honourable Sir Reginald Maxwell: (a) About 3,700 wardens have been enrolled to date and 21 training centres have been arranged. 20 first aid posts, 12 first aid tramcar units and 1 mobile first aid unit have been organised and the staff are under training; 20 rescue parties have been organised and are under training. Government has recently sanctioned the engagement of two paid wardens for each of the 140 wardens' posts of the area and the engagement on a paid basis of 25 per cent. of the other services. The construction of a Combined Depot has commenced and it is expected that it will be completed in a month. An Air Raid Precautions headquarters and control room is also under construction and is expected to be ready in a month.

(b) Not yet. But a scheme for the provision of tube wells on public ground is under consideration.

ARREST OF MR. SARAT CHANDRA BOSE.

75. *Dr. P. N. Banerjee (on behalf of Mr. Amarendra Nath Chattopadhyaya): (a) Will the Honourable the Home Member be pleased to state when the Government of India got for the first time information about the complicity of Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose with Japan, and what period was allowed to intervene between the date of receiving the first information and the date of his arrest, *i.e.*, 11th December, 1941?

(b) Will the Honourable Member be pleased to state if he had received any fresh evidence of Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose's criminal or political activity before his arrest? If so, what sifting enquiries were made with a view to substantiate the alleged charges? If not, will the Honourable Member be pleased to lay on the table a statement showing his reasons for his arrest, or will he place all the papers relating to the alleged suspicion leading to the arrest of Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose before the Members of the Governor

General's Expanded Executive Council? If not, what steps does he intend to take to allay the feeling of the public?

The Honourable Sir Reginald Maxwell: (a) and (b). The Government of India are not prepared to add to the communiqué issued by them at the time of the arrest of Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose.

Dr. P. N. Banerjee: Will the Government of India consider the advisability of placing the papers before a tribunal of High Court Judges?

The Honourable Sir Reginald Maxwell: I have already answered that on a previous occasion.

Mr. K. O. Neogy: The answer having been to the effect that this will engage the Honourable Member's consideration, may we know the result of that consideration?

The Honourable Sir Reginald Maxwell: I did not say when it will engage the consideration of the Government.

CURTAILMENT OF MOHARRAM PROGRAMMES AT BROADCASTING STATIONS.

76. ***Sir Syed Raza Ali** (on behalf of Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad): Will the Honourable Member for Information and Broadcasting please state:

- (a) whether it is a fact that the Controller of the All-India Radio had directed the Directors of the stations of the All-India Radio that Moharram programme should not exceed half an hour this year;
- (b) whether Government are aware that the tragedy of Karbala is celebrated all over the world and naturally Musalmans in India and in the fighting-services abroad must have eagerly awaited to listen to the programmes regarding the tragedy of Karbala;
- (c) whether Government are aware that this year the 18th centenary of the martyrdom of Hazrat Imam Husain was celebrated all over the world and so the Moharram of this year was of particular importance;
- (d) whether Government are aware that in the well-known illustrated weekly, the *Din Dunia* of Delhi, appeared a very bitterly-worded editorial comment, in its issue, dated the 25th January, and reproduced by the *Munadi*, Delhi, in its issue (page 8) dated the 1st February in which editorial the *Din Dunia* had written that up to the 7th Moharram (25th January, the date of its going to the press) no programme commemorating the tragedy of Karbala was broadcast from the Delhi Station of the All-India Radio, and in its stead most obscene songs were radiated from that station;
- (e) if it is a fact that Khwaja Hasan Nizami published a hand-bill on the 11th Moharram (29th January) under the caption *Gham-i-Husain Ki-Tauhin* (insult of mourning for Hazrat Husain), copies of which were disseminated all over India, and were also sent to the Controller of the All-India Radio and the officials of the Delhi Station of the All-India Radio, and other All-India Radio stations;

- (f) if it is a fact that Khwaja Hasan Nizami wrote another article in the *Munadi*, Delhi, in its issue of the 1st February, under the caption *Delhi Radio par Da'we* (filing of suits against the Delhi Radio);
- (g) whether Government are aware that the hand-bill of the 29th January was reproduced by the three well-known dailies of Delhi—the *Anjam*, the *Payam*, and the *Wahdat*, and all the Shia and Sunni Mussalmans of Delhi showed their resentment and anger at the attitude of the Delhi Radio Station; and
- (h) whether Government are aware that in his article Khwaja Hasan Nizami has alleged that the Delhi Radio did not broadcast any programme regarding the tragedy of Karbala on the 9th and 10th of Moharram (27th and 28th January), the two main days of the tragic events, but that they broadcast two objectionable Radio Plays on both these days, *vis.* "Exploits of Gulbaz Khan", a humorous play on the 27th January (page 75 of the *Indian Listener*), *Yahan Husn Bikta Hai* (Here is sold Beauty) another play on the 28th January (page 77 of the *Indian Listener*), and thus insulted the Mussalmans?

The Honourable Sir Reginald Maxwell: (a) No.

(b) Government are aware that Moharram is observed as an important religious occasion by Muslims and that broadcasts concerning it are likely to be of interest to Muslim listeners.

(c) Government have no information on this point.

(d), (f) and (h). Yes. The allegations made in parts (d) and (h) are, however, not correct.

(e) Yes. The hand-bill was sent to some officials of All-India Radio.

(g) The text of the hand-bill was reproduced in some Delhi papers. Government are not aware of any resentment on the part of the public.

Sir Syed Raza Ali: Will the Honourable Member state whether Government are aware that hitherto it had been the practice in the Delhi Radio to have a Moharram programme which extended to one hour, and what was the reason of this being given up this year?

The Honourable Sir Reginald Maxwell: The actual programmes arranged at Delhi for Moharram broadcasts were, on the 18th January, 55 minutes, 28rd January, 55 minutes, and 28th January, one hour and thirty-four minutes.

Sir Syed Raza Ali: Is the Honourable Member aware that the facts supplied to him are wrong? As a matter of fact, the programme, as printed in the *Indian Listener* for the 27th and 28th January is important. In reality there is no Moharram programme. The heading of the programme for the 27th is "Exploits of Gulbaz Khan", and that for the 28th, is "Yahan Husn Bikta Hai", which means, "Beauty is sold here", and I believe Honourable Members know what that means. Is the Honourable Member aware of the facts?

The Honourable Sir Reginald Maxwell: If the Honourable Member is relying on the *Indian Listener*, I should explain that the programmes which

are advertised in the *Indian Listener* are planned about three months in advance. On this occasion, 19th January was calculated to be the probable date of the appearance of the moon, and special programmes were accordingly arranged for the 28rd and 29th January. It is thus true that no programmes were advertised in the *Indian Listener* for the 9th and 10th day of Moharram, 27th and 28th January, and that has probably given rise to some misunderstanding. But special Moharram programmes were actually broadcast on the 18th, 23rd and 28th as the moon appeared on the 18th, and some readjustment of programmes became necessary.

Sir Syed Raza Ali: Will the Honourable Member state as to whether any literary men or any men interested in religion were invited to give any talk on the Delhi Radio?

The Honourable Sir Reginald Maxwell: I should require notice of that.

Sir Syed Raza Ali: Will the Honourable Member state whether it is the duty of the Director or the Director of Programmes to prepare a programme for Moharram and other important occasions, on which public men are invited to give talks? Whose duty is it to prepare such programmes?

The Honourable Sir Reginald Maxwell: The whole organisation prepares programmes in accordance with the requirements of the general public and all sections of the public.

Sir Syed Raza Ali: Can the Honourable Member state whether any programme officer connected with the All-India Radio is in touch with literary, religious or other circles that are competent to give advice?

The Honourable Sir Reginald Maxwell: I am quite sure. That is the whole business of the All-India Radio to be in touch with all sections of opinion and they do their best to cater for their requirements.

Sir Syed Raza Ali: May I know what steps any officer has taken to be in touch with Muslim public opinion in connection with last Moharram? Can the Honourable Member state any particular steps taken on that occasion?

The Honourable Sir Reginald Maxwell: No. I am not in a position to answer that without going into the private diaries of all the officers concerned.

Sir Syed Raza Ali: Is the Honourable Member aware that on the 27th and 28th January, which were the crucial dates in connection with the Moharram, the All-India Radio at Lucknow, Peshawar, Bombay and Lahore devoted a fairly good portion of their time to broadcasting the Moharram programme? Is the Honourable Member aware of that? The crucial dates were the 27th and 28th, and not the 19th January.

The Honourable Sir Reginald Maxwell: I have not got information as to the exact dates on which programmes were broadcast from other stations. The question related to Delhi.

Sir Syed Raza Ali: May I know whether the Government will make any enquiries as to what led the All-India Radio, Delhi, which is the home of Hindustani, to discard the Moharram programme on the 27th and 28th January?

The Honourable Sir Reginald Maxwell: I gather it was due to the behaviour of the moon.

Sir Syed Raza Ali: No, it was not. I am asking about two days, 27th and 28th. The 27th January, whether the moon appeared on the 29th or 30th of the lunar month, will be a crucial date. Does the Honourable Member himself know that 27th would be a crucial day in any case? Is the Honourable Member aware of the fact?

The Honourable Sir Reginald Maxwell: I gather that 28th was the important date; 27th less important.

Sir Syed Raza Ali: I am asking about the 27th.

The Honourable Sir Reginald Maxwell: Owing to the rearrangement of the programme no special programme was given on the 27th.

(Sir Syed Raza Ali rose to put another supplementary question.)

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Next question. The Honourable Member has exhausted the subject.

Sir Syed Raza Ali: May I put this last question with your permission? Will the Honourable Member be pleased to make enquiries as to what led the All-India Radio, Delhi, to discard both the important dates, namely, 27th and 28th? I just want to know whether the Government are prepared to make an enquiry.

The Honourable Sir Reginald Maxwell: There was no discarding on the 28th. I have already said that the programme given on the 28th was for one hour and thirty-four minutes.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Order, order. Short notice question.

Dr. P. N. Banerjee: Will the questions fixed for the 20th be answered today?

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): I understand the answers to those questions will be printed.

TRANSFERRED STARRED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.†

DESIRABILITY OF GETTING CERTAIN ARMY DEPARTMENT FORMS PRINTED IN GOVERNMENT PRESSES.

63. ***Mr. Amarendra Nath Chattopadhyaya:** (a) Will the Labour Secretary please state whether it is not a fact that the Government of India have

†The meeting of the Assembly that was to be held on the 20th February 1942, having been cancelled, the answers to starred questions for that day were, in pursuance of convention, laid on the table of the House today.—*Ed. of D.*

five well-equipped efficient presses—two presses in Calcutta, one in Simla, one in Delhi and one in Aligarh?

(b) Is it not a fact that Mr. H. I. Macdonald, Special Officer, Central Revision Section, Army Department, Government of India, in his note dated the 3rd July, 1931, expressed the desirability of the printing work being done preferably at the Government press than at any private press on economic grounds?

(c) Is it not a fact that the rates of private firms for printing and binding the Army Department Training Manual and Army form Nos. 64-M and 64 are considerably higher than those of the Government press?

(d) Is it not a fact that the Government of India received copies of the Resolutions passed in the India Press Employees' Conference held in Calcutta in July 1926 under the presidency of Mr. T. C. Goswami, then a Member of the Central Legislative Assembly, as well as in the second session of the said conference held in Calcutta, in August 1927, under the presidency of the Honourable Syed Muhammad Padshah Sahib and moved by the Government Press employees that the present practice of giving work of printing and binding to outside presses was detrimental to the interests of the Government Press employees and that the Government of India and the Provincial Governments ought to abandon the practice as early as possible?

(e) Is it not a fact that the Binders of the Government of India Press, Calcutta are very eager to do the jobs, *i.e.*, Army Book, 64-M and 64, and applied to the Manager, Government of India Press, Calcutta, requesting him to allot the work to them?

(f) If the reply to parts (a) to (e) be in the affirmative, will the Honourable Member be pleased to state why Government undertake to get the work done by private printing firms on contract basis?

Mr. H. C. Prior: (a) Yes.

(b) No such note can be traced.

(c) No.

(d) Yes.

(e) Yes.

(f) Only such work is given to private presses as cannot be done in the Government of India Presses with their existing equipment and staff.

ALLEGATIONS AGAINST OFFICIALS OF THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA PRESS, CALCUTTA.

64. *Mr. Amarendra Nath Chattopadhyaya: (a) Will the Labour Secretary please state whether it is not a fact that Government received letters from the Press Employees Association, Calcutta, addressed to the Secretary, Department of Labour, Government of India, through the Controller, Printing and Stationery, Government of India, and through the Manager, Government of India Press, Calcutta, dated the 13th May and 14th August, 1941, regarding serious allegations against some officials of the Government of India Press, Calcutta?

(b) If the reply to part (a) be in the affirmative, will Government be pleased to state the contents of the letter, and what action they have taken in the matter or intend to take in the matter? If not, why not?

Mr. H. C. Prior: (a) and (b). With the permission of the Chair, I propose replying to both parts of his question together. Of the two letters from the Press Employees Association, Calcutta, Government have so far received the one dated the 14th August, 1941. In that letter the Association made two allegations in regard (1) to the method of recruitment of Compositors in the Government of India Press, Calcutta and (2) over-payments made to certain machinememen in that Press. The above allegations have been examined by the Government of India with the result that there is no truth in the first allegation and that over-payments made in certain cases arose out of a misunderstanding of the rules by the official concerned. Steps are being taken to recover over-payments made and the authorities responsible for such payments are being dealt with.

PROPOSED REDUCTION OF CULTIVATION OF SHORT AND FAIR STAPLE COTTON.

65. *Mr. Amarendra Nath Chattopadhyaya: (a) Will the Honourable the Commerce Member be pleased to state if it is a fact that the Central Cotton Committee has decided to request the Government of India to urge Provincial Governments and States to reduce the cultivation of short and fair staple cotton by 50 per cent. minimum? If so, why?

(b) Is it not a fact that there is a shortage of yarn at present in India and the effect of such reduction of cultivation of short and fair staple cotton will be to increase the shortage of yarn?

(c) Is it a fact that short staple cotton and fair staple cotton have no market in India? If so, is there no possibility of creating a market for such cotton in India?

(d) In case Government decide, according to the resolution of the Central Cotton Committee, to reduce the acreage of cultivation of short and fair staple cotton, what alternative crops have been decided by Government to substitute for cotton in different Provinces?

The Honourable Diwan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar: (a) Government have seen the resolution passed by the Indian Central Cotton Committee regarding the curtailment of acreage under short and fair staple cotton.

(b) The Government of India do not think that the reduction in cultivation of short and fair staple cotton which they have in view will tend to increase the existing shortage of cotton yarn of fine counts.

(c) There is no possibility of marketing within India the entire quantity of short staple cotton which has lost its usual market in the Far East.

(d) The question of alternative crops is being considered in consultation with the Provincial Governments and States concerned. The leading candidates are foodstuffs and long staple cotton.

FORMATION OF A NATIONAL GOVERNMENT RESPONSIBLE TO LEGISLATURE.

66. *Mr. Amarendra Nath Chattopadhyaya: Will the Honourable the Leader of the House be pleased to state if the Government of India have considered the attitude of the Indian National Congress, as has been

manifested by the resolution of the Working Committee and the All-India Congress Committee, and if he is prepared to recommend to His Excellency the Governor General, the formation of a National Government responsible to the Legislature?

The Honourable Mr. M. S. Aney: I think that if the Honourable Member again examines the resolutions referred to, he will find that he is mistaken in the interpretation which he appears to place upon the present attitude of the Indian National Congress. On the second part of the question, I am not in a position to disclose to the House the attitude of the Government of India on matters for which His Majesty's Government remains responsible. The Honourable Member is not entitled to enquire as to the individual opinion of Members of His Excellency's Executive Council. If the Honourable Member wishes to impress his views on the Government of India and His Majesty's Government, no doubt he will place a Resolution on the subject on the order paper of the House.

SHORT NOTICE QUESTION AND ANSWER.

DEFENCE OF THE EASTERN BORDERS OF INDIA.

Qazi Muhammad Ahmad Kazmi: (a) Will the Defence Secretary please state whether, in view of the fall of Singapore, and the progress of the enemy northwards and eastwards, any preparations have been made for the defence of the Eastern borders of India?

(b) Have any preparations been made against the apprehended aerial bombardment of Calcutta, Madras, Patna, Allahabad and Cawnpore?

(c) Have any anti-aircraft guns been provided in any of these cities? If so, in which of them and how many?

(d) Have Government made any provision for the supply of anti-aircraft guns, and what number they would be able to collect within the near future?

(e) Have any arrangements for the manufacture of anti-aircraft guns been made in India? If so, what is the approximate quantity that is expected to be produced? If not, have Government in contemplation manufacture of the same?

(f) Have Government got a supply of fighter planes in India for checking the advance of enemy bombers?

(g) Have any arrangements been made for the manufacture of planes and ammunition for this emergency? If not, have Government under contemplation any such scheme?

(h) In addition to anti-aircraft guns and fighter planes what other defences Government have under contemplation against these inroads?

(i) Have Government considered the advisability of making a large scale preparation for the construction and manufacture of arms, ammunition, planes and anti-aircraft guns in India? If so, at what stage of the preparation are they?

Sir Gurnath Bewoor: (a) to (i). All steps that are possible have been, and are being, taken for the defence of India against the threat from the East, but I regret I am unable to give the House the detailed information which the Honourable Member desires, as it would certainly not be in the public interest to do so.

Sir Syed Raza Ali: Will the Honourable Member state in general terms to what are the steps taken to safeguard the security of India, without disclosing any information that may be of use to the enemy?

Sir Gurunath Bewoor: I regret I am unable to reply to the very definite question put by the Honourable Member.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: Will the information sought for be available to this House in case a secret Session, as has been asked for, is held?

Sir Gurunath Bewoor: That is a hypothetical question.

Qazi Muhammad Ahmad Kazmi: So far as the manufacture of aeroplanes and anti-aircraft guns are concerned, may I know whether any preparations are being made for their construction or not? That is a question which, I think, can be disclosed without any danger to public peace or without danger of the information reaching the enemy.

Sir Gurunath Bewoor: I do not think I can give the details.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: May I know

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The Honourable Member is unable to answer these questions.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: I would ask only one question—whether he will take us into confidence when a secret Session is held?

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): No. The Honourable Member had better wait till the secret Session is held. I do not know what the Government will say then.

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

ARRESTS IN THE PUNJAB FOR PROTESTS AGAINST THE GENERAL SALES TAX ACT.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): I have received notice of a motion for adjourning the business of the House from Maulana Zafar Ali Khan who wants to discuss an urgent matter of definite public importance, namely: "the grave situation created in the Punjab by wholesale arrests of traders, members of Legislative Assembly, representatives of the Press and members of other public bodies under the Defence of India Rules for making protests against the policy of the Punjab Government in promulgating the General Sales Tax Act".

I understand that the Punjab Assembly is sitting from today. Besides it is a local affair and I have held in similar cases that if the Police and the Magistracy have been acting in accordance with certain orders issued under the Defence of India Rules, it is not for this House to interfere.

Maulana Zafar Ali Khan (East Central Punjab: Muhammadan): The Defence of India Act is being used for purposes for which it was never intended.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): That may be. That question ought to be raised in the Punjab Assembly.

Maulana Zafar Ali Khan: The members of the Punjab Assembly are being arrested. The whole of the Punjab is being gagged and a reign of terror is being created.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): That is the Honourable Member's opinion but I think the Honourable Member will find that there are plenty of members in the Punjab Assembly ready to speak on this subject.

The motion is disallowed.

SECRET SESSION OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

The Honourable Mr. M. S. Aney (Leader of the House): Sir, I have received a request backed by a large number of Honourable Members for the holding of a secret meeting of the Assembly, at which the present war situation could be discussed with greater freedom and at which more information could be given by Government spokesmen than would be possible under normal conditions. Government welcome this proposal and, provided that you, Sir, will be prepared to exercise your power under Standing Order 36 to order the clearing of the galleries during the discussion of a formal motion for the consideration of the war situation, and also to direct with reference to Standing Order 75 that no report of the proceedings on that motion should be prepared or published, I propose to table such motion for discussion on Friday next.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): I believe the proposal made by the Honourable the Leader of the House will find acceptance from the Members.

Several Honourable Members: Yes, yes.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): I shall, therefore, in exercise of the powers given to me, order the galleries to be cleared on that day when the motion is going to be moved, with the exception of the gallery for the Council of State, and I shall also direct that the proceedings be not taken down, recorded or published.

Mr. N. M. Joshi (Nominated Non-Official): May I ask one question of the Honourable the Leader of the House? If the time allotted is found to be insufficient, will he be in a position to give another day, because there are a number of Members who would like to speak on this subject.

The Honourable Mr. M. S. Aney: The secret Session is intended to be confined to one day. I wish to add that it would not be possible for the Government to allot more than a day for this purpose. The Members might make such arrangements for arranging the debate that all that they have to say can be brought out within the speeches of a few selected Members.

Mr. K. C. Neogy (Dacca Division: Non-Muhammadan Rural): May I make a suggestion in connection with the procedure that may be followed for the purpose of discussing this very important question? My suggestion is that not merely should there be a general discussion such as Honourable Members occupying the Government Benches have in mind but that short notice questions should be accepted by Government for being answered for the purpose of eliciting important points of fact on the basis of which alone we on this side of the House can effectively participate in a discussion of this character.

The Honourable Mr. M. S. Aney: It is not for me to say whether the Members should be allowed to put short notice questions or not but this secret meeting is being held to discuss the war situation on a definite motion that will be placed by the Government before this House and I believe that questions which the Honourable Members want to raise by means of short notice questions can certainly be touched upon by them in the course of the observations they have to make in discussing the motion before the House and the Government will be in a position at the end to give a reply to the questions thus raised in the course of the debate.

Qazi Muhammad Ahmad Kazmi (Meerut Division: Muhammadan Rural): Will it be necessary to send formal short notice questions?

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): I think what the Leader of the House has suggested is the procedure adopted in the House of Commons when a secret Session is held. I think that will suit the Honourable Members and as far as possible Government will, I believe, answer questions that they are in a position to answer.

THE RAILWAY BUDGET—GENERAL DISCUSSION.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The House will now proceed with the general discussion of the Railway Budget. Following the practice which has been followed in the past, I fix 20 minutes for each speaker, except the speaker on behalf of Government who shall have 45 minutes and, if necessary, more.

Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta (Chittagong and Rajshahi Divisions: Non-Muhammadan Rural): During the last Session, 20 minutes was fixed in the first instance and, later on, at the suggestion of Mr. Aney, the time was extended.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The discussion will last for only one day and as there are a number of speakers who wish to speak, I must ask Honourable Members to confine themselves strictly to 20 minutes.

Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta: The budget before us is a surplus budget. That surplus is not an ordinary surplus, but a phenomenal surplus. Therefore, in ordinary course it should be a matter for congratulation but at the same time a mere surplus is not a matter for congratulation

in the case of the Railway Budget. The Railway Budget has sometimes been described as a balance-sheet, and when, on a certain occasion, there was a surplus budget, it was described as "a remarkable balance-sheet". My submission is that this characterization of the budget as a balance-sheet discloses a wrong conception of the functions of the Railway administration. The railway system is not a mere money-making concern. It is a public utility concern and the success of the administration of the railways should not depend upon merely earning a large profit. There are certain tests according to which I should like to form my own judgment as to whether the year's working is really a matter for congratulation or not. The question is this: Has the railway system, during the year under review, served the trade and industry as it ought to? Has the system given proper facilities for the commerce and industry? That is one test. Another test is: How has it served the public at large? For instance, has it served properly the third class passengers who are the real masters of the railway system and not the first class or second class passengers. It is the third class passengers from whom the bulk of the revenue comes. The question is whether the old grievances of the lower class passengers have been redressed. My most emphatic answer is "no". Another test is whether the employees of the railway system, through whose efforts and loyal working the railways have earned this surplus, have been properly treated, whether they are properly paid and treated and whether they are a contented lot. Another test is—and it has become very important now—whether the system has become self-contained and self-reliant and whether the engines, locomotives, etc., are now being produced in India. That question has become more important now than it was before. Then, another test is whether the system has been Indianised or is being Indianised with proper speed. Has a serious and sincere attempt been made to make the system an Indian system?

Now, Sir, there is yet another matter which is very important these days, namely, whether the number of Railway accidents is on the increase or on the decrease. That is another very important test. Unfortunately, the general feeling is that it is extremely risky to travel by railways now-a-days. It is very regrettable and unfortunate that almost immediately after the acquisition of some of the railways there have been some accidents. I should not like to be uncharitable to the Administration in this matter as it may be a matter of mere chance, but all the same the number of accidents is so large these days that it is time that a very proper plan and scheme ought to be evolved under which these accidents may be reduced.

Unpunctuality of trains, the detention of trains in the midst of a journey, habitual late arrival, these are matters of almost everyday occurrence and these things should also be considered as factors as to whether the administration is efficient or not. On the whole, the real question is: Has the system rendered loyal service to India and to Indians? That is the test by which we ought to judge as to whether the year's working has been successful or not.

As regards the surplus, I am quite sure that the alleged surplus is not a real surplus. The surplus is due to the war, to the movement of troops, due to military traffic and to exodus due again to the war. If that is the way by which the surplus has been earned, then the real position is this. It is really a transfer of funds from the general revenues. If all the expenditure on defence has been met from the general revenues of the

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country, then the position is this: It is a transfer of funds from one pocket of the Government to another. The surplus comes from the general revenues. After it comes to the railway revenues, it goes back. As regards the allocation of the surplus, the bulk of it goes back to the general revenues. In other words, it is merely a book entry. If the surplus had been earned, quite apart from the results of the war, then it could be said that it is a real surplus.

Now, Sir, the proposed allocation is justified on the ground that it obviates the necessity of new taxation to meet the cost of the war. That raises the old question, the question of loan *versus* taxation, whether the war expenditure should be met by loan or by direct new taxation. That is an old question and I should not like to dilate upon it. Our case has been and is that the present generation has already been very greatly hit. They should not alone be saddled with the cost of the war. The future generation will reap the full benefit of the war, if there is a benefit at all for which they are hoping. On that ground I say that all war expenditure should be met more by loan than by taxation. In fact, as was very properly remarked by Sir William Acworth, railways should not be treated as the milch cow of the State. After all, it is very doubtful whether the railways should be required to pay arrear contribution to the general revenues under the present state of things, which I need not describe at length. My submission is that the surplus should be utilised for building up substantial reserves for the future and to make up the loss which is sustained during the war.

Now, Sir, one of the greatest complaints against the railway system at the present moment is the difficulty of wagons and transport difficulties. The munitions industry is the largest industry at the present moment and wagons are needed for the supply of munitions and armaments for war purposes.

Now, Sir, in modern wars, foodstuffs, cotton, cotton piecegoods and such other articles are all munitions of war, and if owing to shortage of locomotives and wagons, it is not possible to move all this stuff at the right time to the proper place, the country is bound to suffer. I, therefore, submit that the Government should see that no further depletion of wagons or locomotives from the present stock takes place. I want to emphasise the point that shortage of wagons has resulted in disorganising trade and industry in many directions. For instance, thousands of bags of sugar are lying at certain stations for being despatched to their destinations where they are badly required. The same is the case with cotton which is required by mills both at Ahmedabad and Bombay. The same is the case with coal which is required both by railways and mills and other factories. They were badly required by consumers when prices were soaring high and they were made to soar still higher by profiteers. All these could be easily avoided, if we have had sufficient number of wagons and locomotives. This is a matter which, at the present moment, deserves the greatest attention of the Honourable Member for Communications.

Now, Sir, as regards increase of fares and freights, this has been described by the *Statesman* as one of the most distasteful surprises of this budget. The increase of traffic is no ground for increasing fares and freights, rather it is a ground for decrease. I do feel that the railway system, in view of the fact that they have taken advantage of the difficult

situation, can be charged with "profiteering" when they propose to increase fares and freights. It is after all a temporary windfall and it should be no ground or justification for increase of fares and freights permanently. It has been suggested that this is justified by the law of supply and demand. I should not like to judge the railway system by shopkeeper's instinct of demand and supply and taking advantage of the situation to earn as much profit as possible. That is profiteering pure and simple—a vice which cannot be tolerated even in ordinary business concerns. My final submission on this question is: is this the proper time when the people are already over-burdened in so many different ways, is this the time for increasing the fares and freights? On this question, I have got the verdict of the Honourable the Railway Member himself. He first says:

"In the present situation there are strong arguments for a substantial increase in passenger fares."

Then he gives all his arguments *ad seriatim*. Having given those arguments, his conclusion is this:

"We have weighed these arguments with the attention they deserve but have come to the conclusion that we should stay our hands in the matter of imposing a general increase. The need for this may become more apparent as time goes on, but we are anxious to avoid any undue increase of cost to the railway users. If railways followed the practice of many industrial and commercial firms, they could at the present moment secure very large increases in revenue and at the same time ease their own difficulties considerably by imposing increases which would effectively curtail the demand."

Then the Honourable Member says:

"But we are satisfied that this would not be in the public interest."

Sir, I lay emphasis upon his own conclusion, and I say that this increase is not in the public interest.

The next important question that ought to receive attention of the House is the question of dismantling of railway lines in different parts of the country. We now know what use is made of those lines. They are sent overseas in the different theatres of war for the prosecution of war. So far as the object is concerned, there can be no difference of opinion. If these railway lines are dismantled and if they are used for the prosecution of war, there can be no doubt that they are put to good use. But at the same time, I am anxious to point out that these dismantlings of railway lines and the despatch of locomotives overseas may frustrate this very object. While they are necessary in other parts of the world, and in other theatres of war, they will affect the war efforts in India itself. It will affect prejudicially the essential services in India which are indispensable for war. So, although you may gain something in one direction, the effect is more than lost in another direction. This will cause dislocation in the industry. The road has been restricted, at the same time, railway also is restricted. The position then becomes serious for the State and the industry particularly. I am afraid we will have to go back to days of bullock carts and country crafts and other primitive modes of transport. The time has come when we shall have to resort to those primitive modes of transport. I am not giving any fanciful picture, but I am speaking seriously. Willingly or unwillingly, we shall have to fall back upon the old methods of transport and therefore, it is well that the attention of the Government is directed to this also so that they may take proper steps for facilitating and for bringing into existence those primitive systems of transport.

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One word about the procedure adopted in debiting the cost of dismantling the railway lines. My submission is that the entire cost of dismantling, the entire capital cost should be met by the British Government and not by the Government of India in view of the uses to which these dismantled lines are put in different parts of the world, in the different theatres of war. My final submission is that although if we judge the budget by surplus alone, it is a very good budget

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The Honourable Member's time is up.

Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta . . . still in view of the other considerations that I have described I cannot feel very happy over the budget.

Sir Henry Richardson (Nominated Non-Official): Sir, whatever satisfaction we may derive from the phenomenal profits disclosed by the Railway Budget, and whatever relief we may receive from the contribution to General Revenues, our feelings must be tempered by the fact that the present railway surpluses are mainly the result of war conditions. They are, in fact, very largely book entries, the expenses being paid indirectly by the taxpayer through the carriage of troops and supplies on the Government of India account, and those same expenses re-appearing in the form of surpluses in the Railway Budget. The war is responsible for these fortuitous circumstances and our general appreciation of the very satisfactory position must, therefore, be limited to the earnings themselves rather than to the actual workings, regarding which I shall have something to say later on.

Another point, and one which has been passed over by both the Railway Member and the Chief Commissioner, is the considerable portion of the revenue for which His Majesty's Government must be given credit. We know that colossal orders have been placed in India through the Supply Department on His Majesty's Government's account and that the purchase price either includes railway freight or that this is paid direct by His Majesty's Government. This is another abnormal factor and it would, indeed, be interesting to know to what extent this part of India's war effort has affected railway revenues.

I come now to the question of the distribution of the surplus and the allied question of the necessity for a revision of the Convention of 1924. I have already referred to the circumstances whereby a large portion of the surplus is, in fact, merely a transfer from one pocket of the taxpayer to the other. This being so, it is very right and proper that the Indian taxpayer should receive some assistance from these surpluses as has been admitted by the Railway Member. The taxpayer, however, could not have received that assistance were it not for the moratorium which has been in force for the past two and a half years. Thus it is clearly shown that in days of war when the railways are making surpluses, a strict application of the Convention would be a hindrance to any relief being given to the taxpayer, and in the days of peace when railways were not doing well the Convention was not only an undue burden but quite impracticable. The Railway Member

has implied that a general revision of the existing Convention may be involved and it is because we feel there is a case for revision that we intend to deal with this question in some detail in the discussions on Demands for Grants. I will not, therefore, say any more now on that point.

Another matter I would like to mention is the recent decision to establish a Central Transport Organisation and I must express a little surprise and disappointment that no reference has been made to this very important decision in either of the Government Railway Budget speeches. With all due respect and appreciation of what the railways have achieved under difficult circumstances the fact remains that for months past the general public have been only too well aware of the seriousness of the situation, and of the prospect that it would become worse. The Railway Member in his speech said that the signs pointed to an increasingly difficult situation. We have seen these signs for a long time and the establishment of this Central Transport Organisation is at least a year overdue. We are told its function is to devise means for making the fullest use of road and other forms of transport to relieve the situation. I know that the Organisation was set up only at the beginning of this month but the matter which has been urgent for months past is now immediate. Cannot the Railway Member tell us something of what is being done? And in the devising of means for achieving the desired objects, particularly regarding alternative fuels, why does not the Railway Member take a leaf out of the Commerce Member's book and seek the advice of non-official and business interests, as has been done so successfully and with such mutual benefit in the cases of the Export Advisory Council and the Industrial Research Board?

The Railway Member in the course of his speech found an opportunity gratuitously to voice a compliment to those responsible for State Railways by reason of the fact that public opinion was on the whole strongly in favour of further enlargement of State-management. I think I discerned an impish glint in the Honourable Member's eye when he said this, for he must know that many will disagree with his selected reason for the compliment and that dissatisfaction does exist. In Calcutta during the past few months one could hardly think for the noise created by the screams on all sides about wagon shortage and the necessity for setting up some Transport Authority. Locomotive shortage and reduction of average speed have been mentioned, but experience in our commercial factories and workshops teaches us many a good tune can be played on an old engine. Then again, in some quarters it has been strongly suggested that Government might well look into the question of the greatly increased use of palm oil which it is stated was a prominent feature in the last war and is becoming increasingly popular under present conditions. Government should not ask others to prove these facts. Their own officials can, if they so desire, deal with it themselves.

I entirely agree with the Railway Member's personal opinion that if State-management is to achieve success, both Government and the Legislature must acquiesce in a large devolution of responsibility. In these days when the railways are of vital importance, such plain speaking should not be resented by any one and I am sure I shall not be misunderstood when I ask the question whether the system at present in force whereby railway officials are, to a considerable extent, automati-

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cally promoted merely on the grounds of length of service, is one which makes for that complete efficiency so desirable and so necessary in the circumstances in which we find ourselves today. The Honourable Member said: "We must be prepared to trust those filling responsible posts and do our utmost to select men who merit that trust". I quite agree but there are feelings amongst the general public that many men, Indians, Anglo-Indians and Europeans, could be of invaluable service to the railways and to the public but who are, in fact, prevented by this system. If there is any truth in this opinion, then I say that this is no time to be bound by a red tape system and the best men, irrespective of service regulations, should be put into the thousands of key positions which this immense undertaking involves. I cast no reflection whatever on the staff or on the Railway Member's belief that the general standard of efficiency has never been higher than it is today. What I am asking is whether it cannot be improved still better to meet the trials that lie ahead.

Time does not permit of my discussing at length the increase in fares and freights. I will only say that in the circumstances we approve of these and consider all kinds of concessions should be withdrawn as soon as possible. The necessity for depleting passenger traffic is plain in the interests of the war effort and if the steps now proposed to be taken do not have the desired effect, then the general increase in fares hinted by the Railway Member should come into force without delay.

Finally, it gives me pleasure to close my remarks with an expression of sincere appreciation of the part railway workshops are playing in munitions production and in other ways towards assisting the war effort. Recently I had an opportunity personally of seeing some of this work and I came away tremendously impressed with the organisation and detailed careful planning which has been achieved in so short a time. Whatever we may say about railways in other directions, I feel they are playing a worthy and important part in the war effort, and we should be most grateful to the officers and men for their devotion and willingness to shoulder this important additional responsibility at a time of great difficulty and strain.

Lieut.-Colonel Sir Henry Gidney (Nominated Non-Official): Mr. President, Sir, I congratulate, with other Members, the Honourable
12 NOON. Member on presenting to this House another surplus budget which he himself attributed to the abnormal circumstances in connection with the war. As has been stated by the Member who spoke before me, it is apparent that the main source of revenue for railways during the year under review has been the carrying of military traffic and supplies for purposes of the war. I do not look upon the surplus so much as an indication of profit in railway working as evidence of the extent to which our railways have responded to the military needs of the country. It is a direct tribute to the railway workers in having so efficiently met the urgent needs of the situation to a phenomenal extent. For this reason, the Honourable Member deserves our gratitude for his great effort in helping to stem the tide of the forces sweeping towards our country both from the East and from the West.

Sir, I have never pretended to be an expert in railway finance, and so it is not my desire to delve into the correctness or otherwise of the manner in which the Honourable Member has decided to dispose of the surplus finances accrued both in 1940-41 and 1941-42. But I do feel I must make a few remarks on this subject. In two years the Honourable Member has decided to regroup almost the entire arrears of the Depreciation Fund and I do not know whether this was such a necessary and urgent allotment. I do not suggest that these arrears should not be paid into the Depreciation Fund, for, I agree that this greatest national asset ought to be placed on a sound footing, but I do think the arrears of so many lean years need not be paid up in such lump sums at the present moment when there are so many other more urgent needs demanding funds and assistance.

I am not surprised, but I regret very much to see a note of pessimism throughout the Honourable Member's speech in regard to the capacity of railways to meet the needs of the public. I must again point out that this position has arisen by reason only of the fact that Government have, for years, been short-sighted enough not to make India self-supporting in the manufacture of machinery, locomotives and other major industries. Had this been done, even if it had necessitated the postponement of the purchase of some of the Company-managed railways, we should not have found ourselves today in so unhappy—and indeed perilous—position of having to advertise in the press asking people not to travel. If this is the position when war is not yet on the shores of this country, it is reasonable to assume that the slightest trouble within the borders of India will dislocate communications to an extent not anticipated by any section of the 400 million people scattered throughout the country. The position will become worse as time goes on, because transshipment of locomotives and spares from Great Britain to India is becoming increasingly difficult, even if His Majesty's Government permits the release of machines and locomotives for use in this country. I have no doubt that the position has already become acute in this regard, but it will reach a dangerous point—may be a collapse—when the present locomotives become unserviceable or obsolete. I am not going to indulge in a diatribe of "I told you so", though this House could quite easily and with justification place the entire blame of the present helpless and tragic position of our railways, as also other lines of communication, on the Railway Board and Communications Department. I know there is no use crying over spilt milk, but let's spill no more and I am tempted to ask, was milk not deliberately spilt for reasons which it is not desirable to elaborate at the present moment?

Even now I suggest it is not too late to repair the wrong, the blunders of the past policy of the Government. For, if America can transport and instal, even at this late stage, a full fledged aeroplane factory in China and a large assembling factory at Karachi, would it not be to the advantage of India, of the efficient prosecution of the war in the East and of the victory which one and all of us, members of the freedom loving nations, yearn for, to establish in India a factory for the manufacture of locomotives and other machinery so necessary to maintain uninterrupted the communication services in this country? We do not know what and when will be the turn of events in respect of the war—both in the East and in the West—but while there is yet time is it not to the advantage of the Empire defences to establish at a very early date such factories while

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the sea routes are still safe? I would go so far as to say that a portion of the enormous surplus which it is intended to transfer to the general revenues and the Depreciation Fund would be better utilised in this manner, if only the immediate object is the efficient prosecution of the war.

Sir, I regret very much that the Honourable Member is having recourse to an increase in the fares in order to discourage traffic, but I must say that this is unfortunate, especially at a time of war when facilities should exist for the evacuation of women and children in order that the men may help better in resisting aggression. This surely is not only catching the bull by the horns, but the cow by the udder (other) end. With the absence of alternative means of transport, both by reason of the dismantling* of certain lines—now said to be unprofitable—and the contraction of motor transport owing to the rationing of petrol. I opine that better facilities should be provided for the travelling public. There are many ways of countering these shortages. One of the means of effecting this is by the cancellation of saloons for railway officials and insisting upon all officials travelling as passengers. I know that Divisional Officials are sometimes required to go to wayside stations and spend a day or two, but this is not invariably so. Very rarely do they have to go to stations where they cannot get accommodation and where special officer's rest houses fully furnished and equipped are not available. Why maintain both saloons and rest houses? At the present time, most of these officers even while travelling, for instance, from Calcutta to Delhi or Lahore to Delhi and Lahore to Rawalpindi, Peshawar, Bombay, etc., travel in their saloons just for the dignity of the office. In England the King alone has a saloon. His ministers get a reserve seat and not a saloon. The discontinuance of this practice would not only reduce the enormous cost (running into lakhs) of maintenance of these hundreds of saloons and the load which engines have to haul, but it will enable the railways to afford increased accommodation to the travelling public as also for the transport of supplies. This suggestion may sound ungenerous to railway officials, but they should make some sacrifice as is demanded and exacted from the staff and endeavour to share with the public the inconvenience resulting from the present emergency.

I notice the Honourable Member tries to justify the proposed increase in the passenger fares on the East Indian Railway and North Western Railway on the ground that they are substantially below the level prevailing on other State-managed Railways. I have always thought that railway fares are fixed on the basis of the higher rates obtaining on other railways.

I feel that the dismantling of railways should not proceed any further. What was done a year ago was done when war was far away from the shores of India; but, today, with war on the very borders of the country it is dangerous to continue the dismantling of what are now called "unremunerative lines", because, it is most essential to have as many alternative routes as possible and I feel I should strike a note of caution in this regard.

The Honourable Member has paid a compliment to himself when he referred to public opinion being in favour of further enlargement of State management of railways. From the worker's point of view, I regret to

say that there is growing evidence that State management has not been quite a boon or a blessing. Out of the large surplus which has been effected through the efforts of those who actually did the work and not merely of those who just supervised and issued orders, practically nothing has been allocated by the Honourable Member for the benefit of the workmen. Yes; in a measure State management has been a success, but that is because the State has been able to extract sweat labour from the men through the instrumentality of the over-zealous railway officials who, very often, by threats and exacting rules, have extracted labour from men, even beyond human endurance. I levy this charge against the State Railway Administration. Drivers on railways are required to work from 16 to 21 hours continuously without rest and, if they sign "under rest", out of sheer exhaustion, they are looked upon with disfavour by this over-zealous official.

The Honourable Sir Andrew Clow (Member for Railways and Communications): Where are they worked these hours?

Lieut.-Colonel Sir Henry Gidney: I will give the Honourable Member details. Have patience. And their remarks are considered objectionable and they are punished. This is how the Honourable Member has been able to show a large surplus and the increased mileage in traffic. I submit this is wholly inhuman, apart from it being contrary to the rules and regulations framed by the Railway Board in regard to the hours of employment of railway workmen—indeed I understand the hours of employment rules are not applicable to the running staff, and what is more the drivers, shunters and firemen are the ones, even among the running staff, who are not even entitled to the "under rest" allowance. On the North Western Railway, the General Manager or his Chief Mechanical Engineer in writing to a Union has definitely stated that, according to the rules, a man cannot claim rest until he has worked 16 hours continuously. That is an official document. This railway obviously considers that a very generous concession. I ask, is there any Department in the Government of India where such a condition exists, that a man should work for 16 hours continuously before he can ask for rest? No wonder when this is the actual rule in normal times, that a more inhuman and wholly unsatisfactory position obtains today, during the emergency. Surely this is not good administration. On the contrary it is an imitation of a Nazi order. In the hands of the driver rests the safety of the travelling public and the safe conduct of the property conveyed in a goods train. Can you imagine what will happen when he is compelled to work beyond human endurance? It will result in another series of death and disaster. With all our anxiety to co-operate and help in the emergency, it is foolish, if not tragic, to permit this position to continue on the railways. Something must be done and done early if the position is not to deteriorate to the grave detriment of public safety and defeat the very purpose for which the railways, in their anxiety to rush their work, are exacting work from overworked men. I do not mean to suggest that the men are not prepared to work hard and loyally to co-operate with the railway—the present surplus budget is evidence enough of it—but what I say is that the matter must be thoroughly investigated, and "work and rest" should be so arranged as to permit every employee to take sufficient rest when he has worked 10 to 12 hours on the footplate. The temptation of over-time earnings is no justification.

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to impose this blood and sweat labour, even though the subordinate may fall a victim to this temptation, he being in receipt of a starvation wage today.

Despite the increase in traffic it is noticeable that except for the dearness allowance, there has been no corresponding increase in the working expenses so far as staff is concerned, which shows very clearly that the staff has not been correspondingly increased nor sufficiently paid. The phenomenal reductions made in the staff and their rates of pay which it was said were necessary in the days of railway deficit budgets and periods of depression still continue to obtain, and no effort has been made, even with an unforeseen and enormous budget, to increase the staff, their salaries and amenities to relieve pressure. On the contrary, the number of locomotives are reduced and are fast becoming unserviceable; the permanent way is deteriorating, staff have been in some cases reduced, engines have longer runs with increased weights to pull. Those of us in this House who know the real difficulties under which the subordinate staff labour can better appreciate their case. The Honourable Member and the Railway Board cannot have a true estimate of the position, for their one big idea is a surplus budget and whose knowledge of these matters is as reflected via the mirrors of Railway Agents and their under officers, whose chief object is to extract a maximum effort from an underpaid, underfed and underrested staff, who are stilled into silence should they dare to oppose such demands. I make that deliberate statement in this House.

As I have just told the House, drivers are required to work 80 to 100 hours per week, contrary to all rules and regulations, only because there is no adequate leave reserve, a matter we have repeatedly represented, in vain, to the Honourable Member. The job analysis which was undertaken in 1936-37 resulted in heavy reductions, not only in the total number of staff on railways, but in the curtailment of prospects and promotions. Such curtailment has been forced regardless of the prospects assured to the men in accordance with the terms of service which obtained when they joined the railway service, and, in my opinion, it constituted a definite breach of the agreement and deprivation of vested interests and accruing rights in the matter of promotion in the case of subordinates. Let me, Sir, quote a concrete instance. On the North Western Railway, in the grade of Grade IV drivers, the number of appointments sanctioned as a result of the job analysis was nearly 30 per cent. lower than the number of men holding appointments in that grade, with the result that Grade IV shunters who had passed examinations as drivers and who are also utilised as drivers on many occasions, have no hopes of securing promotion to the grade of drivers, by reason of the fact that the sanctioned strength is much below the number of drivers who are already in the grade. I ask, is this sound administration? Is this fair to the staff? In the past these shunters were automatically promoted to Grade IV drivers in the course of time after they had passed their examinations. This term of their agreement which was held in abeyance during the period of depression has since been permanently withdrawn. The result is that these shunters, who are essentially drivers under training, have no hopes of promotion at

all, although the Railway utilises them as drivers, especially during the present emergency. I call this dishonest economy and a breach of contract.

Again, on the East Indian Railway, the intensified use of locomotives has been the means of depriving drivers of emoluments which they had previously enjoyed and which the Government guaranteed would be continued, even after the State took over the management of the company. While I am quite appreciative of the fact that railways have to adjust their conditions of service to the needs of the situation, I submit it is not open to the railway to deprive the railwaymen of allowances which were guaranteed under the seal of the Secretary of State and His Excellency the Viceroy. Indeed, I consider this a breach of contract, especially with regard to the allowance known as "Shed and Out" and which obtains in the East Indian Railway. I am glad the Honourable Member objects to the word "subordinate" and I hope he discontinues its use on railways. Then, the appeal rules will need immediate enquiry and radical alteration. For today appeals amount of almost a farce to be played with by officials to suit their own whim and fancy. The Good Conduct Marks system requires immediate attention and if this form of censure amounts to punishment, it should be governed by the appeal rules because today some railway officials take an unfair advantage of it.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The Honourable Member has two minutes more.

Lieut.-Colonel Sir Henry Gidney: These are some of the points which I desire to raise here. Sir, while on this subject of relations between the railway official and the worker, I was astounded to hear what the Honourable Member had to say at the conclusion of his speech and which I look upon as positive evidence of an entire absence of the human touch. I should like to refer also to that part of the Honourable Member's speech when he talked of the Moghul Emperors allowing all their subjects to approach them personally with petitions on any matter. It may be a source of pseudo-pride and satisfaction to the Communications Member to feel that he is above those Moghul Emperors, seven of whom today lie buried in this city; but the Honourable Member would have this House and his humble employees to understand that he occupies a greater position than even these Moghul Emperors and that he ought not to be approached in the matter of, say, the promotion of a common Assistant Station Master. Has the Honourable Member ever visited the Delhi Fort? If so, surely he has seen the *Dewan-i-Am* where the Moghul Emperors used to listen to the grievances of their humblest subjects. If not, may I advise him to visit that historic building?

Sir, that Assistant Station Master, I may remind the Honourable Member, is the man who by his sweat labour helped to maintain the Honourable Member in his service and helped him to present to this House a phenomenal surplus budget. I am sure that no Member of the British Cabinet or for that matter a Member of the Cabinet of any freedom loving country could get away with a statement of this type, *i.e.*, that the Minister is unapproachable in the matter of justice, even to the humblest workman in the administration. With labour today as the spearhead of all nations, including India, especially during an emergency such as the present, I

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am surprised that the Minister in charge of Communications has dared to make such an observation. Had any Member of the British Cabinet done so, he would have been voted out of office at once. Does the Honourable Member realise that, by talking loosely like this in this Honourable House, on behalf of the Railway Board, he is not only giving a *carte blanche* invitation to General Managers of Railways and their under-officers to consider themselves unfettered Nawabs and autocrats in their dealings with their subordinate staff, an attitude of "Brutus has spoken, let no dog bark", but openly and actively inciting a much harassed staff of employees to a course of action which I hesitate to contemplate, much less face?

Sir, I desire very respectfully yet firmly, to warn the Honourable the Communications Member that there is great discontent among railway employees, the direct result of an utter absence of the human touch between the official and the employees; a discontent which must become worsened after what the Honourable Member has said. If the Honourable Member doubts this, I invite him to scan the thousands of questions asked by Members of this House since the inception of the Legislatures. Nine-tenths of them refer to railway matters. Surely all these grievances are not imaginary and petitions from employees on such matters, however trivial, if unremedied by the lower officials, deserve a more fitting habitat than the waste paper basket as suggested by the Honourable Member who, in his speech, said "What happened to the bulk of those petitions history does not record." Was he trying to be funny? If so, it was ill-placed humour amounting to ingratitude levied on employees who have helped him to present this surplus Budget. Sir, I belong to a community which is recognised for its untarnished loyalty to the Railway Administration in India, but they also are smarting with their Indian colleagues under the yoke of the present regime and have come to the limits of their endurance.

Before I conclude, I wish to tell the Honourable Member that he owes it to this House and to the hundreds of thousands of his humble employees to withdraw those undesirable remarks or to explain what his intentions were, so that General Managers, some of whom, thank God, do possess and exercise the human touch and their officers will alter their present treatment of their staff.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim.): The Honourable Member's time is up.

Lieut.-Colonel Sir Henry Gidney: I will conclude presently, Sir. As I was saying, their officers will alter their present treatment of their staff; otherwise a grave disservice to the very cause which he serves will have been done. These are not idle words. They are uttered after 25 years experience of railway matters, with an acute sense of responsibility and a knowledge which, may be, the Honourable Member himself does not possess, or if he does, he elects, like a super Moghul, to ignore. Sir, I am no alarmist nor a disloyalist; I am one who has never been afraid to expose any injustice irrespective of colour, creed or caste. It is in this spirit I earnestly urge the Honourable Member to appreciate the value of his subordinate staff, the unchallengeable commanding position labour

wields the world over, and, when he has done so, to examine the generous treatment, today, being accorded to the labourer in Great Britain on whom the success of the present war depends, and then, to try and persuade himself that the labourer in India holds an equally important place in the defence of India and he must be treated, with generosity and sympathy, especially, possessed as he is, with such a big surplus budget. My earnest hope is that he will rise to the occasion and remedy a remediable position today, but which it may be too late to do tomorrow.

Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad (United Provinces Southern Divisions: Muhammadan Rural): Sir, I congratulate the Honourable the Railway Member on the glorious account of the railway estimates that he has presented before us. The movement of men and materials on account of war conditions and the curtailment of the activities of road traffic on account of shortage of petrol has thrown a very heavy strain on the railway traffic. The Honourable the Railway Member has not given us any indication in his speech about the steps he intends to take to meet the growing demands on these railways. He alluded to the abandonment and dismantlement of 770 miles of railway track. He further referred to the supply of materials for additional 800 miles of track, but he said nothing whatever about the steps he has taken or proposes to take to meet the growing demands of these railways. The evacuation of towns has now created an acute problem for railways, and its gravity may be judged by the fact that a new business of purchasing and selling railway tickets at double and treble the prices has come into existence. The same thing applies to goods wagons also, which cannot be obtained without substantial back-door subscriptions. Here the business is made not by businessmen, but by railway officials themselves. I wanted some wagons for the carriage of coal to our University, and I approached every friend of mine, but without any avail. I then approached the General Commercial Manager, I approached the Chief Traffic Manager, and also the railway coal authority, but without avail. Unfortunately, in the University, we have no column where we can put in additional sum in order to get these wagons. Two years ago the East Indian Railway proposed a demand of one crore of rupees for rolling stock, though the war had begun then, but, unfortunately, this demand was withdrawn. Had this money been spent two years ago in purchasing rolling stock, the difficulties of the East Indian Railway would have been minimised considerably.

Now, Sir, I come to the question of surpluses. Now, note the figures for the last four years—we find that the surplus is approximately double of the estimates. In the year 1939-40 the surplus was 4,88 lakhs; in the year 1940-41 the surplus was 18,46. The Honourable Member has given 26,40 for 1941-42, but I am sure it will rise to 29 crores, and in the year 1942-43, though his estimate is 27,95, it will surely reach the figure of 50 crores. We thus have a surplus, since the war commenced, of about a hundred crores. The railway revenue, as was pointed out by the Deputy Leader and by the Leader of the old Party, has to come from the general revenues of the railways. He has also paid for the employment of soldiers and war supplies.

Sir, I spent some time to find out what proportion has been contributed by the general revenues in the railway budget, but there was no data by which this could be calculated. From the surpluses derived substantially from the general revenues, he paid the loans of the general revenues. For

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example, in the explanatory memorandum it has been pointed out that it is not a gift, but it is really the payment of a loan, that he has paid 5.71 crores from the surplus of the general revenue in the year 1940-41 and advance payment of the amount due in 1942-43. This reminds me of a story of *Shâtir* which I will not relate now for want of time. This man was boasting that he paid all the arrears of the *soucar* by stealing money at night and paying him back in the morning, in payment of the arrears,—not only in payment of the loans which he had raised, but in payment of any loans which he might raise later on.

Then, Sir, the next thing that I should like to take up is the question of dismantlement and abandonment of railway lines, and here there are two points I should like to emphasise. The first is that the Railway Member will agree that dismantling means the annihilation of railway capital. The Assembly should have been consulted, and we cannot write off the debt, nor can we write off against depreciation in this manner. In the case of companies, you can reduce the share of the capital, and you can also reduce the value of the share; but in the case of railways we have really to pay out of the income of the general revenues, either directly or through the depreciation fund. In this case, as the Honourable Member said, it will be paid out of the general revenues of the current year. This is a large financial question and two important principles are involved in it. The first is, you have dismantled the line; you have really paid the capital back by dismantling the line. The only question now is under what heading are you going to put it? Practically the expenditure has been incurred, and after incurring the expenditure the Assembly is required to give its vote. Therefore, the Assembly has now been reduced to the position of a Public Accounts Committee, to discuss the *post mortem* expenditure which will be of no use. Therefore, if you really wanted to have the vote of the House, it was very essential for you to have asked the opinion of the House before actually dismantling the lines.

I entirely appreciate that there may be difficulties in case of war requirements. My Honourable friend, the Finance Member, has got the experience that the Standing Finance Committee never stood in the way of any expenditure in connection with war and we never demanded details if it was war expenditure. But, certainly, if a line is dismantled on account of its economic condition or on account of the fact that it is no longer remunerative, I should like to challenge the statement and the figures from which you have drawn that particular conclusion. Again, there is mistake in accounting. The Honourable Member has put the capital expenditure of the dismantled lines on the current revenue. I challenge that this method is not correct. It ought to have been debited under what is called the depreciation reserve fund, and not the revenues of the railway. I agree that whatever you pay comes out of the revenue of the railways, but certainly there is the regular system of accounting. You have got highly paid accountants connected with the Railway Board, you have got the Auditor General, the Honourable the Finance Member. Is it fair that this amount should be debited directly to the current revenue of the railways? It ought to have been put under the account of depreciation fund. My Honourable friend says, what matters it whether you put it in the reserve fund and then take it back the same year?

After all, I use the same arguments about the depreciation fund to which my Honourable friend did not agree, and I shall come to it again. From the figures at page 54 of the memorandum, we find that the actual expenditure under depreciation on an average amounts to less than eight crores of rupees, but still we have been depositing under this head a sum of Rs. 12½ crores for the last now 17 or 18 years. Is it fair to go on depositing 4½ or 5 crores every year extra, and to allow them to accumulate to about 80·18 crores under the head of depreciation fund, which you have now changed into depreciation reserve fund? Are you expecting any earthquake or any special accident when all this money would be required? Why should we not follow the practice of other countries and not have any depreciation fund at all? Have one reserve, you should not have two reserve funds, one depreciation fund and the other depreciation reserve fund. There should be one fund. You put the entire cost of renewal of tracks and replacement of tracks under the revenue, and set aside a small amount to be used at a time when money is most needed. Over and above expenditure of one year which we put either in the depreciation reserve or in the reserve fund, it ought to be contributed to the general revenues. I think that this is a point which needs to be emphasised, and I support the Honourable the Leader of the European Group when he demanded a revision of the Convention of 1924 in this sense.

Let me now come to the purchase of railways. We all agree as regards the principle that India should own and administer all the railways that are on the Indian soil. There are no two opinions on this principle, but we would like to discuss details in the manner it had been done before. In the first place, the Assembly was never taken into confidence. For example, at the far end of the Session, when the Assembly Session was over, the matter was brought before the Railway Advisory Council. The figures were late in coming and we had no time to discuss as the Assembly was about to adjourn and then we were asked to give an opinion within forty-eight hours, when a decision had to be made. The Assembly was here the whole Session, we were here in this House, and the Honourable the Railway Member ought to have brought this question before the Assembly much earlier and every point ought to have been threshed out in the manner in which it was threshed out in 1931. I challenged the figures supplied to us about the Bombay, Baroda and Central India Railway, but I got no satisfactory reply. As regards the Eastern Bengal Railway, I challenged it, and I challenge even today that the amount that you paid for the purchase of that railway was excessive. The share value of that particular railway at the time we purchased it was 65, and we immediately raised it to 100 by our payment, so that we had to pay 35 extra on the lame excuse that we only followed the contract. With financial statesmanship this thing could have been acquired, and had we been given an opportunity of discussing this particular question we would have suggested a better method of doing it.

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman (Finance Member): The moment you discussed it, it would have been a 100 already

Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad: On the last occasion we appointed a committee, the committee sat for about a fortnight and discussed every little detail of the purchase. Did you appoint a committee this time? An open discussion on the floor of this House is a waste of time because

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nobody can understand and discuss and criticise the figures, which is necessary in discussing this particular matter. Take the case of the purchase of Bengal and North Western Railway. Here also we have not been given any data, similar to those which were given in 1931. It is very difficult for me to understand anything now because the whole thing is a mystery. We have absolutely no figures and this mystery will remain as the mystery of the Nizam's State Railway where they lost two crores of rupees in that transaction. One day a similar thing may be discovered about the Bengal and North Western Railway, which at present we do not know. As representatives of the taxpayer we have every right to demand figures to be supplied to us and an opportunity to go through them and carefully examine them because we are not satisfied with the thing. As I said, as regards the principle we agree, but there are certain details to which I took exception at the time, and I shall point them out today. In the first place, you ought to take the Assembly into confidence and should not decide the question hurriedly in the Advisory Council.

Dr. P. N. Banerjea (Calcutta Suburbs : Non-Muhammadan Urban) : You mean the Railway Standing Finance Committee?

Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad : I mean the Railway Advisory Council, which is the last body where you have got representatives of the Council of State also, to give an opinion on that point. When I raised this question, they followed at once the example of the maulvis. The maulvis, when they are handicapped in any argument, immediately used to call the opponent, a *kafir*. When I raised this financial question, they called it a Muslim question, and there are some who would rather lose four annas so that even one anna may not be given to the Muslim. They followed this particular precept and said this was a Muslim question. The Muslims are better off under State-management than under Company-management. They called it a Muslim question and votes were carried in that way.

The Honourable Sir Andrew Olow : Who called it a Muslim question? I never did.

Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad : I am not challenging you.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai (Sind : Non-Muhammadan Rural) : It is only his own imagination.

Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad : Then, before coming to a decision we wanted to know about the scheme of amalgamation. In what way did you want to amalgamate when you purchased it, what did you propose to do with it? You never consulted us on this matter. Again, an old Member of the new Party raised the question of the method of administration. No doubt, the Railway Board is a splendid body, but it was devised for a small administration. When we are adding to their task, it is very desirable that you ought to consider your administrative machinery.

Now, my Honourable friend has said in his speech :

"I am occasionally reminded by those who are anxious that I should use my personal influence in the matter of the promotion of an assistant station-master or the appointment of a clerk or the assignment of a minor contract, that the Moghal Emperor allowed all subjects to approach them personally with petitions on any matter."

I think he misunderstood entirely the object behind that practice. The Moghal Emperors were not concerned with the particular incident but they were concerned with the administration of justice. They wanted to know whether their officers were administering justice and this was one of the methods they employed to discover whether their officials were administering justice and if the Honourable Member does not wish to resort to the old method now and then, then the story of the injustice done by the railway officers will always remain a sealed letter. Therefore, this is the proper opportunity

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The Honourable Member's time is up. He can complete his last sentence.

Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad: I will only say that I protest against the rosy picture that has been given and hope that the Department will rise to the occasion and help not only the Military but also the evacuees who need assistance.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: (Dacca Division: Non-Muhammadan Rural): It has become almost a customary practice in this House to start a speech on such an occasion by congratulating the Member in charge, on the slightest provocation. It does not matter if, as you go on developing your argument, you say very hard things about him. I will try to follow the example of my Honourable friend, Sir Henry Gidney, and try to congratulate the Honourable Member. I find that I can honestly and sincerely congratulate my Honourable friend on one matter and that is the prevalence of the war. The war has proved almost a fairy god-mother to the Indian Railways. It was only the other day that we heard that the Railway Convention of 1924 under which finances were separated, had better be revised in order to reduce the liability of the railways in regard to the contribution to the general exchequer. Suggestions have appeared from time to time from well-known economic authorities that the Indian Railways had better be started with a clean slate, wiping off the past arrear contributions and revising the more important conditions of the Convention of 1924, and yet we find that today the Honourable Member is in a position not merely to wipe off the arrear contributions, but make an advance payment in aid of the general exchequer, although not without some amount of violence to the terms of the Convention of 1924. Now, Sir, how is this grand illusion effected? As has been pointed out by the Honourable the Leader of the European Group, my Honourable friend lays the Defence and Supply services under contribution. He makes the collection and then passes it on to his colleague on his right, Sir Jeremy Raisman, to be passed along by him again to the Defence and Supply services, so that once again my Honourable friend, the Member in charge, may levy a contribution on them. So, this goes on like a merry-go-round and, incidentally, the deficits in regard to the payment of the contribution to the general exchequer gets reduced and indeed wiped off. Now, Sir, I do not at all suggest that it is improper to take advantage of the war conditions for the purpose of benefiting the Railways but, Sir, what I mean to suggest is that this is an artificial stimulus which the Railways get from the prevalence of the war and we should not be blinded to the real condition of affairs so far as the Railway Administration is concerned. Look at the other side of the picture. Now, the Honourable Member's speech here, as well as

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the speech delivered by the Chief Commissioner for Railways in another place, made it quite plain that though this nest-egg is being presented to the Honourable the Finance Member today at what a great cost is it being produced? Renewals and repairs are being postponed, with the resultant decrease in the working expenses,—renewals and repairs which will have to be overtaken at a later date, at a much greater cost, because of the quicker rate at which the stock will deteriorate.

The Honourable Sir Andrew Clow: That is perfectly true if you exclude the Depreciation Fund from working expenses but we are putting into the Depreciation Fund a sum that corresponds to the deterioration.

Mr. K. O. Neogy: I was coming to that. The Chief Commissioner for Railways has stated that what is being put into the Depreciation Fund and the amount that stands to the credit of the fund, is not sufficient for the purpose of meeting the expenditure, that will surely arise for the purpose of overtaking these deferred renewals. I take it that was the purport of the statement made by the Chief Commissioner for Railways in the other House. If we had a proper Depreciation Fund covering the cost of renewal when the time is more propitious, that would have been a different story altogether, but says the Chief Commissioner for Railways—I do not want to read the whole of it, it is a longish paragraph,—this is what he says in paragraph 21:

“For these and other reasons, the Railway Board are satisfied that the amounts in the fund accruing on the present basis will certainly not be more than necessary to meet the calls which will be made upon it in the future and they may well prove to be inadequate.”

Apart from the renewals and repairs being deferred and adequate provision not being made in the Depreciation Fund in regard to these renewals, services are being rigidly curtailed. The activities of the Publicity Department are now being turned towards discouraging the public from using the Railways as much as they can. Trade and commerce are being prejudiced by reason of restrictions put on wagon supply and by reason of the fact that the number of locomotives has considerably gone down. Furthermore, rails and rolling stock have been sent abroad for war purposes and that means dislocation of the public services to a very considerable extent—services which will perhaps, in future, have to be restored. The Depreciation Fund itself has been starved, as I have already stated. For instance, this year what should have gone to the replenishment of the Depreciation Fund is being made over to the general exchequer as a supplementary payment. I should like to sound a note of warning to the Honourable Member that some of the things that are being done today really characterised the position of the Indian Railways after the last Great War. From the complaints that came from time to time from commercial bodies, and the comments made, particularly in the Report of the Acworth Committee that was shortly afterwards appointed to go into the whole matter of the administration of the Indian Railways, it would be found that many of these things actually characterised the railway policies of those days, and some of these things were condemned by the Acworth Committee in no measured terms. I entirely agree that the present position perhaps is not so serious as that, because of the creation of the reserve and the Depreciation Funds. But,

If I remember aright, there was an attempt at the creation of a reserve in those days too, but the reserve got raided. Something like that may happen in the future unless the Honourable Member takes very great care.

Now, Sir, as regards the curtailment of facilities, I have in my hand two telegrams, of which copies must have gone to the Honourable Member in charge also, complaining about the critical position in which the coal industry, in Jharria particularly, finds itself, due to the strict rigidity with which allotment of wagons is being made for what is called public supply. I should not like to dilate on this point on this occasion because I may have an opportunity of raising it specifically in connection with a motion of reduction of an appropriate grant of which I have given notice. But I daresay that this shows that the restrictions under which trade and commerce are now being expected to operate are already proving a little too burdensome and may in the end cripple commerce and industry of this country, which would be a very undesirable thing to happen.

Now, Sir, if the present budget is a really prosperity budget, how is it that the high freights that were imposed some time back by reason of the fact that the railways were not being able to discharge their obligations to the general exchequer, have not come up for revision? Normally, the justification of such an increased imposition having disappeared, the matter should have been reviewed for the purpose of bringing down the rates. But my Honourable friend will say: "Well, as I have not got sufficient facilities to supply to the trade, why should I not make a little extra profit by not merely maintaining those high rates but even enhancing them in certain cases?" That is not the spirit in which a public utility concern like the Indian railways have to be run, although it is true that certain commercial principles ought to apply to the administration of the Indian railways. Sir, the true function of an institution, particularly a State-owned and State-managed institution like the Indian railways, should be to act as the handmaid of commercial and industrial prosperity of the country. The ideally perfect thing would be for the railways to so conduct their policy as to improve trade and industry and the general economic condition of the country without any regard to what direct contribution the railways may make to the general exchequer. The railways, if they can improve the financial and the economic condition of the public at large, should be satisfied with having achieved that result, it being left to the Finance Minister to try and tax the general public as best as he can. But I find that the Honourable Member has agreed to become virtually a tax-collector for Sir Jeremy Raisman. That is not certainly the spirit in which the finances of the Indian railways should be managed.

Sir, I maintain that some of the fundamental principles which underlay the separation of general from railway finances are being violated, because one dominating idea of this measure was that the railways should be freed as much as possible from the control of the Finance Department and should be administered with a view primarily for the benefit of the public at large consistent with the upholding of the best interests of the railway administration itself. Whatever profits the railway might earn should primarily be applied to the improvement of the railway services and the betterment of the facilities to be offered to trade

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and commerce. I entirely agree that having regard to the present position of the country, some of these conditions may have to be kept in abeyance, but what I should like to remind my Honourable friend is that there is a limit beyond which he should not allow himself to be influenced by the considerations of the financial necessity of the Government of India in regard to the war. I think the Acworth Committee strongly criticised the idea that the Indian railways should be treated as a revenue-earning department of the Government. But having regard to the fact that in the past years when the Indian railways had to be subsidised by the general taxpayer and also having regard to the fact that this business-concern of the Government does not have to pay any tax like the income-tax to the general exchequer

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: Nor the Excess Profits Tax.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: Nor the Excess Profits Tax, the general exchequer is entitled to look to the railways for some sort of a contribution, and the Convention of 1924 definitely admits that proposition. My Honourable friend should consider whether he has properly observed the spirit of that Convention by subordinating the considerations of conservation of the railway property and provision of requisite facilities to trade and commerce, to the considerations of finding money for the war. It is a very short-sighted policy, if merely for the purpose of finding money for the war chest, we allow the railway property to go to rack and ruin; and that is the warning that I said I would give to the Honourable Member so that he may see that the state of affairs in which the Indian railways found themselves at the end of the last war may not recur even though to a smaller extent than before.

Now, Sir, in the Acworth Committee report I found a sentence to this effect:

"We cannot think that even a war is sufficient to explain the treatment of the Indian railway revenue in the last few years."

I do hope that if a Committee were to come out at the conclusion of this war to review the administration of the Indian railways, it may not have to make a remark of that character.

Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi (Dacca cum Mymensingh: Muhammadan Rural): Mr. President, Sir, it is no use denying that the Honourable the Communications Member has very good luck,—extraordinarily good luck. I have just heard from my Honourable friend that the surplus budget is due to the war. It is true, but why was not this war declared during the time of his predecessors?

Mr. K. C. Neogy: That is his good luck.

Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi: We will have to congratulate him on this extraordinary good luck of his. Whatever may be the cause, there is the surplus either due to the war or otherwise. That is secondary. He is having that good luck continuously for the past three years. Owing to this good luck, he has produced an extraordinary surplus budget. At the same time he comes before the House and states that he is afraid he has again to increase the fares and freights.

1 P.M.

The Honourable Sir Andrew Clow: I did not express any fear.

Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi: My Honourable friend did not express any fear. Without fear, he expressed that he wanted to raise the fares and freights. What is the necessity for that increase? This is not a deficit budget that he has produced before the House. This is a surplus budget. He is fully conversant with the fact that the Government of India, of which he is a Member, have stopped the Road service. They have stopped the shorter railway communications. Finding that the passengers have no other means of transport, no other ways and means, he now comes forward with the argument that he has discovered that in the East Indian Railway and in the North Western Railway the rates were abnormally lower than in other State railways. He has discovered this only just now. The East Indian Railway was taken over by the State more than 20 years ago. Now he finds that the fares and freights prevailing in the East Indian Railway is proportionately much less than in other State railways. He has increased the fares not only of first and second class passengers but also for intermediate class and third class passengers.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra (Presidency Division: Non-Muhamadani Rural): There has been some deduction in the case of first and second class passengers fares.

Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi: No, Sir. Then he goes on with the increase of freight. He tells us that so far as foodstuffs are concerned, he has not increased the rate, but, he has put in a 'but', that is to say, unless the foodstuff is sent in full wagon loads, the consignment will be charged at a higher rate. I ask in all seriousness, is that fair? He has a tremendous surplus budget. To impose these difficulties at a time when people are finding it difficult to make both ends meet, at a time when war is facing us on the borders of India, is it fair to increase the fares and freights? After all, what does he expect to get out of this increase? He expects to get a paltry half a crore, a flea-bite in the huge amount that may be necessary for balancing the other budget which will be introduced on the 28th February.

Now, Sir, I desire to deal with certain specific points which I want to raise today. That is with regard to the exodus from Calcutta after war was declared by Japan on the 7th December. When war was declared by Japan on 7th December people began to rush out of Calcutta. On 11th December, two battle ships were sunk by Japan, and the exodus then became very serious. On the 13th December, I travelled from Calcutta to Delhi to attend the meeting of the Standing Finance Committee for Railways. I found two special trains were steaming out of Howrah platform full of passengers. On my arrival here on 14th December, I noticed a very large number of passengers *en route* to Bikaner. I knew one of them and he told me he would be very much obliged if he could get accommodation to go by the night train to Bikaner. Our office staff was instructed to assist him in this connection. The staff reported to me that in order to get reservation, a bribe of Rs. 100 was required, but when he mentioned my name, that amount was reduced to Rs. 50. I reported that fact to the Chief Commissioner for Railways soon after the Standing Finance Committee meeting for Railways was over on 15th December. The Chief Commissioner was very sympathetic

[Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi.]

and he wanted to take action immediately. I am grateful to him. He wanted to take drastic action to put down this bribery and corruption. When I went back to Calcutta on 17th December, the exodus was heavier still. On 19th December, I went to the East Indian Railway Head Quarters to see if I could get a special train for certain Marwari friends who wanted to leave Calcutta as soon as possible. The General Manager, East Indian Railway was busy and he could not be seen. The next was the Chief Transportation Officer, Rai Bahadur N. C. Ghosh, he was away. Then I went and saw Mr. Heysham. He very kindly agreed that he would clear out in four days about one thousand passengers by reserving portions of four trains. Thinking that everything was O. K., I got the party to keep everything ready, but to my utter surprise, I got a communication that the General Manager was cancelling the whole arrangement. I was told on the following day—that was Saturday, the 20th December—that the concession suggested by Mr. Heysham would be discrimination because being a Member of the Legislative Assembly and a Member of the Standing Finance Committee for Railways, and a Member of the Local Advisory Committee and the Central Advisory Committee, I should not be permitted to get special treatment in getting special accommodation, while the same was refused to others. That would be discrimination shown in my favour and so the General Manager regretted he could not arrange the special accommodation. Finding no other remedy, I found the only way was to send a telegram to Sir Leonard Wilson, the Chief Commissioner, Railways, a copy of which I also gave to the Financial Commissioner, Railways.

Sir, before I proceed further I may mention that the statements that I am making here now have the sanction and approval of the five Indian Chambers, and I have the authority of their letter as to what they had done which exactly tallied with what I had done in the matter. And I had no knowledge of the steps taken by them before the 17th January when I wrote to them to let me have a full report of what they had done and how they were refused by the General Manager of the East Indian Railway.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra: Did the Honourable Member say that the five Indian Chambers of Commerce addressed the same complaint to the Railway Board?

Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi: Yes, certainly.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra: When was that?

Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi: That was before I addressed them. My telegram was on the 22nd December, 1941. This was the telegram I sent:

“Referring my interview with Sir Leonard Fifteenth Exodus from Calcutta Great Dissatisfaction prevails Arrangements made East Indian Railway. Consider General Manager ought have summoned emergency meeting Local Advisory Committee in order explain arrangements made in order dispel unnecessary panic created by extraordinary exodus. Indian Chambers of Commerce leading businessmen requested for special trains which was turned down. I asked special train clear one thousand passengers at request of leading businessmen but request refused though they agreed placing two additional bogies special trains running Howrah Delhi

accommodating 250 passengers and clear whole lot in four days which subsequently refused. Calcutta contains fifteen lakhs approximately Exodus mostly East Indian Railway it will greatly allay panic if one member Railway Board be present Calcutta stop Understand they have 36 emergency trains in reserve to run in case Calcutta declared emergency area Consider those trains being used at once for voluntary exodus instead of allowing emergency situation arise. Special trains to individual parties be allowed if asked for in order priority stop At Howrah station organised volunteers be permitted help passengers control exodus rush. Severe lighting restrictions interior station resulted losses luggage passengers lighting restriction Howrah should be no more than prevailing at Sealdah station request take immediate action local Indian Chambers accord agreement with my views."

The position was that this General Manager of the East Indian Railway was not calling a meeting of the Local Advisory Committee which has been reduced by him into a farce. Formerly a meeting of the Committee was held every month. I find my Honourable friend, Mr. Raper, taking notes, and I will prove here and now what I am saying. The Eastern Bengal Railway, now the Bengal and Assam Railway, has meetings of the Local Advisory Committee even now every month. A friend of mine behind me says it is unnecessary. I may say it is equally unnecessary to have a three months' meeting of this House with the Congress Benches empty. Why not finish it in ten days' time and go away to our houses? Sir, from one meeting monthly this General Manager has reduced it to one quarterly; and all in the name of economy. In spite of the surplus budget he wants to economise and he is not prepared to pay Rs. 32 as fees to those members who attend the meetings. It is only at his sweet will and pleasure that a meeting of the Committee is now called. Not one meeting has been called to assist him and give him advice or to explain to the Committee the steps taken. In spite of the request made to him by the five Indian Chambers repeatedly, he has refused to call a meeting.

Then, Sir, I pointed out that there was tremendous bribery and corruption.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The Honourable Member has three minutes more. Will he finish his speech now or continue after Lunch?

Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi: Sir, I will continue after Lunch.

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.

Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi: Mr. Deputy President. Sir, as the time at my disposal is very limited, I will only read letters which I sent and also the letters sent by the Chambers. On the 20th of December I sent this letter to the Chief Commissioner, Railways:

"There has been tremendous bribery and corruption at the Fairlie Place Booking Office as well as at Howrah Railway Station. This was brought to the notice of the General Manager, E. I. R., by a very high official but no action was taken. I am going to give you the following instances which will speak for themselves and ample evidence is available in their support.

[Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi.]

With the assistance of the employees of the Fairlie Place Booking Office fictitious bookings are made at first in pencil and when a passenger comes for reservation he is told that there was nothing left to book. Brokers have been engaged who whisper to the passenger that if he paid a certain amount of money accommodation would be made available for him. This is as regards the First and Second Class bookings which have been going on ever since the exodus started. But now the exodus has lessened and probably these bookings are being made at cheaper consideration than before."

Now, Sir, this very thing has been reiterated by the Chambers in these words:

"So far as the reservation of berths is concerned, the usual trick of the railway staff is that they fill in the reservation register with bogus entries so that ordinarily when a person asked for reservation, he was told that all the berths were already reserved. On his paying some bribe, however, the Railway staff would erase the previous entries and reserve the berths."

The second thing which I brought to the notice of the Chief Commissioner for Railways was about bribery and corruption. This is what the Chamber said:

"The representative of the Chamber also brought to the notice of the General Manager the complaint regarding harassment by police and the demand of illegal gratification by Railway staff. When the General Manager asked that proofs should be given to him of such harassment and illegal demands, a definite offer was made to him that he should depute one of his own trusted men, whom the Station staff did not recognise, along with the representatives of the Chambers and the latter were sure that the officer would be able to see things for himself. This offer was also rejected. This General Manager, on the other hand, stated that he could not listen to any complaints unless definite proofs as would be admissible in a Court of Law were given against particular members of the Railway staff."

Sir, lakhs and lakhs of rupees have been paid as bribe. We are told "Why do you pay?" What are we going to do then? If I have to go out of Calcutta, and you will not give me a seat unless I pay you this money, and still to be asked "Why do I pay?". When I ask you to come and see for yourself, when I give you the names of persons who take money, you say, "Better give me a proof". Is that the way to conduct such cases? Is that the way to answer?

Then, Sir, I was told about discrimination in the matter of reservation. What did they do? Reservation was given to the American Express Company. I know, the Honourable Member will say that the Administration is under an arrangement with these Tourist Companies to give them compartments or carriages whenever asked for. Sir, I have seen the agreement. It says that when you have the space available and when the Railways can give the accommodation asked for, it may be given. Was this the time to give it to the American Express Company? The American Express Company had first, second, inter and third class compartments reserved and they earned commission on these reservations. Their men who negotiated with the booking office staff divided the ill-gotten gains made by them in addition to the fares that each man had to pay to get into the American Express Company's reserved accommodation.

Mr. Deputy President (Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta): Honourable Member's time is up.

Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi: Sir, one more sentence and I have finished. What did we ask? The Chambers asked that the Local Advisory Committee should be consulted. What is the Local Advisory Committee

for? The General Manager refused. I brought the whole matter to the notice of the Chief Commissioner, but red tapism prevails and he would only accept what he receives from the General Manager and he would not enquire if what we said was true or not. Every statement that I made to the Chief Commissioner was substantiated by evidence and proof is in my possession. The only reply I get is that he was very sympathetic, but that he was satisfied that the General Manager had done whatever possibly could be done. Sir, I ask the Honourable Member to institute an Enquiry Committee and I am sure I will be able to produce evidence to substantiate the allegations made.

Dr. P. N. Banerjee: Sir, the outstanding characteristic of this year's as well the last year's budget is prosperity in adversity. The war situation is becoming more and more difficult every day, the poorer sections of the community are groaning under the load of high prices, all classes of the people are suffering from the effects of a high level of taxation, and yet the Railways are producing huge surpluses. Is this not a strange phenomenon? If we go deep into the causes of this happening, what do we find? We find that war situation has been responsible for a large part of the revenue, that is to say, what the military traffic has paid in the way of fares and freights has gone from the general revenues to railway revenues. Secondly, the facilities have been greatly restricted. Passengers have suffered a great deal, there has been enormous overcrowding, trains have been delayed, and industry and trade have suffered very greatly. The other day my Honourable friend, Mr. Deshmukh, pointed out the difficulties of the cotton cultivators. The coal industry has been hit very hard and various other industries have grumbled. In spite of all these handicaps and hardships, the fares and freights have not been reduced. So, that is a sort of contribution to the railway revenue. You have restricted the facilities but you have retained the fares and rates at the previous figures. There is, however, a third factor to which no allusion has been made by the Honourable the Railway Member. Two years ago, the fares and freight rates were raised and that enhancement of fares and freights is one of the causes of this surplus. I do not know why the Honourable the Railway Member forgot to mention this fact

The Honourable Sir Andrew Olow: Entirely modesty.

Dr. P. N. Banerjee: I thank him for his modesty and I hope he will show more modesty when the time comes for the reduction in fares and freight rates. It is clear that these three factors have been responsible for the huge surpluses. If the surpluses had been the result either of the luck of the people or of the pluck of the Government, there would have been cause for jubilation or congratulation; but neither of these has happened. Therefore, we have to consider in a sober manner how the surpluses have accrued and for what purposes they will have to be utilised. Coming to the latter point, in normal circumstances we would have urged a reduction in fares and freights. But the situation is abnormal and, therefore, we are of the opinion that for the present the Railway Member's view may be accepted that the surplus should go to the general revenues.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: That is your view, not ours.

Dr. P. N. Banerjee: Yes, perhaps you are of a different opinion. But my view is that this will help to ease the situation in other respects, and I hope the Honourable the Finance Member will not come forward with a fresh measure of taxation before the Assembly, because the enhancement of rates and freights is itself a measure of taxation

Mr. N. M. Joshi (Nominated Non-Official): A bad method of taxation..

Dr. P. N. Banerjee: It is a bad method of taxation, but this bad method of taxation has given us substantial surpluses, and the surpluses may be utilised, as the surpluses have actually come, for giving relief to the general taxpayer

Mr. N. M. Joshi: This is the general taxpayer too.

Dr. P. N. Banerjee: This brings me to the separation convention. The Honourable the Railway Member does not find it possible to stick to the separation convention in its rigid form. There is a departure from that convention, and he asks for a moratorium. Although, in normal circumstances, I would have urged him to give effect to the separation convention to the fullest extent, yet the situation being what it is, I would agree with him with regard to the slight departure which he has made from that convention. The view held by the Auditor General that no surplus can be said to accrue until all debts have been paid off is a sound one. Therefore, the Honourable the Railway Member is entitled to pay the bulk of the surplus to general revenues, and a portion to the Depreciation Fund. The Railway Reserve Fund may wait till the next year.

Now, I should like to say a word about the budget estimates. In 1939-40, the estimated surplus in the budget was 2,18 lakhs, and the actuals amounted to double that amount or slightly over, namely,—4,38 lakhs. In 1940-41, the budget estimates were for a surplus of 8,29 lakhs, and the actuals realised amounted to a considerably more than double that figure, namely, 18,46 lakhs. In 1941-42 the surplus that was budgeted for was a figure of 11,83 lakhs, whereas the revised estimates are for 26,20 lakhs, or substantially more than double. Sufficient margin is left here for the element of speculation. The figures show a great deal of disparity between the original budget and the actual amounts realised. How do you account for this disparity? I am one of those who think that in budgeting a policy of caution should be adopted. But when this policy of caution goes too far, the Honourable the Railway Member is accused of deliberately over-estimating the expenditure and under-estimating the revenue. This charge has been levied against him time and again, and the Honourable the Railway Member has not been able to refute it. Now, in the present Budget we expect a surplus of over 27 crores. We do not know how the actual facts will turn out, but it is regarded as probable that this figure will be exceeded. I agree with the Honourable the Railway Member that there is an element of speculation in this estimate for the coming year, but even making allowance for that element of speculation, it may be held for certain that the figure given by him will be very greatly exceeded.

Sir, the Honourable the Railway Member is not satisfied with the huge surplus which he got last year and the huge surplus which he is expecting in the coming year, but he wants to get a further amount by enhancing the passenger fares and freight rates. Now, is it right on his part to take this step? He does not want to enhance the fares and freights on the ground of financial necessity, but he says that locomotives are wanting and the train services are unable to bear the great strain that is being put on them, and the argument advanced by him is that in order to discourage people from travelling, the soundest way is to raise the fares and freights. This is a wrong argument. When there is adversity, you urge the enhancement of fares and freight rates, and when there is prosperity, you again urge the enhancement of fares and freights. So whether it is adversity or prosperity, the burden on the passengers and on trade and industry must be increased. This is not a correct thing to do

Mr. Deputy President (Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta): The Honourable Member has two minutes more.

Dr. P. N. Banerjea: Sir, please give me two minutes more.

Dr. Sir Ratanji Dalal (Nominated Non-Official): That will be four minutes.

Dr. P. N. Banerjea: It is clear that if the Railway Member enhances the fares for the intermediate and third class passengers, that will impose a great burden on the poorer sections of the community. It is not these classes of passengers that indulge in joy rides on railways. If you have to prevent joy rides, you should increase the fares for the first and second class passengers. I find, however, that for second class passengers, travelling between certain distances, the fares have been reduced, while for certain other distances they have been increased. I do not know what the net result will be, but I must emphasise the fact that the intermediate class and the third class passengers are unable to bear the additional strain on their purse

Mr. J. F. Raper (Government of India: Nominated Official): Might I explain the position, Sir? The fares have not been reduced for first and second class passengers. If the Honourable Member examines the statement he will see that there is no reduction at all—rather there is an increase

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra: Don't you think there will be an enhancement

Mr. J. F. Raper: There is definitely an increase, and there is no reduction.

Dr. P. N. Banerjea: The net effect will be an increase

An Honourable Member: No.

Dr. P. N. Banerjee: Then if you want the passengers to avoid railway travelling, you should offer them alternative means of transport, but you are not doing that. By petrol rationing and various other means, you have practically killed the motor transport business.

Now, Sir, there are two points which I should like to touch in this connection. The first is the dismantling of certain railway lines. In regard to this, I find that the capital expenditure which was originally incurred in constructing these lines has now been actually written off partly under one head and partly under another. But these rails and other materials were sent out of the country for the purpose of defence of Britain, and not of India, and, therefore, the British Government ought to make good the loss to India.

As regards the amalgamation of Railways, I welcome the step that has been taken, but I hope this policy will be carried further.

As for State management, it is quite right that some more lines have been brought under State management. But I must express my own personal view that the State management has not so far yielded that amount of advantage to the general public and to the taxpayers which they had a right to expect. Why was the State management urged in this House? Because it was hoped that the Railways would be administered in the interests of the country

Mr. Deputy President (Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta): The Honourable Member's time is up.

Dr. P. N. Banerjee: I admit that to some extent improvement has not been made, but nobody can say, even the Railway Member himself will not assert, that all the advantages we had expected have accrued. If fruitful results are to be achieved in this regard, the Government will have to change their policy with regard not only to rates and freights, but with regard to facilities afforded to passengers as well as to trade and industry.

Maulvi Muhammad Abdul Ghani (Tirhut Division: Muhammadan): Sir, I appreciate very much the efforts of my friend, the Honourable the Railway Member, to have all the golden eggs with one stroke. He has proposed to increase the rates and fares, and, as has been pointed out by previous speakers, it is a plausible plea. He says that the public don't want to give up their habit of unnecessary travelling. In this connection may I ask him whether he has stopped the practice of his own employees travelling over the railways with free passes? Has he stopped the system of granting free passes to the railway employees? I think about ten lakhs of free passes,—I am speaking subject to correction—are issued, even at the present time, and in these days, as you all know, about fifty per cent of trains have been curtailed on almost all the railway systems, and yet the Honourable the Railway Member has never taken the trouble to get into a third class or inter class compartment to find out what amount of over-crowding exists. I think that he should travel in the third and inter class to see how the third and inter class passengers are being inconvenienced these days.

As regards the rates, you will find from page 13 of the Railway Administration Report, Volume II, that the fares of third class and inter class passengers have already been increased. They are being increased from year to year. The rate of fare for inter class passengers on first class railways was 4.06 pies in 1939-40; it was raised to 4.30 pies in 1940-41. On second class railways it was 5.61 in 1939-40 and in 1940-41 it was raised to 5.87. Similarly, over third class railways it was raised from 5.28 pies to 5.90 pies. As regards third class passenger fare it was raised on class I Railways from 2.9 pies in 1939-40 to 3.05 in 1940-41. Over second class railways it was raised from 3.78 pies to 3.84 pies and so on. This shows that there is no room for any further increase in the fares of inter class and third class passengers. Now, if you turn to the first class fares, you will find that it was reduced from 17.4 pies in 1939-40 to 17.1 pies in 1940-41 over first class railways. Similarly, over second class railways it was reduced from 22.7 pies to 22.1 pies, and so on. Thus, there can be some scope for increase in the fare of first class passengers, but instead of doing that, the Honourable the Railway Member has picked out a class of people who have got no voice, who do not know how to properly represent their case. In this way he wants to raise about a crore of rupees. But he should have been satisfied that next year he is going to have a gain of Rs. 26 lakhs over the strategic railways, over which he used to have a loss of about two crores. Instead of making a loss as he used to before, he is making a gain of Rs. 26 lakhs and he should have been content with that gain but he is not.

Again, there should have been adequate control over the railway finances. The last audit report shows that crores of rupees have been wasted on account of inadequate supervision and control over the railway finances. You will find from the report that a list has been prepared of losses under heads of abandonment of claims, remissions, shortage of stores, re-valuation of stores, shortage of coal and other kinds of losses which have been written off on account of their being time barred. Such losses amount to several crores. If the Honourable Member had taken the trouble of controlling the various railway administrations, he would have been able to save very easily those several crores, but instead he is after the poor third class and inter class passengers. Again, in the same audit report you will find that after meeting all the necessary expenditure there was a net saving of Rs. 88,09,525 in the year 1939-40. This is a kind of hoarding money, this is nothing but bad budgetting. If careful scrutiny is made, the budget might give the Honourable Member the savings which he desires to have. So, instead of tapping all the legitimate and proper sources, he is tapping the wrong sources.

In the concluding remarks of his budget statement the Honourable Member wants a compliment for the State-management of railways. He says:

"The fact that after a fairly long experience of State management public opinion is, on the whole, strongly in favour of further enlargement of its scope, is a compliment to those responsible for State railways. . . ."

I say it is not so. It is not on account of that fact—but as we cannot turn them out, as no father turns out a son who is extravagant. The thing is that we want to keep the Railways under our own disposal and control. It is not a compliment that the officers of the State-managed Railways are controlling well. I have recited examples from.

[Maulvi Muhammad Abdul Ghani.]

the audit reports. They are not peculiar to the year 1939-40. It is going on for a long time. If you compare the previous audit reports, you will find that the losses are more. So, the Honourable Member will, I hope, agree with me and amend his remarks. The second thing which he has remarked at the conclusion of his speech is that he cannot look to the grievances of Assistant Station Masters or the appointment of clerks and so forth as he could not be approached like the Moghal Emperors who allowed their subjects direct approach or access to them. I think he has made observations which are contemptuous of the old Moghal Emperors. He should know that there were many in the list of Moghal Emperors who did not touch a single pie out of the public exchequer for their own personal expenditure.

The Honourable Sir Andrew Clow: I can assure the Honourable Member that no disrespect was intended. I was merely stating that in modern conditions it was not possible for me to follow that example.

Maulvi Muhammad Abdul Ghani: Then you might have expressed it in other terms. We take exception to such remarks on behalf of the Indian people.

The Honourable Sir Andrew Clow: No, no.

Maulvi Muhammad Abdul Ghani: It may not have been meant but the way in which this has been expressed shows that the Honourable Member has contempt for the way in which the old Moghal Emperors did their duty. Many of them never took any public money for their personal use and yet they never failed in their duties. They used to go out on round at dead of night to guard the interests of their subjects. They cannot be so contemptuously dealt with.

The Honourable Sir Andrew Clow: May I repeat that there was no contempt at all. Quite the reverse. I have great admiration for the system. I was only explaining that it was not possible to follow it today.

Mr. Deputy President (Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta): The Honourable Member has said that he did not mean any contempt. The matter should not be pursued after that.

Maulvi Muhammad Abdul Ghani: I was only pointing out that it is the duty of the State officials to look to the grievances of the staff when they are brought to their notice. Cases have been cited by my Honourable friend, Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi, to which they have turned a deaf ear. Is that the proper way of dealing with them. Their plea is that they cannot get time to dispose of such things. We do not press that they should always give time for such things but on rare occasions they ought to test whether their subordinates are working well or not but they are shutting their eyes. They are simply after money. This kind of thing cannot be tolerated and I think the time is coming when a cut motion will come before the House. We will point out in detail the losses and the ways in which they are extravagant. With these observations I resume my seat. The time saved by me may be utilised by other Honourable Members.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta (Bombay Central Division: Non-Muhammadan Rural): It was a somewhat epoch-making budget that was presented to us in the speech which was delivered by the Honourable the Railway Member. I have the deepest sympathy for the strain and stress to which the railway resources have been subjected on account of the war and I am full of admiration for the heroic attempts that are being made by the Railway Administrations to help the war effort on the one side and to cope with the growing traffic on the other. I am impressed by the sustained endeavour made by them during the last 30 months of the war with decreasing rolling stock and depleted personnel. In fact, I agree with the Honourable the Railway Member that these officers and men deserve our great gratitude. He told us that with increasing years the speed of his rolling stock was bound inevitably to fall to some extent but he hoped that the speed of the officers will not decrease, if it could be helped. Is it also permissible to hope that their intelligence will keep pace with their speed? I am glad to have the assurance that every effort will be made to avoid unnecessary hardship but I am bound to say that it would not be right for the Railway Board to rest on its oars. They will have to put themselves to a further period of stress and strain in order to meet civilian requirements; because the one great condition of a successful war is that civil life will be kept as nearly to the normal as it is possible and in that direction much remains to be done.

I only find one omission in the Railway Member's speech. He has been rightly glorying in the pride of his achievement. He has been somewhat cynical about the wisdom of his critics. He is almost lyrical about the wisdom of his officials but he is silent about the exploitation of the workers. He has no time to think of giving them credit and gratitude. In these days seven lakhs of railway workers are doing their best, with growing cost of living and with no corresponding remuneration to keep the railway machine going. The House enjoyed the hearty laugh when the Honourable the Railway Member spoke about the growing age of his officers, and I am hoping that their intelligence will grow with the speed of their work.

Now, Sir, to have a proper understanding of this budget, the comparable year is 1935-36. The only way in which you can test whether this budget reflects a sound, prosperous and a desirable way of running the railways will be to compare it with the basic year 1935-36. By that time the years of the last post-war depression had come to a declining curve. Things were returning to normal. The huge increase in rates and fares which has been a feature of the last five years had not yet begun and, of course, the war was not on us. In every way, therefore, it is the year (1935-36) with which you must compare the three war years if you want to reach a correct conclusion as to whether the railway finances are being run in the interests of the State, the traveller, the trader and the taxpayer. If you compare them, you will find yourself confronted by three things. First of all, I shall give the figures. In 1935-36, Burma was still with us. I have, however, separated those figures. I am taking the figures of the Indian State Railways minus Burma, and what do I find? In 1935-36 the deficit was 1,32 lakhs plus the strategic railways because, like the poor, they are always with us. In 1936-37, there was a surplus of 1,21 lakhs. In 1937-38, there was a surplus of 2,76 lakhs. Later on, in 1938-39, there was a surplus of 1,37 lakhs; in 1939-40, 4,38 lakhs; in 1940-41, 18,46 lakhs; the current year,

[Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta.]

26,22 lakhs; and the budget year, 27 crores odd. Here I wish to point out that the Honourable the Railway Member and the Railway Board seem so much ashamed of what they have taken from the public that they are hurriedly trying to conceal that amount as far as they can. The surplus of the current year is not 26,22 lakhs but nearly 30 crores. The Railway Board fear that the public will not stand this enormous exploitation and so they have started concealing the surplus and to call to their assistance their cousins and nieces quietly to share in the spoils so that the surplus may appear smaller. On page 2 of the Memorandum accompanying the Railway Budget you will find three items of 41,82,000, 81,00,000 and 2,20,40,000 which are taken from the railway revenues in order to show us a smaller surplus. In doing so, the Railway Board do not care whether they commit a breach of the separation Convention or a breach of the moratorium or a breach of sound financial principles. One thing and one thing alone which matters to them is that the public will not discover these huge surpluses. If you add these three items, the total comes to Rs. 3,49,22,000, which, in my humble opinion, is very improperly extracted from the railway revenues. I shall deal with these figures at greater length at the time of the cut motions. Today I only say that the surplus for the current year is not 26,20 lakhs but it is 29,63 lakhs. And the surplus for the budget year is deliberately on a fixed principle that the surplus should appear smaller than it really is. It is not going to be 27 crores unless some dramatic changes appear, and I am told that the Railway Board in framing their estimates do not depend upon dramatic events like earthquakes. Although their estimates are guesses, they are not speculative. They are not estimates, they are guesses but not speculative guesses.

And now let me ask why has the Honourable Member budgeted for 27 crores? Is not the war likely to go on for this year with increasing tempo, to use his own words? Are not the supplies to go on with greater speed to the various theatres of war? Are not his increased rates and fares and freights going to bring him a crore of rupees more? Are not the buses and other modes of travelling going to be paralysed on account of petrol rationing? All these things are there in ever-increasing tempo. The bus service will very nearly decrease by 30 per cent or 40 per cent. Although he admits that he cannot look with complacency on the situation, which means that the war may go on in intensity, yet he has budgeted for only an increase of 80 lakhs. With the paralysis of the bus service, with the intensification of the war, with the increase in rates and fares, why has he budgeted for 27 crores when the current year's budget surplus is 30 crores and not 26 crores? During the last three years the budget estimates of the surplus are being exceeded by 220 per cent. The budgeted surplus of 1940-41 of eight crores has come to 18 crores and 46 lakhs. The same is the case with the current year. Therefore, I say that this under-estimating of revenues and of surpluses are a measure of the scheme which the Government feel at the ever increasing toll on the traveller and the trader. I, therefore, wish that the House will examine this budget from the basic year of 1935-36 and compare as to what has happened. Every year, almost since 1935-36, the railway rates and fares have been increased. In 1936-37, we had them increased. Later on also we had an increase although it is not mentioned. Then, we had the surcharges on coal and other things

increased. Then, came the huge increase of 1940-41 and a further increase this year of one crore is visualised. The rates and fares have thus increased by ten crores per year since 1935-36—this is my estimate. Thus in six years, ten crores of additional income is received from rates and fares; the paralysis of bus service, the war and over-crowding that are responsible for the additional surplus of Rs. 16 to 20 crores.

Now, Sir, who suffers by it? What is the result of this huge surplus. It is monopolistic profiteering of 30 crores in one year after paying all your working expenses and interest charges. Let us see what Sir William Acworth has got to say about such financial methods. I would ask Honourable Members to refer to para. 73 of the Acworth Committee's report. The result of the last six years' working has shown, as I will show in the light of the Acworth Committee's report that railways are no longer public utility services, nor national transport services, but a huge profiteering concern in which income is not based on the cost of transport, but on "what the traffic can bear" in the crudest sense of that phrase. The scale on which railway rates and fares are fixed has nothing to do with the cost of transport. Rates are increased not merely by driving a pair and two but a coach and four through the provisions of the separation convention of 1924. Wherever it suits them, they follow the conventions, whenever it does not suit them, they ignore it. They alternately accept and reject it, they treat the moratorium on the same footing. The only consideration is that they must get more money as railway surplus; in addition predatory raids are made on railway revenues which it is not possible to disclose in a short speech in this general debate. But the fact is that railway rates have become taxation and not cost of service; and here I quote the testimony of the Acworth Committee report. It says that "all economists agree that taxes on transport are an undesirable method of raising revenue". If they want to tax, let them tax openly. Sir, here is a great authority that says that taxes on transport are an undesirable method of raising revenue. The railway rates and fares have today become not merely rates but heavy taxes. What are the results? If you want to understand railway policy and railway finance, there are three master keys. They are first, the imperialistic yoke, second political nepotism and third, capitalistic greed of the Railway Board. If you keep in mind these three master keys, then you will realise that the customers of railways—the traveller and the trader are being robbed in a thousand ways in order to feed these three exploiters of the railways. It is not true that the railway rates here are the lowest in the world. I challenge that statement and I shall prove that it is incorrect. Nominally the cost of a mile of Railway journey may be a few pies; but the rate which I pay for travelling a mile out of my income of the day is much greater in India than the rate which the Britisher pays for travelling a mile out of his income of the day. The railway rates are the highest in this country. It is not correct to say that they are the lowest. Then, Sir, the resultant sufferer is the worker and the customer of Railways.

I tell you what happened during the last ten years. From 1930-31 till today, the Railway Board have deprived the railway worker—not the Railway Board, but the Government of India, I should say, because for the Railway Board I have got the tender feeling, the Members of the Railway Board are often themselves the victims of State policy, therefore,

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I do not blame them very much as I blame the imperialistic policy, the political nepotism and the greed of the Government of India to get most out of the railways. The Railways will forego these heavy rates if they had the way. The Railways do not need these as a Commercial organisation. But it is these three which have deprived the railway worker since 1931-32 of an annual income of nearly five crores of rupees. If you will examine what is the working cost of 1930-31 and 1931-32, you will find in the next year a reduction of five crores of rupees, the bulk of which came from the pockets of the railway workers. Then came two years of a ten per cent cut. This was restored because the higher officers won't stand the cut. Many lakhs of rupees were taken from the workers' pocket in that way. Thereafter, new rates of pay were introduced which were somewhere between ten per cent. and 30 per cent. lower than the old rates before 1929-30. The workers have thus lost six crores a year. Against this loss, all that they have paid is seven lakhs of rupees for Provident Fund and about two crores dearness allowance; a net loss of four crores a year to the railway workers.

The claims made on behalf of the railways must stand modified in the light of my submissions, that the comparable year is 1935-36, that the traveller and the trader have paid through their nose, that the railways themselves are ashamed of getting a larger surplus and, therefore, they are concealing it, that the third class passenger is paying ten crores more since 1935-36, that the railway workers have since 1931-32 lost at least six crores a year against getting two crores and a few lakhs per year, that the cost of living is ever growing higher and higher. I shall develop the rest of my points later on, but today I cannot do so. I am distressed at the revealing document, the Railway Budget which is neither for the good of the traveller nor for the trader nor for the worker, but which demoralises the Government and makes them impervious to the need to explore alternative avenues of transport. An Englishman has given them an alternative for coping with the increased demand for transport an alternative of "Guideways". The Railway Board knows it. Sir Guthrie Russell has pronounced his blessings upon it. But the Railway Board will perform no experiments. They will not try alternative methods of relieving the pressure on traffic because they are hide-bound in their convictions that outside their charmed circle, no wisdom lives. Sir, I have finished.

Dr. Sir Eatanil Dalal: Mr. Deputy President, I shall not detain the House for more than a few minutes. In the first place I heartily congratulate the Honourable the Member for Railways on his lucid, illuminating and interesting budget speech. During 1941-42, developments brought about by the war suggested a spectacular increase in railway earnings, and it is gratifying that these anticipations have been fulfilled. In presenting his Railway Budget, the Honourable the Member for Railways disclosed to this Honourable House phenomenal profits earned by the Indian railways representing the beneficial effect of the war. It is most gratifying that the budget estimates exhibit a surplus of 18½ crores for the year 1940-41, 26½ crores for the year 1941-42, and 28 crores for the year 1942-43. It is only because of the war that these unexpected surpluses have accrued. Now, Sir, the effect of financial adjustments will be that by the end of 1942-43 the railway debt to the general revenues will be fully paid,

and outstandings to the depreciation fund will be reduced to a little over 15 crores. So the war has helped greatly in stabilising the railway finances; indirectly the war has helped in placing the State finances generally on a sound basis and to some extent in mitigating the upward trend in taxation. The fact that while railway revenues remained high, the expenditure did not proportionately increase provides its own tribute and redounds to the credit, efficiency and financial prudence of the railway authorities. And what modest enhancements there are in passenger fares and parcel rates will be cheerfully borne by the public. One great feature of the railway budget is that the State management is expanding and enlarging. The number of State-managed railways is on a considerable increase, and this nationalisation of essential services is a move which the public will cordially welcome.

Now, Sir, my Honourable friend, Maulvi Abdul Ghani, referred to the question of free passes. So, Sir, I shall just say one word as regards the passes given to railway servants. Some Honourable Members are most anxious to abolish altogether the system of railway passes in India. But, Sir, a pass is a very useful way of giving a railway servant something that is of profound value to him—in fact it is a part of his remuneration, and it is an incentive to good men to enter the railway service. It also assists a railway servant to take holidays and thereby to keep him fit for his work, and it affords him facilities for travelling to his home, which is very often at a considerable distance from the place where he is stationed. What is more, the system of railway passes is prevalent in most of the railways of the world.

Now, Sir, I shall pass to a very important point which greatly exercises the public opinion. Recently murders and dacoities and robberies have occurred in trains on the different railways in India. I consider that measures should be adopted to secure the safety and security of passengers. I am not a railway expert, but I think corridor train with adequate police patrols would afford a safeguard and is the best solution of the problem. Sir, I fully realise that this is a very controversial subject, and if the problem is carefully thought out, reasons both in favour of and against the proposal will present themselves. But personally I think that the reasons in favour of the proposal preponderate, and I think that it has reasonable possibilities of being beneficial, provided an adequate and suitable staff of police is provided on the trains for protective purposes. Therefore I would suggest that the Railway Board should convene a conference of experts, and that this question should be carefully discussed and thoroughly thrashed out and a decision should be reached. If the conference reaches a decision in favour of this proposal, namely, corridor train with adequate police patrols, I submit that the rebuilding programme may be taken in hand after the war.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh (Nagpur Division : Non-Muhammadan) : Sir, the first point that I should like to touch is, as has been said, the diminution in capacity to carry passengers. The surplus of this budget has been due this year to extraordinary circumstances, namely, the military traffic. The diminution in capacity to carry passengers is also due to the same circumstances. Might I suggest one thing which has led to the diminution partly of the capacity to carry passengers and the solution also? The diminution to carry passengers has been suggested, and the solution has been suggested for it by attacking the passes for the railway servants,

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which I do not wish to touch. Let them have it. Another solution that has been suggested is that there should be no saloons,—that suggestion I would endorse. But let me, under the circumstances which have come to my knowledge, point out one difficulty, particularly as regards this capacity to carry passengers. When ordinary passenger trains carry military officers there has been a cause of reducing the capacity of the passengers in these trains in second and first class compartments. I have had several occasions to get into second class compartments which contained military officers; and I have seen several persons who wanted to get in being refused entrance by the military officers saying that only two could travel in those compartments. Of course other persons who did not have courage to fight passed on to some other place where they could be accommodated even at the risk of congestion; but whenever I saw this kind of thing I made it a point to get into the compartment, and whenever the military officers said that only two could travel in that compartment I said that I would get in and if they had any complaint to make they could report to the Station Master or the Guard. I have pointed out one instance this morning when the question was put by me and answered by the Defence Secretary. That was also a reason of the resistance on the part of army officers not to allow any passenger in, and this happens frequently. I have often, while travelling, solved this problem by getting into the compartment even at the risk of fighting. It is very likely that big men who are occupying high positions do not wish to fight. Very likely they fear that their dignity would be injured. I am not afraid of that, and I have solved this problem several times in this way and I have helped others to solve it in this way. And this is not a solitary instance. This morning's instance which was put in the form of a question was a glaring instance of its kind. The I.C.S. officer who is in charge of Police portfolio and military portfolio had gone to a second class compartment. A military officer who was in resisted his entry. The army officers resist the entry of other passengers and ordinary passengers have no relief given to them. What is then the solution? I was, therefore, suggesting this solution while dealing with this point that at every station on the platform there should be a sufficient number of police officers to help passengers to get into the compartments. Third class compartment is alright, and where the entry of second and first class passengers is resisted, there should be police officers to help them. At times the Guard is very busy. It is very likely that the train is late and that the passenger comes in time when the Guard cannot be found. On such occasions, at least, there should be a Police officer whose help could be sought to force an entry into the compartment where the passenger's entry is resisted.

Then, Sir, while dealing with this point, namely, the help and assistance which the passengers ought to receive when they wish to get into the train, I am going to deal with the point which is connected with the Railway Police administration. You will find, Sir, that there have been various difficulties which have cropped up on account of the obstinacy and boorish conduct of these persons—the army people and the navy people who are on the platform. One instance I have already referred to in my question this morning. Another one about the Navy officers at the Madras Railway Station is this :

"Two sailors attached to a steamer now in the Madras Harbour are alleged to have behaved in an unruly manner in the Central Station yesterday and assaulted some passengers including a lady under the influence of drink."

And these people did not get any relief or help immediately. They had to wait for a very long time. A considerable commotion was caused and the police was on the spot when there were a number of people to rescue those who were ill-treated. These are the persons who are to be relied upon for the peace, and internal safety of the public. This is certainly a disgrace. I hope some steps will be taken to remove these grievances by providing efficient Police administration to look after the accommodation of passengers and to look after the safety of passengers on the platform : . .

Maulana Zafar Ali Khan (East Central Punjab : Muhammadan) : Why not make separate arrangements for the travel of military people?

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: That is of course a suggestion, but I am also stating that in spite of the fact that there are trains which solely carry the army, the trouble arises on the trains which carry mostly civilian passengers, because the military officers travelling on those trains resist the entry of other second class passengers. I attribute this to their wicked conduct, as I call it. Never mind what their dignity is; never mind what their position is. The trouble arises because of them and I have suggested this solution. I hope due attention will be paid to it and these instances will not be forgotten.

Then, Sir, I wish to refer also to murders and crimes committed on the trains. Dr. Dalal has already referred to murders. This also means that the Railway Police administration is inefficient. When the Railways are spending so much on

The Honourable Sir Andrew Clow: I have been very reluctant to interrupt the Honourable Member, but I am not responsible for the Railway Police Administration and cannot deal with that subject in my reply.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: Well, I hope, Sir, at least the Railways, if it is not responsible for the administration of Railway Police, will seek the co-operation of the appropriate authority and bring to the notice of that authority the instances which happen and suggest that the persons who are employed to look after the safety and the ingress of the passengers into the compartments shall be competent and efficient. The passengers ought not to suffer for want of appropriate protection from the Police—never mind who the authority may be. You should not say that you are not concerned. Are you only concerned with the carrying of people from one place to another and getting money out of their pockets? You must see to the safety of those who travel by your Railways, otherwise you should announce to the general public that you are not responsible at all for their safety. You must tell them that you are not responsible for what happens to them in the railway carriages or on the platform. If you have undertaken this task as carriers of passengers, there are so many responsibilities attached to it. How can you denounce those responsibilities? It would be extremely selfish of the Railway Department to dissociate itself of this responsibility—a moral responsibility, if it is not a legal responsibility—and say 'Never mind what happens; we are not responsible'. This is not the excuse that can be put forward. When you undertake to carry a person, the responsibility to see that he is carried

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safely is yours. In fact, from the moment he enters your jurisdiction that is the railway station, your responsibility to give him protection from all circumstances begins.

Now, Sir, having dealt with this portion which, as I have said, has arisen because of military people travelling on trains, I will refer to the other point, namely, the situation of the agriculturist under this budget. I am very glad that the Honourable the Commerce Member has come up just in time. I think, I am very lucky. The first thing I should like to say is that whenever I speak about the agriculturists, I do not speak from instructions, I do not speak from any brief prepared for me. I am an agriculturist myself. My ancestors have been agriculturists and they have had military traditions. I am not one of those who belong to the legal profession and are coached up by somebody to speak for agriculturists. I am an agriculturist myself. My interests rise or fall with them, and, therefore, I speak for the agriculturists as a class. Sir, having said so much, let me also say that I have heard that an impression is going round that I am merely a lawyer and I just speak because I want to speak. Nothing of the kind. I suspended my practice in the year 1921.

The Honourable Diwan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar (Commerce Member): Whose is that impression? Nothing has been said from these Benches to justify such an impression.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: Well, I have said that an impression is going round. But I have come to know this and I do not want to say who brought this information to me. I am saying all this because I am an agriculturist. I have laid my hand on the plough, and I have laid my hand on the sword. I am speaking as an agriculturist. Nothing has been done in this budget for the agriculturist, but he has been saddled with extraordinary liabilities. If there has been any relief given, as has been said by the Railway Member, it is to the taxpayer. These are his words :

"Finally the bulk of the increased revenue would go under present arrangements to the taxpayer and thus permit them to be relieved in other directions."

The agriculturists are not taxpayers. 70 to 80 per cent. of the population are agriculturists. How many of them pay tax? Therefore, if there is any anxiety on the part of the Railway Board to do anything it is for those who pay taxes, not the agriculturist. The Railway Commissioner has also said something about the agriculturist, which does not really benefit them. Having given no relief, they should have at least maintained the position as it is. But no. They have gone a step further. How? They have taxed the agriculturist in this way. The third class fare is raised. The agriculturists are the persons who travel third class. Then again food grains are included in articles of which freight is increased—this is what the Chief Commissioner for Railways said :

"Food grains being included, a slight increase in the charges for small consignments, which for foodgrains would amount to 2 annas in the rupee, the existing charges being retained for consignments in wagon loads."

Therefore, if the agriculturist wants to bring things in small quantities, he must pay the higher rate. If he wants to send something in small quantities, he must pay at the higher rates. How many agriculturists are so rich that they can take wagons or send their things in wagons? The

ordinary agriculturist whose holding is anywhere between ten to twenty acres is not the man who can take wagon loads. The man who carts edible fruits, say oranges, cannot take wagon for himself. Not only the Chief Commissioner has said this, but the Railway Member also

Mr. Deputy President (Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta) : The Honourable Member has got two minutes more.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh : I will finish within that time. As I was saying the Railway Member has said the same thing, in respect of food-grains. Now, if the railways were in want, and they saddled the agriculturist with this burden, that might have been a redeeming feature; but they are not in want, they have given him no relief. And how much do they gain? The revenue likely to come in is small, and so why not forego it in the interests of the agriculturists? Why do you tax that fellow who is poor, if you are not badly in need of it and when you are not likely to get much out of it? Why do you not forego this little thing altogether from the agriculturist?

Sir, the agriculturist is the person who has been hard hit on account of the war : prices have gone down and the last thing that I can expect, therefore, is that if all this must be done, if no relief can be given to the agriculturist and no compassion can be shown to him, at least these changes which are not to come into operation till the 1st of May, may be postponed till the first of July, by which time the agriculturist meets most of his needs: if he has to order things, he orders them and if he has to send his things he sends them and makes provision for the coming season. I hope at least that much concession will be shown to him. Sir, I have done.

Mr. Deputy President (Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta) : Mr. Dumasia.

Mr. Umar Aly Shah (North Madras: Muhammadan) : Sir, I stood up several times, but I have not been called.

Mr. Deputy President (Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta) : Order, order.

Mr. N. M. Dumasia (Nominated Non-Official) : Mr. Deputy President, the Railway Budget presented by the Honourable Member for Communications has come like a whiff of fresh breeze to the congested lungs in a time like this. The admirable way in which he has presented a surplus budget entitles him to our congratulation and I wish to offer a few observations in appreciation of the results achieved by the Department which is represented in this House by Sir Andrew Clow. On the whole the Railway Budget is most satisfactory this year and there is no cause to find fault in it. The increase of revenue is very gratifying indeed, but the unfortunate part of it is that it is the war which has mostly contributed to it and it does not represent the prosperity of the masses. Be that as it may, in these hard times the war has created an opportunity in establishing railway finances, and indirectly in helping in placing state finances generally on a sound basis and let us hope even in putting a brake on the trend of ever rising taxation. More than the abnormal profits earned by the railways, I regard the sending of locomotives, wagons, rolling stock and

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even expert staff to other theatres of war as a superb achievement of the railway administration, but the question that is now uppermost in the minds of the public is, with India depleted of these materials, how these withdrawals which may prove a handicap if the war breaks out on India's soil, should be replaced and supplemented to meet the growing demand of the country itself? This is the most vital point in connection with the imminent danger to our country. I hope the Honourable the Communications Member will agree with me that an assurance on this point is absolutely necessary in order to inspire confidence in public mind and encourage the people of this country to help in minimising the danger if the threatened crisis materialises. I hope in his reply the Honourable the Railway Member will give us an assurance that if the war breaks out on the soil of India vigorous and successful efforts will be made by the Railway administration to cope with the emergency in the interests of the country. Are our resources adequate and are they being exploited to the fullest capacity? India would like to know whether a programme or a fixed plan is ready to meet the emergency. This much at least is due to the public and I am sure the Honourable the Railway Member will not miss this opportunity of taking the public into full confidence.

The Railway Member has fully explained the system on which it is proposed to divide the surplus between the general and the railway revenue. I will not say much about it. In my speech on the Budget in 1924, I quoted with approval a statement of the Chairman of the Bengal and North Western Railway Company that the policy of that railway had always been to keep its fares at a low level to encourage the growth in particular of its third class passenger traffic. I am still of the opinion that the fares should be kept as low as possible, but in the present instance the enhancement of fares are on such a modest scale, and the fact that they are below the level of the other State-managed Railways, the additional impost will not be unduly felt, though strictly speaking it may not be considered right and proper, in view of the abnormal profits realised this year. The present conditions, however, afford a justification for the slight increase, but I hope the policy of keeping fares at the lowest possible level will always be kept in mind. In regard to the surcharge on parcels, I am sure it will be readily admitted that the difficulty of transport will render more and more difficult in future as the supply of petrol will be very scarce in future and buses and other means of conveyance will hardly be available to take the parcels and other portable luggage

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

It is true that there is a considerable strain on passenger and other trains at present, and it is contemplated now to reduce the number of passenger trains all over India. When such a necessity is imperative, it is absolutely necessary that all race specials all over India and other trains that run for mere pleasure of the public should be seriously curtailed. Government must have noticed that it is difficult to convey the necessaries of life from the mofussil to Bombay, Calcutta and other important cities, such as vegetables, charcoal and other essentials of life for the use of the general public. So far as it is possible after meeting the military demands, every facility should be afforded to the public

for speedy and cheap means of conveyance of articles of daily necessity, otherwise the absence of such facilities will create hardship and discontent. While the Communications Member advises curtailment of railway journey, it is a pity that the railway management encourages the race going public. The money should not be spent on running these race specials and every opportunity should be utilised in making more satisfactory arrangements for the conveyance of food stuffs and other necessaries of life required by the general public. Effective economy in railway finances should be made at least during the period of the war. The running of all specials, saloons to high officials and the railway staff should be curtailed to the minimum, if not altogether stopped. Free passes to railway employees and their relations should be restricted. Railway and Government officials should make substantial sacrifices especially when an appeal is made to the public to avoid unnecessary travelling in order to reduce the pressure on railways.

Whether the war actually extends to Indian soil or not, the transport problem is already a serious one, and if it is not successfully tackled, it may lead to serious results and affect the prices and supply of articles required for daily consumption and may lead to consequences which may be far from pleasant. While we all agree as to the necessity of precedence being given for military transports, and adequate and satisfactory transport policy for saving the public from unnecessary hardships and providing them with necessary supplies is absolutely necessary.

In conclusion, I join in the handsome tribute paid by the Honourable Sir Andrew Clow to Sir Leonard Wilson for the inspiring lead by him and his officers at this critical juncture, and I hope that under his spirited leadership, the Indian Railways will play a worthy part in the country's war efforts and at the same time provide a far reaching and beneficial plan for removing and minimising the hardships on the public, and preventing a disorganization of industry and commerce which is inevitable in the present situation.

The Honourable Sir Andrew Clow: Sir, most Honourable Members began on a note of congratulation, and for that I ought to be, and am, grateful. I must admit that, when I went on to examine the rest of their speeches I found that their congratulations were limited to the fact that I had the luck to present a surplus, and that much of their speech was in anything but a complimentary tone. But I am accustomed to criticism. I have never been one who felt that I had a monopoly of wisdom, and that the others' points of view were not based also on full consideration and were not entitled to every bit of as much respect.

Sir, one or two Members laid stress on the rather fortuitous nature of the surplus. The Deputy President reminded me that success should not be measured merely by money and Mr. Neogy, whom we are glad to welcome back again to railway matters, talked of the "artificial stimulus" which had produced the surplus. I quite agree with both the statements. It is an artificial stimulus, but I hope that when Railways again face lean times, if an economic blizzard again comes, it will be remembered that it is an artificial depression, and that if we cannot claim any large measure of the credit for the surplus, neither should we be given any large measure of the blame when the figures turn out the other

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way. I seem to remember a tendency, during the extraordinarily difficult years that some of my predecessors had to face, to place on Government or the Railway Board the entire blame for the fact that they were not showing a surplus, and I hope that if I do not claim for myself and for my officers the bulk of the credit for the surplus in the Budget today, in future years they will be shown some indulgence if we present a less rosy picture.

I do not, however, entirely agree with those who suggested that the surplus was not a real one or that it was merely some kind of book transaction between myself and the Commander-in-Chief or the Honourable the Supply Member. Undoubtedly the money that we are spending on defence and on supplies has made quite a large contribution to railway revenues. But I do not think it accounts even for the bulk of the surplus, and I would remind the House, as I think Sir Henry Richardson mentioned, that a fair amount of the expenditure on supplies is being met by a different Government altogether. Moreover, the surplus does represent actual work done, work that has to be paid for, and work that has cost labour and money. Professor Banerjee tried to analyse the factors which had contributed to it. I do not entirely agree with him, and I must dissent from his suggestions that I had followed any deliberate practice of over-estimating expenditure and under-estimating revenue. Actually looking back, I find I have not over-estimated expenditure. I have been a little under the expenditure every year. The revenue has always exceeded my estimates, but one has to go on the factors visible at the time, and I should be very surprised indeed if the experience of finding the surplus double of what one expects is repeated next year.

Then, Sir, Sir Henry Richardson voiced a complaint because I had not dealt with an entirely different subject,—in other words, with the development of other forms of transport. He referred to a recent change in organization in another department for which I am responsible, the Communications Department, and said that this should have been done a year ago. I should like to follow him down that by path, but I feel that I will be straying rather widely from the subject if I deal with it at any length. I would only say two things. In the first place, Sir Henry Richardson, I think, was a little mistaken in saying that we had only started organization about a month ago. We did make a certain change then, but, of course, that matter had been not merely under consideration, but was under organization for some time previously. And in the second place,—in addition to the fact that I did not regard it as entirely relevant—I was also a little afraid of giving any exaggerated importance to it, because I had no doubt that certain sections of the press have been doing so. A prominent European paper last month in a leading article said:

Sir F. E. James (Madras : European) : What is the name of the paper?

The Honourable Sir Andrew Clow : It comes from the Honourable Member's home town.

Sir F. E. James : Not the one I was thinking of.

The Honourable Sir Andrew Clow:

"The existing War Transport Board and the Provincial Transport Boards should be enlarged to include representatives of such organizations and all forms of transport should be placed under their authority. Thus co-ordinated, it will probably be found that the transport facilities available in the various provinces and States will prove adequate for all requirements."

Now, I can only say that that is founded on a complete misleading conception of the present position. We are out to develop and to give such help as we can through Provincial Governments and through the Provincial Boards of Transport to develop motor transport and other forms of transport. I hope we shall be able to increase the contribution they are making, but I doubt if the public realises the limitations imposed on us. I have had estimates prepared of the amount that can be carried in present circumstances by motor transport of goods. It amounts to less than two per cent. of what the railways expect to carry this year. Although, as I say, we hope to increase that appreciably by encouraging the use of alternative fuels and in other ways, the amount of relief that can be expected there in the present difficult situation with which we are faced is comparatively small. But that will not be an excuse for not doing what we can.

Mr. Jamnadas Mehta has suggested that the growing difficulty of the bus traffic was making a large contribution to the present railway revenues. I doubt if it was as large as all that, but, undoubtedly, the curtailment of other forms of transport has added greatly to our difficulties. Still, the bus traffic has probably not increased our difficulties so greatly as the very substantial curtailment in coastal sea traffic which has thrown on the railway traffic, particularly commodities like coal, that used to go by sea.

A good many Honourable Members dealt with the subject of fares and freights. Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi asked me a direct question, which was, when did I discover that fares and freights were substantially lower on the East Indian Railway and the North Western Railway than they were on other lines? To be quite honest, I suppose it was about a year ago. My Honourable friend, Mr. Abdul Ghani, said that we were out to affect the poor who had no representative here. I thought that most of the Honourable Members on the other side stood as representatives of the poor. I did not realise that they were confined to representation of the rich. Actually, this is not mainly put on for purposes of revenue. I am often being pressed in this House to secure uniformity. There is a constant cry by one or two Honourable Members, is it not a fact that on such and such a railway something is not done in exactly the same way that it is being done on some other, if so, will you please issue orders to secure uniformity? These suggestions, I find, cost money; but when I attempt to secure something nearer uniformity in the direction that brings in money, that uniformity does not seem to be quite as popular as the other.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: Uniformity in the right direction.

The Honourable Sir Andrew Clow: Uniformity always tends in one direction and not in the other. But at a time like the present, the burden should as far as possible be evenly distributed. Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi said, that by increasing the rate on foodstuffs I get only a

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flea-bite of half a crore. I am not a Calcutta magnate and I have not got to a stage when I can regard half a crore as a flea-bite. But, if he will look at my speech again, he will find that this is not put on mainly with a view to revenue, it is put on for other reasons which I explained in my original speech.

Several Honourable Members drifted from the question of these small increases we are putting on, to the general question of fares and freights, and when was the right time to put them up. So far as I could gather, there was no right time; we must always put them down. But I put it to the House, you have to choose between having your fares high in times of prosperity and having them high in times of diversity. If you do not have your fares and freights at a level which will yield a balance when times are good, there is not the slightest doubt that you will have to put them up when the times are bad. That is the reason why, although a large surplus has been presented, we have not considered it a proper time to reduce fares and freights. Incidentally, such a step would add very greatly to our embarrassment at the present time. I dealt with that in the first budget speech I presented to this House,—the question of increasing fares and freights. I pointed out that if you were not going to pursue that policy of putting them up in times of prosperity, you would certainly have to put them up in times of adversity. That is what has actually happened in the past. As an Honourable Member has reminded the House, the increases were put on just at those most difficult times in the economic blizzard of 1931-32 when, undoubtedly, they had their effect in adding to the prevailing depression. If I may venture to cite my own words two years ago, I said:

“The railways, like every other form of industrial enterprise, must expect marked fluctuations in their working. Periods of general prosperity are followed only too surely by periods of depression and as the financial results of railway working depend closely on the economic situation in the country, a period of depression for the community is also a period of depression for the railways. Thus, if railways fail to take advantage of times when the demand for their services is brisk the inevitable result is that when the demand falls off, they will be unable to meet their obligations to the taxpayer. That is precisely what happened in the years following 1928, the important consequence being that in 1931-33, when the need of the taxpayer was greatest, the railways were quite unable to fulfil their obligations to him and had indeed, at a time of depression in industry, to enhance their rates.”

One or two Honourable Members alluded to crimes or offences on railways. Mr. Deshmukh dealt with the lighter offences of discourtesy by passengers. We, on the railways, deplore discourtesy from passengers, but, unfortunately, it has been my experience

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: May I say a word? I dealt with one instance of discourtesy, but so far as the Madras instance is concerned, it was an act of rowdyism and there was disturbance to passengers which is not an ordinary crime.

The Honourable Sir Andrew Clow: I said that Mr. Deshmukh dealt with the lighter offences and I will come later to offences of a more serious nature. My experience has been, unfortunately—and I think it is shared by all who have travelled widely—discourtesy is by no means confined to this country. There is something about travel, and, particularly, railway travel, which seems to induce a feeling of selfishness in

passengers. I found discourtesy shown to me by both Indians and Europeans. But I have never thought about it in this way, that it was because he was a European, or because he was an Indian. Unfortunately, there are a few discourteous people in all races; we regret it. But I would ask when instances of that kind occur, they should not be made generalisations and used to attack the community or class to which the particular person offending happens to belong.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: May I interrupt the Honourable Member? I did not attack the community. I merely said help should be given to passengers.

The Honourable Sir Andrew Olow: The Honourable Member attacked no community, but I think, because some discourtesy was shown by people who happened to be military men, he suggested it is typical of the military officers as a class.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: Army officers as a class—yes.

The Honourable Sir Andrew Olow: I would also say that, while we do all we can to ensure the comfort of our passengers, it will be a very heavy task if we are going to be responsible for every act of discourtesy and rowdiness that passengers may show in any of our stations.

Sir Ratanji Dalal dealt with more serious crimes,—crimes like murder and robbery on trains and suggested that the conversion of our rolling stock to corridor trains might possibly prove a solution. I very much doubt whether it would. I feel myself, personally, safer in a compartment with a few gentlemen, when I can bar the doors, than I would feel in a long corridor compartment, with the knowledge that there were dozens of other people of varying degrees of morality not very far from me, who can come in in the middle of the night.

An Honourable Member: Have police patrol.

The Honourable Sir Andrew Olow: Then I shall have to provide a frightful lot of policemen. According to Mr. Deshmukh's scheme, I should have large posse of police at every station to show passengers into their compartments. I am not responsible for the Railway Police but I have to pay for some of them.

Mr. Govind B. Deshmukh: Cannot you have some control over them? You are paying for them, then why can you not have control over them?

The Honourable Sir Andrew Olow: My answer to Sir Ratanji Dalal is that I do not think there is much to be gained by considering this question at present, because we could not possibly convert our rolling stock in time of war. We will have to depend a great deal on rebuilding which we are doing at present, naturally, at a slow rate.

I come now to the more important question of labour on which several Members had observations to offer. I was astonished to hear Sir Henry Gidney saying that persons could not obtain rest before they did 16 hours work on the railways on the running staff or even 21, and as this order had not been brought to my notice before, I sent for the order to which he was referring. I have now obtained the order, which is one which

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begins with the words, "Guards and drivers may claim rest only after 16 hours continuous duty with the train". I feel sure that Sir Henry Gidney knows the railway system well enough to realise that it is not the whole order, that it is an order designed to meet those cases of emergency where, owing to breakdown or any other cause, a train cannot complete its journey within the normal time. You have an accident or a breakdown and a man may have to stay in the train for a very long time. This is an order which governs the case of getting rest in those circumstances. If Sir Henry Gidney will bring to my notice any case which provides for a sixteen hours' continuous run for a man on the footplate, I can assure him that the matter will have my most immediate attention.

Lieut.-Colonel Sir Henry Gidney: I promise to do so.

The Honourable Sir Andrew Clow: Then, in the present circumstances there has undoubtedly been—and I have acknowledged it and acknowledged it gratefully—a very great strain on the staff, and, when I was talking of the staff I was not thinking merely of the officers. I was thinking of men in all capacities, down to the humblest. The suggestion was made, I think, that the staff was insufficient to meet the emergency. Now, the Railway Board have very recently dealt with this matter and they issued a circular as recently as the 31st January last, stating that they were greatly concerned at the frequency with which the flow of traffic and fullest utilisation of engine power is impeded by shortage of staff and they asked General Managers to make every endeavour to appoint extra staff as early as possible, particularly, on the main lines of communication. They went on to say: "If necessary, you should erect temporary quarters, debitable to revenue, for such extra staff where required. It is realised that this is an urgent matter and that you may have to issue immediate orders for the construction of such quarters." So that I hope that relief will be provided where undoubtedly in some cases I admit it to be required.

Lieut.-Colonel Sir Henry Gidney: On a point of personal explanation. I am grateful to the Honourable Member. My remarks related to cases of under-rest anterior to the publication of that notice.

The Honourable Sir Andrew Clow: Then several observations were made on the question of dealing with individual cases and the reference which I made, by no means with contempt but with a great deal of envy, to the Great Moghals. Their system is one which, I think, had very big advantages at the time in which they worked and it is one that I know Indian opinion has always looked back to with pride—the idea that you can take the smallest matter right up to the highest possible authority. I was not questioning the suitability of that system that obtained two or three hundred years ago. All I was expressing was my conviction that in my more humble sphere it is impossible for me to follow it. I would remark that the Great Moghals had no Posts and Telegraphs system such as we know it today, so that the number of persons who could present petitions were much more limited than those who could present them to me. Moreover they were autocrats. They could issue orders without giving any reasons for them. They could not be called upon, as I can be called upon in this House, to explain—as I might be asked by Mr. Lalchand Navalrai—why I made an exception from a particular rule or why this or that man was promoted and not somebody else or why a particular quota was not reached.

Lieut.-Colonel Sir Henry Gidney: But Indian subjects knew what would be the fate of their petitions.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: In those days, they had a bell outside and any one who rang it was called in.

The Honourable Sir Andrew Olow: We live in a more democratic age and I am a democrat and we have to have a division of responsibility. I think Sir Henry Gidney will realise, as a medical man, that even with the best will in the world it will be physically impossible for me to attend to my duties and to give personal consideration to every case of promotion that any one chooses to bring to me.

Lieut.-Colonel Sir Henry Gidney: Not you. The Railway Board.

The Honourable Sir Andrew Olow: Even the Railway Board. They are just as busy men as I am. If they were asked to deal with every case of the promotion of a station master or cases of that kind, they certainly would not be able to carry on the duties which they are carrying on today. Nor am I sure that it would yield better justice. I find that in many of these cases that come to me endeavours are made to get my personal influence. I have to tell the gentlemen—and there are a good many of them—that I think it will be unfair to accede to their request. A man comes and says: 'Here is my son. We are very poor people. He has, unfortunately, not passed the matriculation. If you can get him a clerk's post, what a great benefit you will be doing to me'. The other day I had a man who came to see me, bearing a letter from a friend in England who had been a personal friend of us, hoping that with this introduction he would be able to get orders issued to the General Manager to have him promoted out of turn. Now, all these efforts to get personal influence really involve, I feel, in a way an element of unfairness. It means that the person who can get access to me or a Member of the Railway Board, if they were to yield to that kind of thing, would have a pull over the man who does not know me and cannot get an introduction to me. Indeed, that is the object in most of these cases. Nor do I feel that I or the Members of the Railway Board are more fitted to judge what should be done in such cases than General Managers or heads of departments or other officers. We know the men less. We know the circumstances less and if the orders they pass in every one of those cases are to be subjected to revision, the machine will soon break down.

Lieut.-Colonel Sir Henry Gidney: On a personal explanation, I am sorry the Honourable Member has talked of people coming from England with chits. I did not mean them. I was thinking of genuine complaints from the staff to the Railway Board, which are ignored.

The Honourable Sir Andrew Olow: If the Honourable Member is dealing with general complaints such as the complaints put forward through Mr. Jamnadas Mehta that some persons were not getting the dearness allowance or the complaints that the grading of this and that is wrong, then the Railway Board and I are dealing with these matters. But if it is a case—and this is perhaps one of the hardest cases of all—of a man who, for example, has been punished in a lower category, then it is a different matter. He says that he had appealed and probably the General

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Manager had also looked into the case. Now, he wants to come to the Railway Board and, if they do not satisfy him, to me. If we were to deal with every case of that type, we will be overwhelmed because it has been my experience that we are all poor judges of our own cases. If they do not get what they want, it is extremely difficult to convince them that they have been fairly dealt with.

Sir Ziauddin Ahmad and Maulana Abdul Ghani were rather nearer the point when they said that the importance of this kind of work was that an occasional check would make sure that justice was being done. But the people who come to me and who want me to take up their cases do not come to me in order to have a check on the administration generally. They come to take advantage for some particular individual. I recognise that this is a very important and a very difficult subject and I wish I could develop it further. But I have laid before the House the conclusions to which I have come by my experience and I believe the House also must ultimately come to these conclusions if we are to carry on successfully this great organisation.

Less complimentary things were said about some of the staff by a few Members who alluded to the question of corruption. One Honourable Member said that it was not any good asking the public for complaints but that we must ask for complaints from the railway officials. My experience is that railway officials who have been guilty of corruption are extremely reluctant to come and say so, and other officials very seldom get an opportunity of checking them. Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi referred particularly to the exodus from Calcutta in which he took a great personal interest. He complained that he had produced cases of bribery there but he got no satisfaction. Actually, my understanding of the position is that the papers in connection with this matter have been given to the police and that an inquiry is in progress. He also dealt with the American Express Company. I had not previously heard of their coming into this business and I certainly got the impression from his speech that they were taking a very great part in disposing of tickets during the exodus. But a report from a Committee appointed to inquire into the matter says:

"The records of the American Express Company have been examined and show that during the period of exodus the agreement has not been violated, as the issue of such tickets did not exceed one ticket per day."

The important subject of the purchase of State railways did not attract the attention I had expected and perhaps the attention it deserved. Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad dealt with it and made a gentle complaint that the Assembly were not consulted in that we did not have a full dress debate in this House on the matter. Later on, in his speech, he said that an open discussion in the House would be a waste of time. I was not very clear as to what he wanted. I admit he said that we should appoint a Committee to examine it as was done when the contract came up at an earlier date. Actually, it was examined in the Central Advisory Council and I do not think there is any Committee that could have been constituted either from this or the other House that was better fitted to examine it. That Council includes all the members of the Railway Standing Finance Committee. In the case of the two railways, they met separately to advise the Council. In the last case it was decided merely to have one meeting. I do not think there is ground for saying that

the proceedings were hurried. I certainly took no steps to bring them to an early conclusion and we found the meetings of this Council extremely valuable. I am quite sure that the decision we took is one generally acceptable to public opinion. I do not believe for a moment that if the matter had come before this House, the view taken would have been different. Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad also suggested that by means of private negotiations we might have done better than we did by terminating the contract. He said that the Assam Bengal Railway shares were at Rs. 65 but we paid Rs. 100 for them. That may be so, but as the Honourable the Finance Member pointed out at the time, the minute it was known that we were going to pay for them they would not have remained at Rs. 65 for a day longer.

Professor Banerjea said that even I could not claim that all the advantages that we had expected from State management had accrued. I admit it. They have not all accrued. I said in my speeches that I am conscious of the difficulties that the State management creates. I was thinking of that subject myself when I referred to the difficulty in a democratic State of Parliament and the Government dealing with matters of detail. I think we have still got to devise some system which will retain the big advantages that State management offers with safeguards against the dangers to which it is exposed.

Several Honourable Members alluded to the dismantlement of lines and the Deputy President was apprehensive that we might go to the extent of dismantling lines that would impede our war effort. I can assure him that that position will be most carefully watched. Hitherto, we have dealt with only small side lines which do not play an important part in the economic life of the country although, I admit, that their removal involves in some cases an element of hardship. Dr. Sir Ziauddin Ahmad asked how they were to be assured that every line we had lifted was unremunerative and wanted a fuller examination of that question. We have only taken the question of remuneration as a general guide. We are reaching a stage, if we have not reached it already, when we have to remove one or two lines that are already remunerative or which would shortly be remunerative. We have left one or two lines which were unremunerative. There was one in Madras which was serving an industrial purpose and another in Bengal where alternative means of transport are very few. I think as far as I can recollect we have removed no lines in Bengal hitherto, because we recognise the difficulties, particularly in Eastern Bengal, of getting alternative means.

Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta: The removal of one line is under contemplation in Rangpur district.

The Honourable Sir Andrew Clow: We may have to do that later on. We pay close attention to the question of alternative means of transport. In one or two cases the Central Government has contributed to improving the road system in places where the line has been taken. Reference was made to the question of payment. To a large extent, we are receiving payment from His Majesty's Government and I think we can count ourselves fortunate that in the case of lines which were not yielding us any income, we are none the less deriving a capital sum. As I observed, the lines are not being used all overseas; some of them are being used for defence in India.

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There was a particular reference to the convention separating railways from general finance. Here, I do not propose to go into that subject because I am assured that one party in the House proposes to make it a special subject during the voting on Demands for Grants when it will be discussed at greater length and after more study. My Honourable friend, Mr. Neogy, very rightly repeated the warning contained in Acworth Committee's report. I can assure him that that passage and particularly the passage that follows has been closely present to my mind in the last two years. As the passage is rather an instructive one, and as I think it will help the subsequent debate, I should like to remind the House—I know it is quite fresh in Mr. Neogy's mind—of the paragraph following the one he cited. After referring to how the funds have not been built up for maintenance and renewal, they went on to say:

"Obviously the expenditure was only postponed, and had to be faced later on. An ordinary commercial concern would, as a matter of course, have carried the money so underspent to a reserve for renewals, to be spent when the materials were again available. The independent railway companies did this. Not so the State. The money was treated as part of the ordinary revenue of the Government in the year in which it was not spent, with the result that the net profits of the State railways are shown in the official returns as having risen steadily from 4.54 per cent. in 1914 to 7.07 per cent. in 1918-19. The apparent gain was not real. Had there been a separate railway budget the money underspent would have been earmarked in it as advanced to the Government for general purposes."

They go on to say:

"The railway machine is in urgent need of repair and funds to put it right are not forthcoming. The position at present is this: maintenance is lamentably in arrears. The cost of materials of all kinds is far above prewar level."

I think we have learned something since those days and the Honourable the Finance Member has not pursued the policy that was pursued in the last war. We are building up a depreciation fund. One or two critics suggested that too much money was being put into it. I think if we study the Acworth Committee report, we will come round to the conclusion which I think Mr. Neogy was anxious to impress upon the House.

In conclusion, Mr. Deputy President put forward for consideration certain tests by which the success or the failure of our railways ought to be judged. I am afraid my test in the present case would be different, because my main test would be—What are the railways doing to secure victory in this tremendous struggle in which we are engaged? It is not the only test but it must be the one constantly present to our minds. We are facing a situation of peril and we must bend the greater part of our energies towards meeting that peril. I think I can claim that railway men in all ranks of service are making a very large contribution to the war effort. I was very grateful for the reference made by Sir Henry Richardson, Mr. Dumasia, Mr. Jamnadas Mehta and others to the work that is being done, particularly in the lower ranks of the service at this difficult and strenuous time. I think we all tend to remain silent—I do—when things are being done well, but tend to ask for explanation when they are being done badly. But I think and I believe that the staff works best under encouragement rather than under blame. I am grateful to those Honourable Members of the House who have given the staff encouragement in this debate.

Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta: May I know what percentage of this year's surplus is due to war conditions?

The Honourable Sir Andrew Clow: I am afraid it is quite impossible to say that. I could of course give out the amount that is given directly by the Defence Department and the Supply Department if it is expedient to do so, but it would not really give a correct picture. War conditions penetrate into such an enormous number of spheres and the indirect effects of the war are so great and the increasing industrialisation of India goes into so many channels that it is quite impossible to separate the effect. For example, we have had a very large increase in passenger traffic. That had an important effect in last year and that represents money which is being pumped in, as it were, reaching the poorer classes of the people and being spent by them in greater travelling than they formerly were able to afford.

The Assembly then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Tuesday, the 24th February, 1942.