

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY DEBATES

Official Report

Volume I, 1944

(7th February to 28th February, 1944)



TWENTIETH SESSION

OF THE

FIFTH LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY,

1944



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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

Deputy President :

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Mr. HOOSAINBOY A. LALLJEE, M.L.A.

Sir HENRY RICHARDSON, M.L.A.

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Committee on Petitions :

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Mr. GOVIND V. DESHMUKH, M.L.A.

Sardar SANT SINGH, M.L.A.

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

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Monday, 21st February, 1944

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.

MEMBER SWORN:

Colonel Henry Wynter Wagstaff, M.C., M.L.A. (Government of India: Nominated Official).

STARRED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

(a) ORAL ANSWERS.

†125*—141*.

QUALIFICATIONS AND DUTIES OF COAL COMMISSIONER.

142. *Mr. K. C. Neogy: (a) Will the Honourable the Labour Member please refer to his reply given in the Legislative Assembly on the 17th November, 1943, to question No. 250, that "the principal factor that contributed to the shortage of coal is undoubtedly the shortage of labour", and state why it was deemed necessary by Government to appoint a Coal Commissioner to help to increase coal raising when the primary cause of shortage, according to his above-mentioned reply, was shortage of labour?

(b) What will be the duties of the Coal Commissioner, and what are the qualifications of the person appointed? Are Government satisfied that no Indian of the requisite qualifications is available?

(c) What will be the official relations of the Coal Commissioner with the Labour Department, the Railway Department and any other Department of the Government, respectively?

(d) What emoluments will the Coal Commissioner be entitled to?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: The Honourable Member for War Transport has agreed to answer the question on the 24th February, 1944.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR FEEDING PEOPLE IN DEFICIT AREAS.

143. *Mr. Amarendra Nath Chattopadhyaya: (a) Will the Honourable the Food Member please state the basic policy of the Government of India regarding the food question of the country? Whose is the responsibility for feeding people in the deficit areas in India?

(b) Is it a fact that food being a provincial subject, the Government of India's line of action goes only up to suggestions to a Provincial Government, and so far as possible, under section 126-A of the Government of India Act?

(c) Are Government aware that the present situation of the food problem is mainly due to war and India having come within the war zone and do they realise that public demands that His Majesty's Government, too, must share this responsibility? If so, what steps have been taken by His Majesty's Government to help British Government in India to feed India?

(d) Is the Honourable Member in a position to clearly explain the policy of the Government of India in the matter of food in relation to the Government of Bengal and other provinces?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: The Honourable Member is referred to paragraphs 3, 4 and 7 of my statement for the information of the Standing Advisory Committee of the Central Legislature for Food and Commerce Departments which was included in the White Paper on the Food situation in India circulated to the Honourable Members during the last session.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR FEEDING PEOPLE IN WAR ZONES IN INDIA.

144. *Mr. Amarendra Nath Chattopadhyaya: Will the Honourable the Food Member please state whether, in view of the fact that Bengal and Assam

†For these questions and answers, see pages 359—67, of these Debates.

are situated within the war zone, and the responsibility lies with the Government of India, is it not necessary to make a clear statement regarding the Government of India's responsibility in the matter of feeding the people of India in their charge?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: I have already made a clear statement on the subject, a summary of which is given in my statement for the information of the Standing Advisory Committee of the Central Legislature for Food and Commerce Departments, which was included in the White Paper relating to the Food situation in India circulated to Honourable Members during the last Session.

METHODS OF PROCUREMENT OF FOODGRAINS FOR GOVERNMENT REQUIREMENTS.

145. ***Mr. Amarendra Nath Chattopadhyaya:** (a) Will the Honourable the Food Member please state the policy of the Government of India regarding procurement of food grains for their own requirements and that for distribution amongst deficit provinces? Are they utilizing ordinary trade channels in all the provinces or depending upon Provincial Government's agents?

(b) Have the Government of India decided as regards the statutory price control of food grains in the country? In fixing such prices, are they taking into their consideration a fair return to the agriculturists for their products? Do they admit that the cost of production, besides other factors, must be taken into consideration in fixing basic rates? Do they further admit that wheat or rice (paddy) is not only a food crop but a money crop to the majority of agriculturists of the country, hence in fixing statutory prices, a fair margin to the producers is essential?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: (a) and (b). The Government of India have entrusted to Provincial Governments the function of procurement of foodgrains for their own requirements and for distribution to deficit areas. Trade channels are employed as far as possible. The Honourable Member is referred to the chapters on Procurement and Prices in the Report on the Progress of the Recommendations of the Foodgrains Policy Committee laid on the table of the House on the 7th February, 1944, in reply to unstarred question No. 16 by Mr. Neogy.

METHODS OF DISTRIBUTION OF FOODSTUFFS IN CALCUTTA AND DISTRICTS OF BENGAL.

146. ***Mr. Amarendra Nath Chattopadhyaya:** (a) Will the Honourable the Food Member please state if it is a fact that as the Government of India have got no purchasing agents of their own, in Bengal, purchases on their behalf are being done by Provincial Government's agents, as stated by the Honourable Mr. Suhrawardy, Minister of Food, Bengal, on his return to Calcutta from the last session of the Food Conference held in Delhi?

(b) What is the position of the Government of India as regards supply of foodstuff in the "Greater Calcutta"? Is it only handing over the estimated quantity of foodgrains more specially rice to the Government of Bengal who will distribute the same under rationing system through their own organisation, or will they also direct and supervise, through their own men, the distribution of the same? Do they realise the strong public resentment against the distribution through Government shops? And in view of that, does the Honourable Member think it necessary that larger number of private shops, under licence, will be utilised for distribution over and above the Government shops which will be set up more as parallel organisations to keep back private owned shops from unfair dealings than as profit earning ones?

(c) What was the quantity of rice procured by the Government of Bengal's chief agents up to the end of January, 1944, and how had that been distributed in the districts of Bengal?

(d) Is the Honourable Member aware of the fact that the Government of Bengal decided to appoint one wholesale dealer of essential foodstuff in each sub-division on whom specified retail suppliers had to depend?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: (a) No purchases of foodgrains are being made on behalf of the Government of India in Bengal.

(b) The Government of India have undertaken to supply to the Government of Bengal the quantity of foodgrains estimated as approximately equivalent to the amount required to feed Calcutta and its industrial suburbs on a rationed basis for 18 months including one month's reserve. The arrangements for the distribution of these foodgrains are the responsibility of the Bengal Government and the Central Government is in constant touch with the Bengal Government over these arrangements. The efficiency of existing channels of distribution under the Rationing Scheme are under close review by the Provincial Government and the question of increasing the number of private retail shops will be considered if and when, according to them, the need should arise.

(c) It is not desirable in the public interest to disclose at this stage the quantity of rice procured by the Government of Bengal's chief agents by the end of January, 1944. The quantity procured is in the process of distribution according to a pre-arranged programme.

(d) No, Sir. It is, however, understood that wholesale dealers have been selected for each importing deficit area in a sub-division, the number of such dealers depending on the requirements of the area.

RICE SOLD AT HIGH PRICES IN CERTAIN PARTS OF BENGAL.

147. *Mr. Amarendra Nath Chattopadhyaya: (a) Is the Honourable the Food Member aware of the fact that up to the 30th January, 1944, not a particle of rice was available in open market at places in Bengal other than Calcutta, and that rice was available only through the black market at Rs. 25 per maund, while Government statutory price was fixed at Rs. 16 or Rs. 17 per maund?

(b) How long will the Government of India leave the matter of feeding Bengal with the Provincial Government?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: (a) No Sir. Except in certain parts of East Bengal rice was generally available throughout December 1943 and January 1944 in the open markets at or below the Statutory maximum wholesale prices which on the 15th January were reduced from Rs. 16 and Rs. 17 to Rs. 14 and Rs. 15 for traders in surplus and deficit districts, respectively.

(b) The Honourable Member is aware of the constitutional position and of the policy of the Central Government in the matter of guidance and control in the carrying out of the All India policy. I have nothing to add to the statements I have already made on the subject.

APPOINTMENT OF BRIGADIER WHEELER AS DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF ARCHÆOLOGY.

148. *Nawab Siddique Ali Khan (on behalf of Qazi Muhammad Ahmad Kazmi): (a) Will the Secretary for Education, Health and Lands please state if the Government of India are aware that the *Statesman* and other leading Indian dailies published the appointment of Brigadier Wheeler to the post of Director General of Indian Antiquities, *vice* Rao Bahadur K. N. Dikshit, the retiring incumbent? Is the news correct?

(b) Is it or is it not a fact that, in pursuance of the recommendations of Sir Leonard Woolley in his report on Indian Archæology wherein he describes archæological officers as "the blind leading the blind", the Government of India considered all Indian officers unsuitable for the post of the Director General? If not, what was the reason for throwing capable and experienced Indian officers aside, and recruiting an outsider from England?

(c) What are the qualifications of Brigadier Wheeler, and in what respects is he specially suitable for Indian Archæology, in preference to Indian Archæological officers?

(d) Did the Government of India consider the claims of Indian Archæological officers as well, while making the appointment? If so, in what particular branches were they found more efficient or less efficient than Brigadier Wheeler?

Mr. J. D. Tyson: (a) Yes.

(b) and (d). Government are satisfied that none of the officers within the range of selection has the wide range of knowledge and experience of modern technique and methods of archæological excavation, preservation of ancient monuments and museum organisation which the Director General of Archæology

should possess if the Archæological Survey is to be reorganised and placed on a sound basis.

(c) Dr. Mortimer Wheeler is a well-known archæologist who is outstanding in his profession and has had a wide range of experience in modern archæological excavation, the preservation of ancient monuments and the organisation of museums as well as teaching experience. He is a Fellow of the University College, London; Member of the Ancient Monuments Board for England and Wales; Honorary Director, Institute of Archæology, London University; Lecturer in British Archæology, University College, London and a Governor of the National Museum of Wales. Before the War he was Keeper and Secretary of the London Museum.

Sir Muhammad Yamin Khan: May I ask if the non-selection of an Indian in the service of the Government of India for the Director-Generalship of Archæology is based on the reports of the persons who have been condemned on the floor of the House many times?

Mr. J. D. Tyson: I do not know what the Honourable Member means by the reports of persons?

Sir Muhammad Yamin Khan: I want to know if the non-selection of an Indian is based on the reports of the very person whom this House had been criticising, that is, the Director General of Archæology.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: Nobody criticised him. He was the soundest man. You tyrannised over him.

Sir Muhammad Yamin Khan: I want an answer from the Honourable Member in charge.

Mr. J. D. Tyson: Reports on officers made over a long period of years are available to Government.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra: Has this gentleman Indian experience?

Mr. J. D. Tyson: Probably not.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: Is it not a fact that Indian Archæology entails a study of Indian subjects like Indian languages, Indian epigraphy, Indian numismatics, Indian art, etc., and if so has this gentleman the necessary experience of these subjects?

Mr. J. D. Tyson: It is not necessary that the Director General of Archæology should have a knowledge of Indian languages. An acquaintance with Indian history and Indian archæological remains would be an advantage but in this case we attach more importance to getting the Department reorganised and the personnel of the Department trained in modern archæological methods.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: May I ask what Government did to train their officers and make them capable of being in charge of these offices during the last hundred years?

Mr. J. D. Tyson: We do not seem to have done enough.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: May I ask when Government of India will give up their policy of importing Britishers for such jobs in India?

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

COMMISSION TO ENQUIRE INTO ALLEGED INEFFICIENCY OF ARCHÆOLOGICAL OFFICERS

149. ***Nawab Siddique Ali Khan** (on behalf of **Qazi Muhammad Ahmad Kasmi**): (a) Will the Secretary for Education, Health and Lands please state if it is a fact that the History Congress held at Aligarh in December, 1943, passed a resolution demanding the institution of an impartial Commission to enquire into the alleged inefficiency of the Archæological officers, as hinted by Sir Leonard Woolley, and to consider the desirability of recruitment from outside India in preference to experienced Indian officers based on comparative superiority in archæological merits?

(b) Did Government take any action on the above resolution? If so, what, and, if not, why not?

(c) Did Government adopt the usual course of consulting the Public Service Commission and the Director General of Archæology in India in the matter of selecting Brigadier Wheeler? If not, why not?

(d) Is it a fact that the age of Brigadier Wheeler is only a few months less than that of the retiring Director General of Archæology? If so, why has he been recruited in disregard of the age of superannuation in India, which obviously applies to the retiring Director General who could have been kept on by granting an extension like the Archæological Chemist in India?

Mr. J. D. Tyson: (a) and (b). Government have no information of the resolution.

(c) The Director General of Archæology was consulted regarding possible candidates in the Department. The Federal Public Service Commission were not consulted as regards the selection of Dr. Mortimer Wheeler as their advice is not required to be obtained as regards candidates selected through the High Commissioner.

(d) No. The age of Dr. Mortimer Wheeler is 53.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: May I know why the Director General of Archæology put it on paper that he had deserving men available in his Department and did the Government of India make any attempt to find out another Director General not from the Department but from the whole of India?

Mr. J. D. Tyson: The Director General of Archæology did not put anything on paper and all possible candidates from the whole of India were considered.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: In view of the fact that this gentleman, Dr. Mortimer Wheeler, is 53 years of age, does the Government of India hope to get him to train people who will be capable of being in charge of the Archæological Department? Since they could not train people during the last hundred years, do they hope now this gentleman will be able to train people in two years' time?

Mr. J. D. Tyson: He has been given an appointment for four years and we hope that he will be able to do a great deal of training in this period.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra: Did the Government of India advertise for this post at all?

Mr. J. D. Tyson: No, Sir.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: Why was not advertisement made?

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

RECRUITMENT OF LOWEST GRADE READERS IN GOVERNMENT OF INDIA PRESSES.

150. ***Mr. Muhammad Azhar Ali:** Will the Honourable the Labour Member kindly state:

(a) if it is not a fact that instructions to hold proper examinations for filling posts of readers in the lowest grade or class likely to fall vacant during the ensuing two years in all the Government of India Presses were issued by the Controller of Printing and Stationery (India) sometime in September, 1935, which had effect from the date of their issue, covering all those posts or vacancies which were not permanently filled, and also covering all those future vacancies as well which were anticipated or likely to fall vacant during the ensuing two years, either by retirement, death or otherwise;

(b) if the answer to (a) above is in the affirmative, if any examination was held accordingly in the year 1936 in all the Government of India Presses; and, if so, whether he proposes to place on the table of the House the names of the qualified candidates who appeared for such tests in all the Presses, showing the posts which those qualified candidates were holding at the time the results of the examinations were declared by the Managers, particularly mentioning whether such candidates were at that time officiating or temporary or permanent copyholders or revisers; and

(c) how many posts had fallen vacant, particularly in the Government of India Press, Simla, from September, 1935 to March, 1939, in the following categories:

(i) posts fallen vacant temporarily due to men proceeding on short leave in which officiating arrangements were made in lowest grade;

(ii) posts fallen vacant after the receipt of these instructions by the Manager in September, 1935, due to the death of readers; and

(iii) posts filled provisionally pending the result of the examination which was to be held in March 1936?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: With your permission, Sir, it is proposed to reply to Questions Nos. 150, 151 and 152 together.

The information asked for by the Honourable Member is being collected and will be laid on the table in due course.

RECRUITMENT OF LOWEST GRADE READERS IN GOVERNMENT INDIA PRESSES.

†151. ***Mr. Muhammad Azhar Ali:** If the enquiries contemplated in the preceding question reveal that certain deaths actually occurred in the Government of India Press, Simla, after the receipt of the Controller's instructions referred to above, will the Honourable the Labour Member kindly state whether such posts were filled by promotion of only those qualified candidates who had appeared for the test prescribed by the Controller and held in March 1936? If that was not the case, does the Honourable Member propose to make enquiries as to why such qualified candidates were deprived of promotions, and unqualified candidates were given preference in disregard of Government instructions? Are Government aware that these unqualified candidates should have held the posts tentatively till the qualified men were available for filling up these vacancies permanently, whereas these unqualified men were permanently fixed up in disregard of the instructions quoted above?

RECRUITMENT OF LOWEST GRADE READERS IN GOVERNMENT OF INDIA PRESSES.

†152. ***Mr. Muhammad Azhar Ali:** If the enquiries contemplated in the preceding two questions reveal that the Managers of the Presses have not complied with the instructions of the Controller referred to in the preceding question, will the Honourable the Labour Member kindly state:

(i) what action he proposes to take against such delinquents;

(ii) whether he is prepared to consider the cases of those qualified persons who were deprived of the posts to which they were entitled under these instructions, from the date of their passing the prescribed test held in March, 1936 and who were entitled to permanent posts on communal basis and whose case falls within the purview of "Direct Recruitment", *vide* paragraph 106(8)(b) and (c), pages 106-107 of the Government of India Presses Hand-Book, Chapter V—Communal Representation in Services—Section I—Summary of Rules; and

(iii) whether the posts so filled in violation of the Communal Representation Rules will be declared *null and void* and the persons entitled to them will be appointed to such posts with retrospective effect?

COMPLAINTS FORWARDED TO THE DELHI ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE HOARDING AND PROFITEERING ORDINANCE.

153. ***Sir F. E. James:** Will the Honourable Member for Industries and Civil Supplies be pleased to state:

(a) how many complaints under the Hoarding and Profiteering Prevention Ordinance have been passed on by his Department to the Delhi Administration for action since the Ordinance came into effect;

(b) how many prosecutions under the Ordinance have been instituted at the instance of the Delhi Administration;

(c) how many cases under (a) and (b) above, respectively, have been dealt with by the courts;

(d) the results of the prosecutions under (a) and (b) above; and

(e) what special arrangements, if any, have been made by the Delhi Administration to deal promptly and effectively with complaints made and substantiated under the Ordinance?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: (a) 14.

(b), (c) and (d). In four of the above cases sanction to prosecute has been given on behalf of the Provincial Administration under section 14 of the Ordinance, and these cases are now pending in court.

(e) A special Investigation and Prosecution Section has been formed in the office of the Director of Civil Supplies for the Delhi Province to deal with cases under this Ordinance and under certain other 'Control' orders, and the sanction

† For answer to this question, see answer to question No. 150.

of the Government of India has lately been accorded for the re-employment of a retired Superintendent of Police to be in charge of this section.

FIFTEEN-YEAR PLAN FOR DEVELOPMENT OF INDIA.

154. *Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi: (a) Will the Honourable the Food Member be pleased to state if the Government of India have examined the fifteen year plan for the development of India, published by prominent industrialists?

(b) Do the Government of India accept the principles underlying this plan? If not, why not?

(c) Do the Government of India propose to take this plan as a basis of discussion by the Post-War Reconstruction Policy Committees? If not, why not?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: (a) The Government of India have seen copies of the plan.

(b) and (c). The Government of India are collecting data and material required for the formulation of detailed policy and specific plans for post-war development. In formulating their policy and schemes, they will give due consideration not only to the proposals published in the fifteen year plan but also to such other suggestions as may be forthcoming.

BOOKING OF ORDERS FOR CAPITAL GOODS WITH THE UNITED KINGDOM.

155. *Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi: (a) Will the Honourable the Commerce Member be pleased to state whether it is a fact that orders for capital goods are being booked in this country to be placed with the United Kingdom?

(b) Is it a fact that one of the conditions of booking of such orders is that the industrialists have to pay a certain deposit which will be forfeited if the orders do not mature, and that there is no guarantee that the goods will be delivered or delivered at prices originally fixed?

(c) Is it a fact that the Government of India are already reserving a portion of India's sterling balance in lieu of these orders?

(d) Is it a fact that the Government of India are inducing and encouraging Indian industrialists to book the orders immediately?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: The answer to all parts of the question is in the negative. Industrial concerns have, however, been invited to intimate their post-war requirements of capital goods (machinery) so as to enable Government to assist such industries in securing priority for their requirements if they so desire.

REGULATION OF TRADE BETWEEN INDIA AND THE MIDDLE EASTERN COUNTRIES.

156. *Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi: Will the Honourable the Commerce Member be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Major Brown, a representative of the Middle East Governments, had discussion with the Government of India on the question of supply of goods to the Middle Eastern Countries;

(b) whether it is a fact that, as a result of this discussion, decisions are reached whereby trade between India and the Middle Eastern Countries will be regulated;

(c) whether the Government of India has secured an assurance that the trade between India and the Middle Eastern Countries will be allowed through the normal Indian trade channels only, and that the United Kingdom Commercial Corporation or the United States Commercial Corporation will be considered as normal trade channels for this purpose;

(d) whether, as a result of this discussion, export licence from India will be automatically covered by an import licence from those countries;

(e) whether the Government of India have secured an assurance that the grant of export licence by the Government of India will not be conditional on the prior obtaining of an import licence by the importer at the opposite end, and that the export licence will be given by the Government of India to the Indian exporter without requiring him to produce an evidence that import licence has already been given to the importer in those countries;

(f) whether it is a fact that, as a result of this discussion, prices of Indian goods to be sold in those countries are to be fixed;

(g) if the reply to (f) is in the affirmative, the commodities in regard to which prices are to be fixed, and whether the selling price of that commodity in the importing country is to be fixed, or that the exporting price of the article is also to be fixed in this country; and

(h) if the Government of India have agreed to fix the export price of an article destined for those countries, whether the Government of India have secured a similar fixation of prices of goods to be exported from the Middle Eastern Countries to this country; and, if so, the commodities in regard to which export prices in those countries will be fixed?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: (a) and (b). There were no discussions with Major Brown or with any representative of the "Middle East Government". Presumably the Honourable Member refers to the visit to India of Major Smith, a representative of the Middle East Supply Centre, in January 1944. Government of India have had discussions with him regarding the scheme for co-ordinating Indian export licences with import licences granted in the Middle East Countries.

(c) to (e). The attention of the Honourable Member is invited to the terms of the notice issued to exporters in this country on the subject, a copy of which will be found in the Library of the House.

(f) No. The Middle East Countries have adopted certain general measures of price control in respect of imported articles. But we have no complete details of the measures adopted. In any case the question of fixation of import prices in the Middle East Countries was not discussed with Major Smith.

(g) Does not arise.

(h) The Government of India have not agreed to fix the export price of any article destined to the Middle East Countries. The other parts of the question do not arise.

Sir F. E. James: May I ask whether India is either represented on the Middle East Supply Council or is permitted to have a representative sitting at the meetings of that Council in view of the importance of this area to Indian overseas trade?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: I will not be able to answer this question off-hand; but I will be able to give the Honourable Member the information he wants tomorrow after getting the details about it.

ACTION ON RECOMMENDATIONS OF SPECIAL HAJ ENQUIRY REPORT.

157. *Seth Yusuf Abdoola Haroon: Will the Honourable Member for Indians Overseas please state:

(a) if the proceedings of the Haj Conference will be placed in the Library of the Indian Legislature for the use of Members;

(b) what steps have so far been taken to construct the proposed *musajarkhana* for Hajees at Calcutta; and

(c) which of the recommendations made by Mr. Rahim, in his Special Haj Enquiry Report have been accepted by Government, and what action has so far been taken in connection with such recommendations?

The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare: (a) A copy of the proceedings of the Haj Conference held in May, 1943, has been placed in the Library. A copy of the proceedings of the second Haj Conference held in January 1944, will be placed in it when printed copies are available.

(b) The attention of the Honourable Member is invited to the reply given on the 13th November, 1943, to Kham Bahadur Shaikh Fazl-i-Haq Piracha's starred question No. 154.

(c) I lay on the table a statement containing the necessary information.

Statement showing recommendations in the Special Haj Inquiry Report accepted by Government and action taken on them.

Recommendation No.	Action taken.
1	Port Haj Committees have been asked to arrange for the medical examination of foreign pilgrims during the outward pilgrim season.
2	The Scindia Steam Navigation Company agree to continue the concessions in future. The Mogul Line have no present intention of discontinuing the concessions for children.
4	Will be given effect to after the war.
5	Rule 117 of the Indian Pilgrim Ships Rules has been amended.
12	Shipping Companies have been asked to give effect to the recommendation.
15	The first part has been accepted and the shipping companies have been informed ; the last part of the recommendation regarding the provision of shelves is still under consideration.
17	Messrs. Turner Morrison and Company have been asked to provide a microphone with loud speakers in their ships when carrying pilgrims. Messrs. Scindia Steam Navigation Company are prepared to install loud speakers on their ships. (It is not proposed to ask Shipping Companies to provide radio sets at present).
18	Draft amendment to the Indian Pilgrim Ships Rules has been notified for comments.
19	Shipping Companies have been asked to erect temporary hospitals before the commencement of the pilgrim season so that the arrangements may be examined by the Government Surveyor and the Port Health Officer.
20	The Shipping Companies have been asked to advertise for Muslim doctors and also to consult the Shipping Masters at ports.
23	Rule 156 (4) of the Indian Pilgrim Ships Rules has been amended.
24	Necessary amendment to the Indian Pilgrim Ships Rules will be issued shortly.
26	Necessary instructions to the Port Health Officers have been issued.
28	The Shipping Companies have been asked to make efforts to employ Bengali cooks.
29—32	The relevant rules in the Pilgrim Ships Rules have been amended.
33	The Shipping Companies have been requested to make arrangements for the sale of cooled drinks when refrigerators are available and to suggest amendments to Rule 81 of the Indian Pilgrim Ships Rules, if necessary.
40	Port Haj Committees have been requested to make the necessary arrangements but not to exercise compulsion on pilgrims.
42	Facilities will be provided, but immunisation will be purely voluntary.
44	Port Haj Committees have been asked to undertake propaganda in favour of depositing their heavy luggage in the ships' hold and to collect it on the day fixed for loading the luggage.
47	It has been decided to acquire 2 plots of land adjoining the Camp and the Sind Government have been asked to take the necessary acquisition proceedings. Reconstruction of the Camp has been deferred till the end of the war.
52 and 80	The recommendations have been brought to the notice of the Port and Provincial Haj Committees.
61	Necessary instructions have been issued to the Port Haj Committees and the British Legation, Jeddah.
62	The necessary instructions will be issued shortly to the Port Haj Committees and Shipping Companies. The Indian Pilgrim Ships Rules are being amended.
63	The draft of the form of the report to be submitted by an Amir-ul-Haj has been referred to the Port Haj Committees for comments.
64	Provincial Governments have been asked to amend the rules.
66, 67 and 68.	The Provincial Governments concerned have been asked to give effect to the recommendations.
73	Necessary instructions have been issued to the Port Haj Committees of Bombay and Calcutta.
77	The Port Haj Committees have been asked to supply copies of instructions to pilgrims and notices of Importance to provincial and local Haj Committees on the regional basis.
82	This recommendation will be given effect to after the war.

Syed Ghulam Bhik Nairang: With regard to part (c) of the question, will the Honourable Member be good enough to tell us what steps have been taken to implement the recommendation regarding the appointment of a Pilgrim Officer in the Government of India Secretariat?

The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare: The recommendation regarding the creation of a permanent post of a Pilgrim Officer is at present under consideration and a temporary officer is now employed on Haj work.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: With regard to part (c) of the question, may I know what steps has the Government taken since the last answer was given with regard to *musafirkhanas*?

The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare: All aspects of this case are under correspondence with the Government of Bengal. When we receive a reply from them, all these things will be carefully considered.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: When will that be? How much time will the Honourable Member take?

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Order, Order.

Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi: The Honourable Member said on the 13th of November that the question of the construction of the *musafir khanas* at Calcutta was under the consideration of the Government of Bengal and we are now in the month of February. Has he not received any reply from the Government of Bengal in the meantime? If not, why not?

The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare: After that, our Pilgrim Officer visited Calcutta and had discussions with all concerned. We are now awaiting the reply from the Government of Bengal.

Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi: The Honourable Member is aware that this question of the construction of *musafir khanas* has been going on for the last three years and a plot of land was secured in Calcutta, but nothing has been done; that plot of land will not be available if urgent steps are not taken to secure it.

The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare: We shall remind the Bengal Government.

Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi: It is not the function of the Government of Bengal; it is the function of the Government of India. The Honourable Member is responsible to have *musafir khanas* in Calcutta. It is the responsibility of the Government of India. They have constructed *musafir khanas* in Karachi and they should also do the same in Calcutta.

The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare: I am afraid, Sir, it is not a question.

FACILITIES FOR EXPORTS OF BRITISH COTTON MANUFACTURES TO INDIA.

158. ***Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari:** Will the Honourable the Commerce Member please state:

(a) whether his attention has been drawn to the Annual Report of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, wherein it is stated that "the British Government has promised to obtain all facilities for export of cotton manufactures to India, particularly in the matter of procurement of Indian import licences and shipping space";

(b) whether His Majesty's Government have approached the Government of India to obtain these facilities;

(c) whether His Majesty's Government have made any proposals to the Government of India to secure the imports of textiles from the United Kingdom;

(d) if the answer to (b) and (c) is in the affirmative, the specific facilities demanded by His Majesty's Government from the Government of India, or the specific proposals put forward by His Majesty's Government to the Government of India; and

(e) whether the Honourable Member is aware of the fact that the assurance of His Majesty's Government to obtain all facilities for exports of British cotton manufactures to India has led the Manchester Chamber of Commerce to the expectation that the accumulation of sterling balances in India's favour will be used up for bringing such goods from Britain to India?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: (a) and (b). No, Sir.

(c) In accordance with their policy of increased imports of consumers' goods, Government placed a comparatively small demand on the United Kingdom for imports of certain textiles. His Majesty's Government are meeting this demand as far as possible.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) No.

Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari: What does the Honourable Member mean by "certain textiles"?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: Such textiles as are not available in India and the quantity is not more than 75 tons in six months.

Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari: Will the Honourable Member tell the House what those textiles are?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: I am not a specialist in that line to know all these details.

APPOINTMENT OF BRIGADIER WHEELER AS DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF ARCHAEOLOGY.

159. ***Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari:** (a) Will the Secretary for Education, Health and Lands please state whether his attention was drawn to an item of news that appeared in the *Statesman* of the 3rd December, last, about the appointment of a Brigadier Wheeler as Director General of Indian Antiquities?

(b) Was a new post in the Archaeological Department being created for Brigadier Wheeler, or is he to replace the existing incumbent holding the post of Director General of Archaeology, and, if so, when?

(c) If it is the intention of Government that this Brigadier Wheeler is to fill the post of Director General of Archaeology, have Government examined the claims of the existing officers in the Department to fill the post?

(d) If the answer to (c) above is in the affirmative, have Government consulted the existing Director General on this matter, and is it proposed to place his opinion on the table?

(e) Does the appointment of the Director General of Archaeology come within the scope of the work of the Federal Public Service Commission? If so, have they been consulted in regard to the appointment of Brigadier Wheeler.

(f) What are the special qualifications of Brigadier Wheeler for holding this post? Has he any knowledge of the ancient Indian history, and is he familiar with any of the ancient Indian languages and scripts?

(g) What are the terms on which he has been appointed?

(h) What are the reasons that made Government ignore the recommendations of Sir Leonard Woolley in regard to the person to be appointed as Director General of Archaeology?

Mr. J. D. Tyson: (a) Yes.

(b) Dr. Mortimer Wheeler has been appointed to succeed Rao Bahadur K. N. Dikshit as Director General of Archaeology.

(c) Yes.

(d) The Director General was consulted. Government do not disclose the opinions given by their officers.

(e) The Honourable Member is referred to the answer just given to part (c) of starred question No. 149.

(f) As regards the first part of the question reference is invited to the reply just given to part (c) of starred question No. 148. Dr. Mortimer Wheeler may not have a specialised knowledge of ancient Indian history and languages but he is an archaeologist of the first rank with wide experience of archaeological practice and is, therefore, well equipped for the work of reorganising the Department.

(g) He has been appointed for a period of four years.

(h) Sir Leonard Woolley recommended the appointment of an Adviser to the present Director General. Government considered that such an appointment would be likely to lead to administrative difficulties and that the better course would be to appoint a specially selected person with the requisite knowledge and experience as Director General for a limited period with a view to the reorganisation of the Department and the training of staff.

Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari: With reference to part (b), the Honourable Member did not tell us when this officer will take charge?

Mr. J. D. Tyson: He is going to be on special duty for two months and then take charge. Probably he will take charge about the beginning of May.

Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari: With reference to part (f) may I know whether the knowledge of this gentleman on modern archaeology extends only to the Roman ruins in England?

Mr. J. D. Tyson: That has been his principal subject, but the point about him is his knowledge of modern archaeological methods.

Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari: May I ask if this brilliant professor had any experience of sappers and miners work connected with the army and that entitles him to be a modern archaeologist.

Mr. J. D. Tyson: The Honourable Member will understand that there are many professional men now in the armed forces in Great Britain. He was a member of the Territorial Army—gunners, not sappers—before the war.

Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari: May I ask if he has any knowledge, not a very thorough knowledge perhaps of Indian history or Indian languages?

Mr. J. D. Tyson: I would not care to deny him any knowledge, but I do not know that he has any knowledge of them.

STOCKS OF NEWSPRINT.

160. ***Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari:** Will the Honourable Member for Industries and Civil Supplies, please state:

(a) the position of stocks of newsprint in the country, as compared with the position of stocks at the time when the Government fixed the size and prices of newspapers, under the following headings (i) with the newspapers, and (ii) in the market with newsprint dealers;

(b) the quantity of newsprint imported into the country during the twelve months ending the 31st December, 1943;

(c) whether Government consider it desirable to allow the present tariff, of price and the relative size of newspapers to remain unaltered, or whether they periodically examine the question of giving the public better value for the money spent by them on newspapers; and

(d) whether Government realise that the continuance of the present scale of prices of newspapers militate unduly against the well-established papers with a large advertising clientele who find it necessary to restrict space available for news and at the same time turn down advertisements as the market open to them will not permit of any increase in the price of their newspapers?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: (a) The price-pages schedules of the Newspaper Control Order, 1942, have been amended from time to time. The last principal amendments in these schedules were made at the end of February, 1943. A statement showing the stocks of newsprint at the end of March, 1943 and at present is placed on the table of the House.

(b) About 10,000 tons.

(c) and (d). Government would welcome lower prices for newspapers but they are unable to make a permanent increase in the permissible number of pages and in the newsprint ration of newspapers as the newsprint supply position cannot yet be considered wholly satisfactory. As a temporary measure Government have already allowed certain concessions to newspapers, which are set out in a press note dated 16th February, 1944, a copy of which is available in the Library of the House.

Statement.

	Newsprint with dealers	Newsprint with Newspapers.	Total.
	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.
At the end of March, 1943	649	6,830	7,479
At the end of January, 1944	792	9,780	10,572

Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari: In deciding to continue the restriction of the size of newspapers, has the Honourable Member taken into account the position of the consumer public in this matter and has he considered the fact that the newspapers are making a lot of money, and, will the Honourable Member consider the question of lowering the price of newspapers so as to benefit the consuming public?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: I take it that at the time when these schedules were prepared, all these things must have been looked into. If my Honourable friend wants the question further looked into, I shall be pleased to do so.

Mr. Lalchand Navarai: Is the Honourable Member aware that the price of newspapers has been raised and is the Honourable Member going to help the public in that direction by giving them more print paper?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: I have already answered that question.

Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari: With reference to part (d) has the Honourable Member considered the question raised from the point of view of the present restrictions militating against well established papers with a large advertising clientele?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: I am not aware that it unduly militates against well established papers with a large advertising clientele.

Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari: Now that the question has been raised, will the Honourable Member make enquiries?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: I would look into the matter.

Mr. E. L. C. Gwilt: Will the Honourable Member be pleased to give details of quotas of newsprint that have been given to newspapers?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: It is very difficult to answer off hand. I shall certainly look into the question and I will inform him in a day or two whether we will be able to get the information collected within the time allotted to us.

APPOINTMENT OF A EUROPEAN AS DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF ARCHAEOLOGY.

161. *Bhai Parma Nand: Will the Secretary for Education, Health and Lands be pleased to state:

(a) if it is a fact that Government have taken a European gentleman from outside as Head of the Archaeological Department, in supersession of persons who have served the Department in their career; and

(b) if the answer to (a) be in the affirmative, how Government propose to compensate them for depriving them of their right on account of this supersession?

Mr. J. D. Tyson: (a) Dr. Mortimer Wheeler has been appointed to succeed the present Director General of Archaeology.

(b) Government have not considered the question of compensation. If any claim for compensation is made Government will consider it.

UNSTARRED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

†45—49.

REQUISITIONING ACCOMMODATION IN SHAHDARA, DELHI, FOR STAFF OF UPPER JUMNA VALLEY ELECTRICITY COMPANY.

50. Mr. Ananga Mohan Dam: Will the Honourable the Labour Member please state:

(a) if it is a fact that the Revenue Officer, Delhi Province, asked the Tehsildar, Delhi, in his letter No. 13624/Mis., dated the 24th November, 1943, to take an undertaking from the Upper Jumna Valley Electricity Company, Limited, for the compensation to be paid for the requisition of residential quarters required for the use of the staff of the said company within the town of Shahdara, Delhi Province;

(b) the description of the land, and of quarters requisitioned for the said purpose;

(c) the enactment under which the land and quarters were requisitioned;

(d) the justification for the requisition, and whether the staff of the said company was not residing in quarters at Shahdara;

(e) whether the staff from their present office, post and residence are not carrying out or discharging their duties efficiently; and

(f) in what respect the said staff claims a preference under the Defence of India Act Rules and the nature of the reports received by the District Magistrate regarding any apprehension of the break down of the supply of electricity to the town by the public in the event the quarters are not requisitioned for the said staff?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: The information asked for is being collected and will be laid on the table of the House in due course.

AUTHORITY RESPONSIBLE FOR SANITATION OF LAND BETWEEN RAILWAY BRIDGE, SHAHDARA, AND GRAND TRUNK ROAD.

51. Mr. Ananga Mohan Dam: Will the Secretary for Education, Health and Lands please state the authority (Central Public Works Department, District Board, Municipal Committee or the owners of buildings) who is responsible for the sanitation of the land lying unoccupied on either side of the Feeder Road in front of the buildings between the Railway Bridge, Shahdara, and the Grand Trunk Road?

Mr. J. D. Tyson: The information has been called for and a reply will be furnished to the House when it is received.

POSTPONEMENT OF ELECTIONS TO SHAHDARA NOTIFIED AREA COMMITTEE.

52. Mr. Ananga Mohan Dam: Will the Secretary for Education, Health and Lands please state if it is a fact that the election of city fathers in place of the present nominated members of the Shahdara Notified Area Committee has been postponed indefinitely? If so, what are the reasons therefor? If not, when is it to be held?

Mr. J. D. Tyson: The information has been called for and a reply will be furnished to the House when it is received.

SUPPLY OF FOODSTUFFS TO RESIDENTS OF SHAHDARA, DELHI.

53. Mr. Ananga Mohan Dam: Will the Honourable Member for Food please state the nature of arrangements made for the supply and distribution of foodstuffs to the residents of Shahdara, Delhi Province, the export of which has been prohibited from the city of Delhi by an order of the Government? If no arrangements are made, what are the reasons therefor?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: In order to prevent leakage of foodgrains from the Punjab-Delhi area into the United Provinces the booking and despatch of foodgrains to Shahdara without the permission of the Assistant Director of Civil Supplies, Delhi, has been prohibited. Under the Foodgrains Control Order 1942 licences have been granted to twelve shopkeepers in Shahdara. The requirements of the Shahdara population have been carefully estimated and weekly permits are issued to these licensees through the Secretary of the Shahdara Municipal Committee enabling them to obtain foodgrains from Delhi city.

IRREGULARITIES REPORTED UNDER PAYMENT OF WAGES ACT AGAINST EAST INDIAN RAILWAY.

54. Mr. Ananga Mohan Dam: (a) Will the Honourable Member for Labour please state the nature of irregularities reported by the Inspector under the Payment of Wages Act against the East Indian Railway since 1938, and the action taken thereon by the Government, by the Railway Board and by the Railway Administration, respectively? If no action has been taken, what are the reasons therefor?

(b) Have any of these irregularities been repeated in reports from year to year?

(c) What action has been taken on the irregularities referred to in part (b)? If not, why not?

(d) What are the reasons for not taking proceedings under the Payment of Wages Act against the Railway Administration for the repetition of irregularities?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: (a) and (b). Information is being obtained and will be placed on the table of the House in due course.

(c) The irregularities detected were brought to the notice of Railway Administration for rectification.

(d) Government does not consider it necessary to proceed formally under the Act when satisfactory settlement in individual cases can be otherwise achieved.

NON-PAYMENT OF WAGES TO WORKERS BY LOADING CONTRACTOR AT DELHI-SHAHDARA RAILWAY STATION.

55. Mr. Ananga Mohan Dam: Will the Honourable Member for Labour please state:

(a) if it is a fact that in the past workers employed by the Loading and Unloading Contractor at Delhi-Shahdara Railway Station on the North Western Railway were not paid their wages;

(b) if it is a fact that the delay in payment and the non-payment of wages were reported by the Inspector of the Railway Labour;

(c) if it is a fact that the Inspector under the Payment of Wages Act suggested the prosecution of the said contractor, and of stoppage of the payment due to him by the Railway Administration;

(d) if it is a fact that the Railway Administration paid him against the said suggestion and the Railway Board refused his prosecution under the Payment of Wages Act; and

(e) if it is a fact that the said workers have not received their wages upto now for that period?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: (a) to (e). Information is being obtained and will be placed on the Table of the House in due course.

ELECTRICITY SUPPLY RATES WITHIN THE DELHI PROVINCE.

56. Mr. Ananga Mohan Dam: Will the Honourable Member for Labour please state:

(a) the rate of charges for the electric power supplied for domestic purposes in the areas of (i) New Delhi, (ii) Delhi Fort, (iii) Delhi City, (iv) Delhi Civil Lines, (v) Delhi Cantonment, (vi) Shahdara Delhi, and (vii) other places within the Delhi Province;

(b) the reasons for the difference in rates, if any, in those areas;

(c) the rates on which the Delhi Central Electric Power Authority, Limited, supply the power in bulk to the Delhi Electric Supply and Traction Company, Limited, for distribution for domestic purposes;

(d) the rates on which the Delhi Electric Supply and Traction Company, Limited, distribute the power to the consumers for domestic purposes;

(e) the rates on which the Irrigation Department of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh supply the power in bulk to the Upper Jumna Valley Electricity Company, Limited, for distribution for domestic purposes;

(f) the rate on which the Upper Jumna Valley Electricity Company, Limited, distribute the power to the consumers at Shahdara Delhi for domestic purposes;

(g) the reason for the difference in the rate of the Delhi Electric Supply and Traction Company, Limited, and of the Upper Jumna Valley Electricity Company, Limited, for the distribution of power for domestic purposes; and

(h) whether those areas are not under the Central Electric Power Control Board or Central Electricity Board or the Delhi Central Electric Power Authority, Limited; if so, the reasons therefor?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: Information is being obtained and will be laid on the table in due course.

TRANSFERRED STARRED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.†**CONTROL OVER APPELLATE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONERS OF INCOME-TAX.**

125. *Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: (a) Will the Honourable the Finance Member be pleased to state if it is a fact that while creating Appellate Income-Tax Assistant Commissioners, it was intended to recruit such officers from the Judicial Department or those possessing judicial qualifications?

(b) Under whose control, for the purpose of promotion, leave and other administrative functions are these Appellate Commissioners?

†The meetings of the Assembly that were to be held on the 17th and the 18th February, 1944, having been cancelled, the answers to starred questions for those days were, in pursuance of convention, laid on the table of the House to-day.—*Ed. of D.*

(c) Do Government propose to put these Appellate Assistant Commissioners for appointment, promotion and such other functions under the control of the Legislative Department of the Government of India?

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: (a) No Sir.

(b) and (c). I would refer the Honourable Member to my reply to parts (a) and (d) of his starred question No. 66 on the 12th February, 1943.

UNCONFIRMED INCOME-TAX OFFICERS AND INSPECTORS, ETC., IN SIND.

126. *Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: Will the Honourable the Finance Member be pleased to state:

(a) how many permanent and how many unconfirmed Income-Tax Officers are working in Sind;

(b) since how long they have remained unconfirmed; and whether Government propose to confirm them; if not, why not; and

(c) how many Inspectors and Examiners are yet unconfirmed, and since how long each of them has remained unconfirmed?

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: (a), (b) and (c). A statement is laid on the table of the House. The question of confirming these Income-tax Officers is under consideration.

<i>Statement.</i>		
<i>Income-tax Officers.</i>		
Permanent	. . . . .	3
<i>Unconfirmed—</i>		
Officiating for more than :		
5 years . . . . .	. . . . .	1
3 years . . . . .	. . . . .	1
1 year . . . . .	. . . . .	3
Officiating for less than 1 year . . . . .	. . . . .	2
		7
<i>Inspectors and Examiners.</i>		
Officiating for more than :		
6 years . . . . .	. . . . .	1
5 years . . . . .	. . . . .	1
3 years . . . . .	. . . . .	1
1 year . . . . .	. . . . .	4
Officiating for less than 1 year . . . . .	. . . . .	2
		9

ILL-TREATMENT METED OUT TO SARDAR SARDUL SINGH CAVEESHAR.

127. *Sardar Sant Singh: (a) Will the Honourable the Home Member please state if it is a fact that in the petition Sardar Sardul Singh Caveeshar stated that though he had sent petitions to the Home Member, Government of India, and some other members of the Viceroy's Executive Council drawing their attention to illegal treatment meted out to him during his detention in the Lahore Fort, these petitions were not forwarded by the authorities concerned to the Members of the Viceroy's Executive Council, and that he based this statement on the replies of the Home Member to the questions of Maulana Zafar Ali when it was stated in the House three months after the submission of the petition that no such petition was received by the Home Member?

(b) What are the reasons that when a person is detained under orders of the Government of India, members of Government are kept in dark about the treatment meted out to him and his petition to Members of that Government are not transmitted to them?

(c) What action do Government propose to take on the petitions of Sardar Sardul Singh Caveeshar to the Home Member and the Governor General in Council? If not, why not?

(d) Is it a fact that in the petitions to the Governor General in Council, the Home Member and other members of the Government of India and to the High Court, Sardar Sardul Singh Caveeshar made serious allegations against

certain C. I. D. officers of the Punjab and of the Government of India, about the illegal and criminal treatment meted out to him during his detention in the Lahore Fort?

The Honourable Sir Reginald Maxwell: I would invite attention to my replies to the Honourable Member's questions Nos. 102, 103 and 104 on February 14th. Government do not propose to take any action since the allegations made by Sardul Singh Caveeshar are without foundation.

ILL-TREATMENT METED OUT TO SARDAR SARDUL SINGH CAVEESHAR.

128. *Sardar Sant Singh: (a) Will the Honourable the Home Member please state if it is a fact that Sardar Sardul Singh Caveeshar applied to the Home Member for a copy of orders of the Government of India ordering his detention under section 26 of the Defence of India Act, but he was informed by the C. I. D. that no such orders could be furnished to him?

(b) Is it a fact that Mr. Wace saw Sardar Sardul Singh Caveeshar in August, 1942, in the Lahore Fort and told him that if he did not tell him within three days what the Deputy Inspector General wanted, he would create in the Fort conditions of a concentration camp?

(c) Is it a fact that when Mr. Caveeshar made no statement during those three days, he was tortured in the manner complained of by him in his letters to the Governor General in Council, Home Member and other officials, and which letters were not allowed by the Punjab Government to reach such officials?

(d) What was the conversation that took place between the Deputy Inspector General, C. I. D., and Sardar Sardul Singh Caveeshar in the Lahore Fort? Was the Government of India consulted before Mr. Wace saw Mr. Caveeshar and threatened in the manner complained of by him in his *Habeas Corpus* petition to the High Court,

(e) Is it a fact that one of Mr. Caveeshar's Assistant Pandit Ram Rup Sharma has been detained under section 26 of the Defence of India Act?

The Honourable Sir Reginald Maxwell: (a) I would invite attention to my reply to the Honourable Member's question No. 103 on February 14th.

(b) and (c). No.

(d) The conversation was confined to matters connected with Sardul Singh's interrogation.

(e) Yes, an order of the Punjab Government.

FILMS OF PRESIDENTIAL PROCESSIONS OF CERTAIN ORGANISATIONS.

129. *Sardar Mangal Singh: Will the Honourable Member for Information and Broadcasting please state whether it is a fact that films of the presidential processions of all or any of the following organisations were taken during December last at the occasion of their annual sessions under Government orders:

- (1) All-India Liberal federation;
- (2) All-India Muslim League;
- (3) All-India Hindu Mahasabha; and
- (4) All-India Depressed Classes Conference?

The Honourable Sir Sultan Ahmed: With your permission, Sir, I propose to answer this question along with question No. 132 later on.

ILLNESS OF SARDAR NIRANJAN SINGH TALIB, A SECURITY PRISONER.

130. *Sardar Mangal Singh: Will the Honourable the Home Member please state:

(a) whether Sardar Niranjana Singh Talib, a security prisoner in the Punjab, was transferred to Mayo Hospital for treatment;

(b) the disease from which he was suffering;

(c) whether he was re-transferred to jail after treatment; and

(d) whether he has now completely recovered from the disease from which he was suffering?

The Honourable Sir Reginald Maxwell: (a) Yes.

(b) He was suffering from chronic rhinitis.

(c) Yes.

(d). No. The treatment is being continued in jail.

FAMILY ALLOWANCE FOR SARDAR NIRANJAN SINGH TALIB.

131. *Sardar Mangal Singh: Will the Honourable the Home Member please state:

(a) whether any family allowance is being paid to the family of Sardar Niranjana Singh Talib; if so, what?

(b) whether Government are prepared to reconsider his case with a view to increasing this amount, particularly in view of high prices; and

(c) whether Sardar Niranjana Singh Talib applied to Government that he may be kept at Amritsar or at least Lahore so that his people could interview him without much inconvenience and expenditure; if so, whether the same was accepted?

The Honourable Sir Reginald Maxwell: (a) and (b). Yes. His family allowance which was fixed at Rs. 75 per mensem has since been increased by 50 per cent. in view of the high prices.

(c) No. He is, however, at present confined in the Central Jail, Lahore.

FILM OF MUSLIM LEAGUE PRESIDENTIAL PROCESSION AT KARACHI.

132. *Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: Will the Honourable Member for Information and Broadcasting be pleased to state:

(a) if his attention has been drawn to the *Roy's Weekly*, dated the 23rd January, 1944, referring to the ovation given to Qaid-e-Azam when he presided over the Muslim League session held recently at Karachi;

(b) who authorised the bringing out of the film of his procession in Karachi;

(c) the purpose of singling out Qaid-e-Azam's procession, when such processions of other leaders were not so filmed;

(d) if it is a fact that the Information and Broadcasting Department had blacked out the Congress, the Mahasabha and even the Liberal Federation from such publicity; if so, why?

(e) the reasons for the use of public money on the publicity of the Muslim League session; and

(f) what advantage the Indian Government or the British Government gained by such advertisement?

The Honourable Sir Sultan Ahmed: (a) Yes.

(b) The Central Government.

(c) and (d). There has been no question of singling out any procession or any party for publicity. 'Indian News Parade' which is the Government of India's organisation for the production and distribution of a weekly news reel has been authorised to film items of news value for the news reel. It endeavours to cover everything photographically practicable as far as the available camera staff and facilities allow. The meeting of the Liberal Federation could not be filmed because lighting facilities were inadequate in the Cama Oriental Institute where it was held. An attempt was made to film the Presidential procession of the Hindu Mahasabha but the cameraman was badly mauled by the crowd and camera damaged in subsequent lathi charge. The Scheduled Caste Conference at Cawnpore could not be filmed because the regional cameraman was down with fever at the time and the cameramen elsewhere had other important assignments. As for the Indian National Congress, there has been no such procession or meeting of that party since the inception of the Government news reel in September 1943.

(e) and (f). Do not arise.

REPRESENTATION BY THE SOCIETY OF REGISTERED ACCOUNTANTS IN NORTHERN INDIA.

133. *Mr. Ananga Mohan Dam: Will the Honourable the Finance Member please state:

(a) whether the Central Board of Revenue has received any representation from the Society of Registered Accountants in Northern India about assessment of or profits on properties, including business premises, under Rule 2(a) of the Schedule to the Income-tax Act; and

(b) if the reply to (a) be in the affirmative, what reply has been given; and if the reply was in the negative, whether executive instructions will be

given pending amendment of the law that the same is not to be considered as income since the receipts will be capital in nature?

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: (a) Yes.

(b) The point raised by the Society is being considered.

EXTENSIONS OF SERVICE TO SUBORDINATE RAILWAY STAFF.

134. *Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: Will the Honourable Member for Railways be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the policy of giving extension to the subordinate Railway staff beyond the age of 55 has been revised, and no extensions are now given to them;

(b) if the reply to part (a) above be in the negative, the figures of the subordinate staff on the North Western Railway who are in grades above the lowest grade, and were given extension of service on or before the 1st January, 1944;

(c) if the reply to part (a) above be in the affirmative, how it is that Train Examiners are still being given extension of service on the North Western Railway, or have been recalled after retirement;

(d) how many such Train Examiners have been given extension or have been recalled and were in service on the 1st January, 1944;

(e) whether they have been provided against the ordinary or the super-numerary posts; if against ordinary posts, why the claims of persons awaiting chances of promotion from the lower to the higher grades are overlooked; and

(f) whether the Honourable Member proposes to give relief to the Train Examiners referred to in part (e) above; if not, why not; and if so, what kind of relief is proposed?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: (a) No.

(b) As far as can readily be ascertained, 101 subordinates in grades higher than the lowest had been granted extensions on the North Western Railway up to 1st January, 1944.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) Four who had been given extension and two who had been recalled from leave preparatory to retirement.

(e) These six men were against regular cadre posts. As regards the second part, as there was serious shortage in the category, it was necessary to retain available personnel and any postponement of promotion which this may cause is inevitable.

(f) No, because Government have never accepted the view that the grant of an extension created a right to compensation on the part of any one expecting to succeed to the post.

DEPUTATION TO RUSSIA TO STUDY HER CULTURE.

135. *Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: Will the Foreign Secretary please state if Government propose to send a deputation of professors and a batch of students to Russia to get this country acquainted with its culture, system of education and industrial methods? If not, why not?

Mr. O. K. Caroe: Not at present. No response has been received from the Soviet Government to earlier suggestions that delegations from India might visit Russia during the war, and it may be assumed that the Soviet Government's preoccupations with their successful struggle against the Nazi Armies do not permit them at this juncture to welcome delegations whose business is not immediately connected with the active prosecution of the war.

FACILITY OF MAIL TRAVEL TO PRIVILEGE TICKET HOLDERS.

136. *Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: Will the Honourable Member for Railways be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Railway employees holding tickets in exchange for Privilege Ticket Orders are allowed to travel by mail and express trains carrying passengers of the class for which the P. T. O. ticket is held;

(b) if it is a fact that the employees, referred to in part (a) above, are not allowed to travel by mail trains, when fares for travel by mail trains are a bit higher than those for ordinary third class travel;

(c) if it is proposed to afford facility of mail travel to Privilege Ticket holders by the payment of difference between the ordinary and mail fares; if not, why not; and

(d) on which Class I Railways, different fares for ordinary and mail third class travel exist, and whether the North Western Railway have made any representation to such Railways in terms of part (c) above; if so, with what result; if not, if it is proposed to refer the matter to the Indian Railways Conference Association for a common agreement?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: (a) and (b). The rule in this connection is that:

(a) first class privilege tickets are available by any train carrying passengers;

(b) second class privilege tickets are available by mail trains to:

(i) employees drawing Rs. 400 per mensem and over;

(ii) employees drawing Rs. 176 per mensem and less than Rs. 400 when travelling 600 miles and over; and

(iii) employees travelling on medical certificate at the issuing General Manager's discretion.

(c) intermediate and third class privilege tickets are not available by mail trains.

(c) No, because of the limited accommodation on mail trains and the pressure on such accommodation.

(d) The following class I railways have separate scales for third class fares by (1) mail and express and (2) trains other than mail or express:

B., B. & C. I.,

B. N.,

G. I. P.,

Jodhpur,

M. & S. M.,

Mysore State, and

S. I.

As regards the second part, Government are informed that no representation has been made by the N. W. Railway to other railways on the subject and for the reason given in part (c) above it is not proposed to refer the matter to the Indian Railway Conference Association.

AMERICAN ORDER FOR HESSIAN OF JUNE 1943.

137. *Mr. K. C. Neogy: Will the Honourable the Supply Member be pleased to refer to starred question No. 17 of the 8th November, 1943, and his answer thereto, and state:

(a) whether it is a fact that on the 14th June, 1943, the Adviser on Jute Supplies on behalf of the Government of the United States of America placed an order in India for 70 crores of yards of hessian at rates below the then market price;

(b) whether it is a fact that the Washington representative of Economic Warfare in India on behalf of the Government of the United States of America refused to pay any price for the said hessian above the domestic ceiling price in the United States of America and that the Government of India supported him in this attitude;

(c) whether it is a fact that the above order was classed as a war order and, as such, given priority over others;

(d) whether the Government of India satisfied themselves that this was really an order exclusively for the purposes of war effort, and was not intended to supply the domestic civilian needs in the United States of America to any extent whatsoever;

(e) the price of hessian at which these orders were executed, and the price of hessian ruling in the market in the country then;

(f) whether it is a fact that the Members of the Indian Jute Mills' Association entered into an agreement amongst themselves not to purchase raw jute for the execution of these orders at more than Rs. 14, Rs. 17 and Rs. 19 per maund for Bottoms, Middles and Tops, respectively;

(g) whether it is a fact that the Government of the United Kingdom agreed not to purchase jute in the Indian market at that time, in order to keep the prices at the level agreed to amongst the Members of the Indian Jute Mills Association;

(h) whether it is a fact that the prices of jute ruling about the time when the American order for hessian was placed, were higher than those fixed by the Indian Jute Mills' Association; and

(i) how the prices offered by the Indian Jute Mills' Association for jute compared with the average prices of other agricultural commodities, particularly foodgrains, month by month, since June, 1948, in the principal jute producing areas?

The Honourable Dewan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami Mudaliar: (a) No. The negotiations leading up to the placing of contract were conducted by Mr Swerling, U. S. A. Representative with the Committee of Indian Jute Mills Association.

(b) The price paid was the result of free negotiations between the U. S. A. Representative and the Committee of the Indian Jute Mills Association and the question, therefore, of support by the Government of India does not arise.

(c) and (d). Yes.

(e) Basis Rs. 19-8-0 per 100 yards for 9 porters and Rs. 26 per 100 yards for 11 porters against ruling market prices of Rs. 21-10-0 and Rs. 23-8-0, respectively.

(f), (g) and (h). Yes.

(i) Information regarding prices of agricultural produce in Bengal is being collected and a statement will be laid on the table of the House. I may, however, state from such information as is readily available that the normal parity between jute paddy did not prevail during the period, the price of paddy far outdistancing the price of jute.

LOCATION IN DIFFERENT BUILDINGS OF THE RAILWAY CLEARING ACCOUNTS OFFICE, DELHI.

138. *Mr. Amarendra Nath Chattopadhyaya: Will the Honourable Member for Railways be pleased to state:

(a) whether he is aware:

(i) that at present the Railway Clearing Accounts Office, Delhi, is located in four different buildings—Ludlow Castle, Delhi Sadar, Dak Shed and the temporary building constructed beyond the Kishengunj Railway Station;

(ii) that the distance from Ludlow Castle to Delhi Sadar is about three miles, and that of Kishengunj more than five miles;

(iii) that the staff experiences great inconvenience, and there is a huge waste of time when they have to go quite frequently from one building to another in connection with office work;

(iv) that no arrangement exists in the office for the conveyance of these clerks from one building to another;

(v) that the staff who thus perform office work is not given any tonga hire from the contingent grant; and

(vi) that certain staff of the Ludlow Castle are sitting in tents without any proper arrangements for flooring, and that they are getting severe cold and spoiling their clothes due to heavy dust; and

(b) whether he is prepared to take immediate steps to see that either suitable conveyance arrangements are made, or the clerks concerned are given tonga hire from contingency, or to decentralise the Railway Clearing Accounts Office at once?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: (a), (i) Yes.

(ii) The distance from Ludlow Castle to Delhi Sadar is about one mile and a half and to Kishanganj about three miles.

(iii) Some inconvenience is inevitable, but, as far as possible, independent units of the staff have been located in the same building and the staff are not required to visit other buildings frequently in connection with office work.

(iv) Office has two hired tongas for Office work. They are also available for conveying staff from one building to another when required to do so on duty. An additional tonga is hired when necessary.

(v) As free conveyance is provided, the question of payment of tonga hire does not arise.

(vi) At the present time 105 out of 1,884 men in this office are working in tents. There has been no complaint of cold, etc., except on a few days when there was cloud or rain and *angithis* were provided to meet the difficulty.

(b) Does not arise.

DIFFERENT DATES FOR ENFORCING NEW PAY RATES AND LEAVE RULES IN RAILWAY ACCOUNTS OFFICES.

139. *Mr. Amarendra Nath Chattopadhyaya: Will the Honourable Member for Railways be pleased to state:

(a) if it is a fact:

(i) that in all the Civil Departments of the Government of India, the new rates of pay and the new leave rules came into force from one and the same date, viz., 16th July, 1931; and

(ii) that in the Railway Department, specially in the Railway Accounts Offices, the new rates of pay were introduced from the 16th July, 1931, but the new leave rules were enforced from September, 1928, with the result that the persons who were recruited between the years 1928 to 1931 are drawing old rates of pay, but are governed by the new leave rules; and

(b) if he is prepared to so amend the rules as to bring the Railway Accounts Offices into line with other Government of India Departments in regard to leave rules, so that the new leave rules and new rates of pay may be deemed to come in force from one and the same date, viz., 16th July, 1931, thereby giving those persons who were recruited between September, 1928 and the 16th July, 1931, and who are continuously holding the post, the benefit of old leave rules with retrospective effect?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: (a) (i). Both the sets of rules referred to apply to persons who entered Government service on or after 16th July, 1931.

(ii) Yes, the reason being that on and after 1st September, 1928, staff were recruited on the distinct condition that when the new State Railway leave rules which were then under consideration were promulgated, they would be brought under their operation. In this respect the position of the Accounts staff is not different from that of other Railway staff.

(b) No. The question does not arise in view of what is stated in (a) (ii) above. Moreover, the conditions of service in the Railway Department and the other Government of India Departments are not similar in all respects.

WHEAT PURCHASED BY EAST INDIAN RAILWAY TO SUPPLEMENT DEARNESS ALLOWANCE.

140. *Mr. Kailash Bihari Lall: Will the Honourable Member for Railways please state:

(a) the amount of wheat purchased by the East Indian Railway in each year since September, 1941, for each Division, separately, to supplement the Dearness Allowance by its supply to the staff;

(b) the rate, and cost for each year, at which it was purchased for each Division, separately;

(c) the amount of wastage in it in each Division, separately, for each year;

(d) the rate at which the wastage was calculated in each year by each Division, separately; and

(e) the amount of wastage "written off" in each year by each Division, separately?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: (a) to (e). I regret I cannot undertake to compile the information under present circumstances.

COAL RESERVED FOR AGRICULTURAL OPERATIONS.

141. *Sardar Mangal Singh: Will the Honourable Member for War Transport please state:

(a) whether Government have set apart any amount of coal for the use of agricultural operations, particularly for the "grow more food" campaign; and

(b) what quota they have allotted to the Punjab for the year 1943-44 or for the next crop?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: (a) I have no information about coal set apart for agricultural operations. Under the coal rationing scheme quotas have been allotted to provinces to meet the requirements of domestic consumption and small industries and it is for the Coal Controllers appointed by Provincial Governments to make allotments from these quotas for agricultural operations if they consider it necessary.

(b) The provincial quota for the Punjab is 500 wagons a month.

TRANSFERRED UNSTARRED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.†

PRODUCTION OF OPIUM ALKALOIDS AT GHAZIPUR FACTORY.

45. **Mr. K. C. Neogy:** Will the Honourable the Finance Member please refer to his reply to question No. 186 on the 15th November, 1943, wherein he stated, with reference to the manufacture of opium alkaloids at Ghazipur Factory, that "production has, in addition, been materially reduced as a result of the August disturbances last year", and state:

(a) in what particular way the August disturbances reduced production in the Ghazipur Factory;

(b) whether there was any labour strike in the factory at that time;

(c) whether the machinery, plant or building was actually damaged; and

(d) the total reduction in production through this cause?

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: Precise information has been called for and will be placed on the table of the House in due course.

PRODUCTION OF OPIUM ALKALOIDS AT GHAZIPUR FACTORY.

46. **Mr. K. C. Neogy:** Will the Honourable the Finance Member please state:

(a) the quantity of opium alkaloids produced by the Government Factory at Ghazipur during the years 1939-40, 1940-41, 1941-42 and 1942-43;

(b) the supplies given by this factory to the chemical and pharmaceutical industries during the same period;

(c) the monthly supplies of this factory to the said industries since April, 1943;

(d) the total annual requirements of opium alkaloids for the chemical and pharmaceutical industries in India;

(e) the steps taken by Government to increase the manufacture of opium alkaloids at the Ghazipur Factory; and

(f) the maximum productive capacity of this factory?

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: (a), (b), (c), (d) and (f). The information has been called for and will be placed on the table of the House in due course.

(e) A new factory is under construction at Ghazipur, which is expected to be in full operation in the near future.

SALE OF GOLD BY RESERVE BANK OF INDIA.

47. **Mr. K. C. Neogy:** Will the Honourable the Finance Member please state:

(a) from which date the Reserve Bank of India commenced selling gold to the public in this country;

(b) the amount of gold sold from that date till now;

(c) the average price at which this gold has been acquired by the Reserve Bank of India locally or from outside India;

(d) the average price at which this gold has been sold; and

(e) what profits have been made so far by the Reserve Bank of India, or the Government of India, over these transactions?

†The meetings of the Assembly that were to be held on the 17th and the 18th February, 1944, having been cancelled, the answers to unstarred questions for these days were, in pursuance of convention, laid on the table of the House today.—*Ed. of D.*

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Baisman: (a) From the middle of August, 1943.

(b) and (d). I am not prepared to give details of the amounts and prices at which sales have been made.

(c) The Reserve Bank of India did not purchase the gold but were selling as agents on behalf of His Majesty's Government and the Government of the United States of America. The gold was provided by those Governments from their own resources.

(e) No question of profit arises. The proceeds of the gold sales were utilised by those Governments in meeting their war expenditure in this country.

INSPECTION OF CERTAIN RAILWAY STATIONS IN MORADABAD DIVISION BY THE COMMERCIAL SUPERINTENDENT AND THE ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT.

48. Mr. Kailash Bihari Lall: Will the Honourable Member for Railways please state:

(a) the dates, since 1941, on which the stations of Raiwala, Kausro, Doiwala and Harawala on the Hardwar-Dehra Dun section of the East Indian Railway, were inspected by the Superintendent and the Assistant Superintendent, Commercial, Moradabad Division, separately;

(b) the dates of the posting of the present Superintendent Commercial and Assistant Superintendent, Commercial, to continuous service since 1941 in the Moradabad Division;

(c) if the reply to part (a) be in the negative, that is, no inspection of those stations was conducted by those officers, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the dates on which those officers passed through those stations *en route* to and from Dehra Dun *cum* Mussoorie since their assumption of the charge of those offices in the Moradabad Division?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: (a) to (d). Government do not receive information concerning such minor details of administration.

FEES PRESCRIBED FOR SUPPLYING COPIES OF CERTAIN RAILWAY DOCUMENTS.

49. Mr. Kailash Bihari Lall: Will the Honourable Member for Railways please state the scales of fees prescribed under section 76 of the Indian Evidence Act, 1872, for copies of (i) Service Agreement and service records of non-gazetted railway servants; (ii) Railway Administration's Gazettes, Notices and other publications, (iii) instructions, circulars and other regulations concerning the duties, condition of service, conduct and discipline, scales of pay and allowances and other cognate matters affecting the non-gazetted Railway servants, and (iv) subsidiary rules to the General Rules made by the Government of India, issued from time to time by the Railway Administrations. If no scales of fees are prescribed, what are the reasons therefor?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: There is no power to prescribe copying fees under section 76 of the Indian Evidence Act, the sole effect of which is to entitle a person having a right to inspect a public document to be furnished with a copy of the document on payment of the legal fees otherwise prescribed therefor. For the amount of the fee chargeable in any particular case, the Honourable Member is referred to the relevant entries in Schedule I to the Court-fees Act and Schedule I to the Indian Stamp Act. I should perhaps add that I should not be understood to endorse the Honourable Member's statement that all the classes of document to which he refers are public documents.

DISPENSING WITH THE QUESTION HOUR ON THE GENERAL BUDGET PRESENTATION DAY.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): I may inform Honourable Members that in accordance with the usual practice no allotment as regards questions was made in respect of the meeting for the 29th February, 1944, fixed at 5 P.M. for the presentation of the General Budget, and that there will, therefore, be no questions on that day.

ELECTION OF MEMBERS TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE FOR THE INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING DEPARTMENT.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): I have to inform the Assembly that up to 12 Noon on Wednesday, the 16th February, 1944, the time fixed for receiving nominations for the Standing Committee for the Department of Information and Broadcasting, five nominations were received. As the number of candidates is equal to the number of vacancies, I declare the following members to be duly elected: (1) Mr. Lalchand Navalrai, (2) Mr. C. P. Lawson, (3) Khan Bahadur Sheikh Habibur-Rahman, (4) Seth Yusuf Abdoola Haroon, and (5) Mr. M. Ghiasuddin.

ELECTION OF MEMBERS TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON EMIGRATION.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): I have to inform Honourable Members that the election of members to the Standing Committee on Emigration will be held, if necessary, on Wednesday, the 23rd February, 1944. The election, which will be conducted in accordance with the principle of proportional representation by means of the single transferable vote, will be held in the Assistant Secretary's room in the Council House, New Delhi, between the hours of 10-30 A.M. and 1 P.M.

THE RAILWAY BUDGET—GENERAL DISCUSSION. FIRST STAGE.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Before the House discusses the Railway Budget, under Rule 46 I fix the time limit for speeches as twenty minutes for each Honourable Member, excepting the Government Member, for whom 45 minutes or more will be allowed if necessary.

Dr. P. N. Banerjee (Calcutta Suburbs: Non-Muhammadan Urban): Sir, the Budget presented by the Honourable Member for War Transport is an extraordinary, unwelcome and unsatisfactory one. This Budget seeks to impose a heavy and unconscionable burden on the people of India, particularly the poorer and middle sections of the population. There is neither any necessity nor the slightest justification for imposing such a heavy burden. A careful examination of the figures contained in this budget will make my contention perfectly clear. In 1942-43 the surplus rose to a very high figure and this figure was preceded by large surpluses year after year since the commencement of the present war. In 1942-43 the amount was as large as 45 crores, and a similar surplus is likely to arise in the course of the present year, while the surplus for the ensuing year will perhaps be still larger.

Now, how have these surpluses been utilised? In the first place, they have been utilised for making very large contributions to the general revenues of the country, and, in the second place, for making additions to the depreciation fund and the railway reserve fund. In the coming year the contribution will amount to no less than 31 crores and 37 lakhs. Besides, the depreciation fund will rise to the record figure of nearly 88 crores during the current year and the railway reserve fund will reach the unprecedented sum of 31 crores and 69 lakhs during the ensuing year. These figures are worth examining because the conclusions which have been drawn by the Honourable the Transport Member will appear to be wholly wrong on such examination.

How these surpluses have arisen is the question to be considered next. It appears to me that they have arisen from two sources, namely first, intensified war activity and second, sacrifice and suffering on the part of the people. So far as the first is concerned, it is more or less a paper transaction and does not call for much comment. But so far as the second aspect of the question is concerned, namely, the sacrifice and suffering of the people, I think it is necessary to make some observations. It is well known that during the last four years the facilities for travel have been greatly curtailed. Overcrowding has taken place to such an extent that not only is there discomfort and inconvenience but there has been a large number of accidents resulting in loss

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of lives and limbs of the passengers. Besides, lack of transport has been one of the contributory causes of the disastrous famine in Bengal and of scarcity in other parts of India. In view of these things we should consider whether Government should attach any importance to this important aspect of the question or not.

Now, Sir, we find that Government, instead of seeking to provide greater facilities and greater convenience and comfort for the travelling public, want to increase the fares. As a matter of fact what is urgently called for is that fares should be substantially reduced. And why do we ask for a reduction in fares? The services rendered by the railways to the users have been greatly diminished and justice demands that the fares should be reduced. But instead of doing that Government have come forward with an astounding proposal to increase the fares by as much as 25 per cent.

Let us examine whether these surpluses have been the result of economical management of the railways. I refer to the report of the Railway Finance Committee. There we find that there have been many cases of extravagance and waste. In particular, I refer to one instance, namely, the loss of 10 crores which is mentioned in the Honourable Member's budget speech with regard to the cheap foodgrain shops. These shops were started with the object of helping the employees of the railways. We have no objection to that; but the policy was carried too far and even the highest paid officers were included in the list of persons who were to receive the benefit of these cheap food-grains. And the quantities given to these officers with their dependants were on a very lavish scale and entailed heavy expenditure.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall (Member for Railways and War Transport): No, Sir; they get precisely the same as is given to the humblest employee.

Dr. P. N. Banerjea: If I had time I would have read from the Report of the Standing Finance Committee, but I will only refer the Honourable Member to page 8 of the Report, where this is mentioned. Again, every user of the railways knows that inefficiency prevails throughout the Indian railways and that bribery and corruption are rampant. Therefore, these surpluses are not the result of economical management but are due to the sacrifices and sufferings of the people.

Now what are the reasons advanced by the Transport Member in favour of his extraordinary proposal? He says there are three good reasons for taking this step. The first, according to him, is that it will reduce travel. I do not think that this effect will be very great, and if it is great it will prove injurious to the people of the country. A great deal is being said about travelling for pleasure and as a matter of luxury. Is it possible to contend that the third class passengers travel for pleasure when they risk their lives by sitting on the foot-boards and by hanging on to the carriage rails? If there is any luxury travel it is for the highly-paid officers of Government who travel in saloons and air-conditioned coaches at Government expense. Therefore, this additional tax will be injurious to the third class passengers who travel only when they must and when it is compulsory for them to travel; they never travel for pleasure.

The second point raised by my Honourable friend is that it will have a deflationary effect. Now inflation, as we all know, has been the result of the bungling financial policy of the Government, and other remedies will have to be adopted to deflate the currency. But it is a cruel joke to say that the poor people—the third class passengers and Intermediate class passengers—have large sums in their pockets, and if these sums are taken away from them there will be a deflationary effect on the currency policy of the Government. Far from it.

The third point to which my Honourable friend refers is to create a fund of ten crores of rupees for the provision of facilities in future. This amounts to an invitation to the poor to suffer and, if necessary, die now, in order that

in the next life they may enjoy the amenities to be provided by the Honourable the Transport Member. No, this will not do. If he is serious and sincere in this matter I would ask him to withdraw this proposal, and would offer some suggestions with regard to the provision of funds for the purpose he has in view.

Sir, we all know that budgets have always been under-estimated—the income side of the budget has always been under-estimated. As he himself points out, during the last year and during the current year the income has been under-estimated. It is possible that such an under-estimate will occur in respect of the coming year too, and if, as a result of this, larger surplus is obtained, I would request him to earmark that additional surplus for the purpose of providing amenities in future for third class railway passengers. There is also another alternative which I would like to suggest, if I may. The Revenue Reserve fund will reach the record figure of thirty-one crores and sixty-nine lakhs during the ensuing year even on the existing basis of the fares. This is a figure which was never dreamt of by the legislators or by the Government when the Convention was arrived at in 1924, and out of this surplus a sum of ten crores may easily be spent for providing conveniences to the third class travellers.

Sir, the net effect of the iniquitous proposal which my Honourable friend has placed before us, if carried out in the teeth of opposition, will be great discontent in the country. I may point out in this connection that protests have been pouring in from all parts of the country—from Bombay, from Calcutta, from Madras and from other parts. In view of these protests I hope the Honourable the Transport Member will reconsider the position. But it may be said that the Government do not mind the discontent because of the large military forces they have at their command. I hope that attitude will not be taken up by Government.

Sir, the Government have at their command in this House the votes of their servants and their dependents and I know how those votes will be recorded. But we, the elected representatives of the people, have our duty to perform, and we shall be no party to such an iniquitous proposal. I am sure that no elected Member of this House, unless he is completely devoid of a sense of duty to his country, will fail to record his vote against the proposal.

Sir Muhammad Yamin Khan (Agra Division: Muhammadan Rural): Sir, I am glad that the Railway budget is again a surplus budget. But there are many things which the Honourable Member has said in introducing the budget, with which I cannot agree and, therefore, I have to make some observations.

In his speech the Honourable Member said:

"During the year Government have had under discussion with the Standing Finance Committee the question of the abolition of the lower gazetted service. Government do not accept as valid the reasons advanced by the majority of the committee against the steps and propose to carry the measure through at the appropriate time."

The Honourable Member ought to have explained where he did not agree with the reasons advanced by the Standing Finance Committee. In disagreeing with the Committee, he gives no valid reasons himself. At their last meeting, when the Standing Finance Committee rejected the proposal, they gave clear reasons for doing so, namely, that the proposal was meant to give undue advantage to the people who will not only get a better salary to which they were never entitled and which their condition of service never laid down, but they will also become entitled to the overseas allowance. The proposal was put before the Standing Finance Committee in the beginning and it was said that it will cost something like two lakhs, but ultimately it was found that, including overseas allowance, it will come to more than six lakhs. And so the Standing Finance Committee rejected this proposal on financial grounds and because the proposal was in the interest of 64 persons, all of whom were Europeans. To spend such a huge amount at this time was considered to be all the more unacceptable because the Railway Board picked up only one class of people for betterment of prospects and ignored all other persons. The Standing Finance Committee could not take it up but we wanted to know

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from the Honourable Member what were his reasons for disagreeing with the Committee. Sir, it is an open fact that when the proposal was examined there were 187 people in this service, 64 out of whom were Europeans. It was proposed that only 150 will be promoted and the rest—37—will be kept down. There were 47 Hindus and 13 Mussalmans, and it was suspected that those who will be kept down will be Indians and not Europeans. The reason was given that these people had put in an application to the Viceroy requesting that they may be promoted. There was no precedent of this kind of promotion, and it was pointed out that there were Tehsildars in the Revenue Service, Superintendents in the Government Secretariat, and many other such services in the various branches of the Government but they had never claimed to be promoted as a body, and, therefore, the proposal was an untenable one. Sir, I do not know what reasons the Honourable Member has got for differing from the views of the Standing Finance Committee which took more than one year in examining the different questions which were raised by the Railway Board, and which considered that the proposal was based on nothing else but a desire to promote the interests of Europeans in this service and to let the Europeans get a strong hold of Indian Railways. This desire was based on the principle that the European element in the Railways should not be decreased on account of non-recruitment in the superior services from England at the present time. Therefore, those Europeans who are in India and who are in services, in which they had no title, should be promoted by this backdoor method. Sir, the Standing Finance Committee gave a good deal of thought to this from all aspects and they said that unless the proposal came for the whole service they would reject it.

Then the Honourable Member says that this will be decided at the appropriate time. I do not know what the Honourable Member means by 'appropriate time'. The Standing Finance Committee said that this matter should be shelved till one year after the war as every other question would be considered after that. Why does he not say so? Is he afraid of the 64 Europeans who are in the service and who have been shouting and whose case has been advocated by the Railway Board? He does not disclose the proportion of the majority and minority votes in this case. The only member on the side of the minority vote was the solitary European member of the Committee. I do not want to go into details of the proceedings of the Standing Finance Committee, but the Honourable Member should have placed the full facts before the Assembly.

Then he says—and I am glad that he qualifies his words later on—"They agree that piecemeal reorganization at the moment is not desirable". I agree entirely with that and that was the reason given by the Standing Finance Committee also.

Then I will take the Honourable Member's phrase when he gives his reason for the increase in the railway fares and rates. He says:

"For wheat, which fetched Rs. 10, before the war, the farmer today gets Rs. 40. But the farmer can transport his wheat in full wagon loads for any distance at the same cost as before and on an average a journey which then cost Rs. 10, today costs the farmer less than Rs. 10-8-0."

The Honourable Member has been in business for a very long time and I expected something from him which would enlighten the House and not a statement which may be considered here as a camouflage. Had this come from a bureaucrat who did not understand business, it would have been different. But the Honourable Member knows that it is not the farmer who transports his wheat from one place to another. It is the merchant. You do not touch the profits of the farmer if you wish to sell his wheat at a higher price. The Honourable Member does not want to explain that the burden will lie on the consumer and not on the farmer. Previously the consumer paid Rs. 10 and now he pays Rs. 40 but by putting up the prices still higher you want him to pay Rs. 50. So the question ought to be looked at from this point of view. The burden is not going to fall on the heads of the

farmers who will be selling their produce at the controlled rates, whatever they may be. But where in other parts of the country there is difficulty of transport, it will be the consumer that will have to bear the burden of increased cost.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: But the rates are not being increased.

Sir Muhammad Yamin Khan: I am just telling you what he has said in his speech.

Now the question of fares. On whom does he want to put the burden of the fares? It is not the farmer who travels. We have to see whether Government servants, the military or the public travel in larger numbers than before. If the public are travelling in larger numbers what are the causes? The Honourable Member was not able to give the figures of increased travelling among the military personnel. He says that they travel in military trains. But there are many trains not meant for the military but still they are travelling in them. If the Honourable Member would go to any railway station, he will find that all those trains which are meant for the public are half-crowded by military personnel.

Dr. P. N. Banerjee: Not half but three-quarters!

Sir Muhammad Yamin Khan: That may be but I take it as this. But you will find that these are the people engaged in the war effort or doing one kind of work or the other in connection with it. Indians have never been the people to travel for pleasure's sake. You have, Sir, for a long time been offering inducements to the public to travel by way of railway concessions. Have you ever found that the people have taken full advantage of them? Here you will find very few people amongst the Indians who go just to see the Taj at Agra and other such like places. These kind of travellers will be found among people from America and Europe. If an Indian has a holiday he stays at home, while the European goes out shooting. So if you think that the Indians are travelling more because of the war or for pleasure trips, you are mistaken. They are forced to do it because their business is such. First of all, the war effort is there. The second reason is that you have stopped all the lorries and buses which they cannot run on account of the petrol shortage and also that most of the lorries have been requisitioned by the Government. Very few are, therefore, left on the lines and those few are working to the utmost strain. They have no possibility of getting any other means of transport except the trains and that is the reason for the seeming increase in railway travel. If you stop the war effort the trouble will disappear. It will not affect the people who have to come because they have to travel, and, therefore, I do not think that the reasons which have been given in the phrase "so having weighed all these pros and cons, Government have decided to increase the fares" are justified. If the Government had fully considered the pros and cons, the Government would not, I think, have found it desirable to increase the fares at present.

The Honourable Member says that the railway fares are at present the
 12 Noon. cheapest and that the railways are serving at rates which are disproportionate to the increase in the cost of living at present. May I ask the Honourable Member whether he is paying any increase in house rent. I am a zamindar and I know that the rents were fixed at the rate prevailing in 1938 or in the beginning of 1939. Prices have gone disproportionately high, but still those rates are the same. The Honourable Member's house rent has not been increased by the Government either. The cheapest is that which you are getting at the prices prevailing in 1938. The people are suffering. And although my farmer or tenant is making more money I cannot increase a penny of the rent; but the rent he gets is also the same. So, how can the Honourable Member say that the railways are the cheapest? Because you go on taxing the people more and more in one respect and leave other questions aside, do you think that the man, to whom you have given increment as dearness allowance, has got sufficient money to pay your increased

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fare? You are paying that orderly or low-paid employee an increase simply because they cannot meet their ordinary food requirements. But if, in addition to increased cost of food, he has to meet extra railway fare of 25 per cent. if he has to go on leave to see his family and so on, you merely give with one hand and take away with the other. Is he in a position to pay the increase? You have considered only one class of persons who travel. But the class of persons who must travel is being heavily burdened; and so I do not agree with the reasons which you have given, and this matter will be properly dealt with at the appropriate time.

The coal question is a broad question. When the Honourable Member found that coal was not coming in in sufficient quantities he ought to have persuaded the Government or the Viceroy to issue an ordinance in this respect—a very stringent ordinance to the effect that if any colliery was not working properly or to the full extent, it should be dealt with irrespective of the question whether they were making huge profits or no profits at all; the coal must be mined. You may have to pay higher prices but the quantity of coal must not be decreased simply because excess profit tax has not to be paid. How can there be an excess profits tax without profit. . . .

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

Sir Muhammad Yamin Khan: I am just closing. Therefore, I think this coal policy of the government has been lacking in determination and foresight and an Ordinance should have been issued in the beginning when the Government came to know that the collieries were not working to the satisfaction of the railways or for the good of the country.

Sir Henry Richardson (Nominated Non-Official): Sir, once again we are here to discuss a Railway Budget which shows a very large surplus. But as the Honourable Member for War Transport has reminded us the apparent prosperity which the Budget shows is largely illusory. Not only are railway earnings largely the result of taking from one pocket to put into another, but also the rehabilitation and reconstruction works which are steadily accumulating will, in due course, involve the Railways in very large expenditure. The House will be aware that we on this side have consistently expressed the view that the Railways should accumulate reserves during periods when trade is good so that finance will be available for less prosperous times such as may well occur after the cessation of hostilities. Whatever target for reserves may have been considered adequate in the past, it is obvious that we must now reorientate our views to meet the altered circumstances which the war is bringing. When we hear of so many crores of rupees going to general revenues and of further crores being accumulated in Depreciation and Railway Reserve Funds we are inclined to forget that, large as these sums may sound, they are no more than relative to the capital-at-charge. If instead of talking in crores we were to think in lakhs and apply to the problem the normal precepts of sound business, a far clearer picture is possible. Instead of a capital of 808 crores, let us for a moment think of it as 80 lakhs, and instead of a depreciation fund at the end of 1944-45 of 82.45 crores let us think of it as 8 lakhs. Similarly, instead of a Railway Reserve Fund of 41.69 crores let us think of it as 4½ lakhs. With these simplifications we can visualise a company having a capital of 80 lakhs, with a depreciation provision, after many years, amounting only to about 10 per cent. of its capital and with reserves of only about 5 per cent. of its capital. I ask my business friends, would they be proud as proprietors or satisfied as shareholders with any concern showing, after so long a period, such meagre funds? Would they not under present conditions desire to make provision for bad times ahead and to create additional reserves which can be found in the balance-sheets of companies established for far less a period than the Railway organisation in this country? Where have we got in the Railway Budget such provisions as Reserve for equalisation of dividends, Reserve against depreciation of stocks, Reserve for taxation, Reserve for development and where do

we find any sinking fund for the repayment of loans? Honourable Members who are either businessmen or shareholders are well aware that these headings are eagerly looked for in commercial balance-sheets and the ability and prestige of the management is often judged by the prudence and strength displayed by the finances thus carefully preserved and held ready under these various headings against the rainy day and future developments. Looking, therefore, at our depreciation and reserve funds from this angle, I find no justification for that satisfied and comfortable feeling which the word 'crore' implies.

Having said this, it will come as no surprise to this House when I say that we now, more than ever, give full support to the strengthening of Railway reserves which we feel are inadequate and we support fully the steps contemplated by the Honourable Member in this direction. In view of the constitutional changes which the end of the war will bring, it would be easy for the present Government to court popularity by planning for the present rather than for the future. Indeed, I heard one Honourable Member interrupt the War Transport Member with the statement that the benefits to be provided for lower class passengers would accrue only after the present generation was dead. This interjection illustrates my point. If some of us wish to provide for the future—even for those who will come after us—is there anything particularly wrong with such a policy? It might be popular with a certain section to benefit the present generation and to let the future look after itself. But surely we must do better than that.

The Honourable Member has proposed an increase in fares and the press has forecast this intention for some time. Opposition has been gathering and when precision was given to the proposals in this House such opposition was quite evident. It would be inconsistent for us to join in such opposition in view of the policy which we have so often pressed both in this House and on Standing Committees. Individually, we may dislike paying more for railway travel just as my friends on the other side may dislike it, but the three reasons which have been given by the War Transport Member for taking this course are, in our opinion, valid reasons. Provision for the future is obviously our duty. Anti-inflationary measures must obviously be attempted. Overcrowding should be remedied as far as possible, and if any of my friends argue that an increase in fares will not reduce overcrowding, I can only suggest that logically they support a larger increase than that proposed. The facts as disclosed are that in the past two years, third class passenger traffic earnings have gone up by some 10 crores and it is evident that whether the majority of these people had to travel or not, they had the wherewithal to enable them to do so.

But, as I have said, we are not supporting the proposal on that ground alone and I would turn for a moment to the proposals which the Honourable the War Transport Member has made for earmarking and utilisation of the proceeds of the increases which are expected to yield 10 crores. The grievances of the third class passenger have been pleaded in this House and in the Press for some years, and after the war is over there is no doubt that the public sense of responsibility over this question will brook no further delay in the remedying of the defects which are so well known. Honourable Members, however, know that the list is so long and the items are so vast that a huge sum of money, at present unknown, will be required. Furthermore, the country will expect as much as possible of this money to be spent in India so that in the manufacturing of railway requirements within the country itself private industry may be assisted in those difficult periods which, from experience, we know follow a great war like the present. It is no use saying that the money can be taken from the Railway Reserve Fund. The Honourable the Chief Commissioner in his speech in another place has stated that the amounts in this fund will be needed to ensure payment of interest charges. Those interest charges amount at present to nearly 29 crores per annum, so that the sum of nearly 32 crores which will be in the Reserve Fund at the end of 1944-45 will only be sufficient to pay one year's interest and this again bears out what I have already argued

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from a business point of view, namely, the inadequacy of the present reserves. Although the Honourable Member has stated that the expected yield of 10 crores from increased passenger fares will be earmarked for an "amenities fund" in the Railway Reserve I must say that we would prefer the purpose to be more clearly defined so that whatever future Governments may have the handling of railway finances, this provision is used strictly for the purposes of "betterment". We would like this Fund to be kept completely separate from the Railway Reserve. But, Sir, in dealing with the question of the effect on travel, which these increased fares may have, I am bound to express our opinion of the need for military authorities to take all practical and possible steps to reduce travel on the part of the military personnel. We are constantly hearing of cases of officers and men who are permitted to travel long distances on leave, and often, while they are on holiday, they are transferred to some other unit which happens to be nearby or in another direction from their base. But owing to some military necessity, or rather perhaps I should say, lack of organisation, these men have to go back from their holiday resort all the way to their unit and then again undertake a long journey to the place of transfer. We fully realise the military must have leave, but this sort of thing ought to be stopped. Then again the principles of what are known "leave zoning" and "leave staggering" might, I think, with advantage be adopted with more strictness than appears to be the case at the moment. I am aware that there are difficulties and that discretion must be left to the military authorities, but I hope the principle will be accepted so as to reduce the criticism which is heard amongst the general public, who are so greatly affected by the very large numbers of military travelling. I believe that military leave is given irrespective of the time taken in travel which would seem to be a direct encouragement to undertake a long journey and this is a point which the military authorities might take into consideration.

Then, Sir, we would like to know what success has been achieved in regard to ticketless travel and what further steps Government propose to take to reduce this form of overcrowding. There is no information in the Honourable Member's speech on this question.

While realising the great difficulties under which Railways are working today, I think that I should warn the Honourable Member against the tendency which I detect in certain quarters to blame war conditions for certain deficiencies which can be avoided. We realise that major repairs to carriages are frequently impossible. But there are certain minor repairs which can and should be carried out. If this is not done, deterioration may be rapid and war conditions cannot be blamed for everything. Recently we have seen advertisements in newspapers expressing the regret of certain railways that electric bulbs could no longer be provided in carriages and passengers must make their own arrangements. I do not know whether this is due to inability to obtain bulbs or whether excessive losses are being experienced owing to theft.

Dr. P. N. Banerjee: Passengers will have to carry bulbs with them!

Sir Henry Richardson: If the latter, could not some prevention be provided in the shape of metal frames for the bulbs? It is also possible that the public have shown some resentment at the A. R. P. arrangements in regard to lighting and the opinion is being expressed that these could now be relaxed to some extent. Then, again, Sir, war is no excuse for sending out carriages from terminal stations with filthy lavatories and insect infested bunks. I am aware that efforts are made at some places to remedy these defects, but the general feeling is that more could and ought to be done and I trust the Railway Administration will take note of this complaint. I must add one further remark regarding restaurant services which are considered on some trains as absolutely disgraceful. Despite the fact that a lot of money is being taken out of troops who have to travel and to pay high charges, no attempt appears to be made to deal with the increased traffic or to reduce menus with the idea

of giving a lesser number of courses but a better meal. We all know that food is not easy to obtain, but the excuse which was put forward in the past that caterers did not know how many might travel by the train is, I think, frivolous now when practically all trains are full. In short, Sir, although we agree to the increase of fares we submit that within the possibilities there should be an endeavour to improve the facilities. The taking over of so many railways from private enterprise, which has been welcomed in this House, should not be allowed to cloud the need for efficiency under bureaucratic control so that the interests of the public who are shareholders just the same should suffer no detriment.

In conclusion, Sir, despite these salutary criticisms we wish to join with the Honourable the War Transport Member in the tribute which he paid at the end of his speech to the Chief Commissioner and the railway staff. There is no doubt that, as in all other industries, many of which are working with a 50 per cent. reduction in their supervisory staffs, the war has enforced a continuing strain on all personnel. Industry in other countries, as well as in this, is showing tenacity and determination that there shall be no slackening of the war effort which is now beginning to bear signs of that success which we have all so long desired and I am sure that our railway staff will, on their side, continue to earn such tributes as the Honourable the War Transport Member paid to them, which we feel were well deserved, and in which we whole-heartedly join.

Mr. Hoosenbhoy A. Lalljee (Bombay Central Division: Muhammadan Rural): Sir, I would very much like in the first instance to thank the War Transport Member for the trouble he has been taking in the discharge of his onerous duties. We must acknowledge that he has done his best so far as corruption is concerned (*An Honourable Member*: "Has he?") Yes, he has tried his best so far as I know. He has also done his best so far as the economical way of using the railway transport is concerned and in many other respects.

Now, the important question that arises is whether we would agree with him in his financial review of the whole situation. The proposal to increase the fares by 25 per cent has been before the public for nearly over a month, and I am sure, he has received protests against it from every quarter. All the people concerned are from Calcutta, Bombay, Madras, Delhi, Lahore, Karachi, and other parts of India, as also from businessmen and, I am sure, he, as a great businessman, does realise that businessmen will not make such a strong protest unless it is really needed and mostly in a right cause.

Now, Sir, what do we find? We find that after the war the surplus has been one crore 39 lakhs, contribution to the General Fund 89 crores, and, further we are going to add in 1944-45, 52 crores and a contribution to the general revenues of 31 crores. Just now, Sir, my friend, the Leader of the European Group, has pointed out to us the figures with regard to the reserve fund and the depreciation fund and has pointed out to us that, so far as businessmen are concerned, they make provision also for sinking fund, equalisation of dividend and what not, but I submit, Sir, the private companies and businessmen have to depend on many things including the world conditions but, so far as the Government railway concern is concerned, it is a Government's public utility concern and it can very well, whenever any contingency arises, raise the prices and being a monopolist, it can really demand of the people to pay rates and fares which would make the budget always even. We had nearly ten years when the Railway Budget was at the cost of the public equalised but such a contingency cannot arise when there is a private concern. Many a time we have observed that when there is a great depression all round in the world trade, many of the companies which had even lot of reserves and were very well managed came to grief and trouble, which was no fault of their own. Then the private concerns have to depend on the capital to be got from the public and the shareholders. That is not the position so far as the Government Railway Department is concerned. Therefore, I do not agree with my friend, the Leader of

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the European Group, that the Railway Administration could be strictly put down in the same manner as the private concerns, and very great reserves have to be built up at public cost.

Now, Sir, let us see the other argument that has been put forward. It has been said that if there are reserves, they will be spent in India and the private industry will get orders. It may be, but no body is going to guarantee that, we just have an instance before us—the huge orders that are being placed for importing locomotives and wagons this year and the next year and we do not know for how many years advance orders will be likewise placed and the reason for the same may be honestly that we have not got facilities for their manufacture in this country so, as, to get these urgently needed locomotives and wagons and we would be told that therefore the orders for the same are placed outside India exactly as it happened just after the last Great War. Sir, during the last two speeches that Sir Andrew Clow made in this House as Railway Member, we were given to understand that locomotives would be built in this country. In fact metre gauge locomotives were being manufactured in Ajmer and so far as broad gauge locomotives were concerned, there were plans made to manufacture at Dhakod and at other Workshops. But for the war, as it was said in the Standing Finance Committee reports, the production of these locomotives would have already taken place in India.

It may be said at the present moment that these locomotives are badly needed, that is right too but why could it not be arranged at once that the machinery for making these locomotives in this country be imported? Those who are in the business line know very well that the shipping space that is required for getting a locomotive in parts or in whole is very very large and we are so much short of shipping space with regard to foodstuffs which we so badly require and for which we are starving and when we are even begging for that shipping space, we are told that no space is available. Now, compare this our position with regard to foodstuff with the shipping space that will be made available for the locomotives ordered out. All this does naturally create a suspicion in our mind as to why the machinery to build the locomotives in India is not being imported. For the next three, four or even five years, to carry on the war specially with Japan the most essential thing needed is to get at once machine tools and machinery for building the Railway Locomotives. We find that even now countries like the United States of America and the United Kingdom have got surplus locomotives or they can make locomotives which they can send out ready built while we have nothing; not only that but we find that a large number of locomotives and wagons were sent out from this country in the beginning and during the war. If that has been the position and that has been the policy why during all this period, no attempt is being made to get machinery and tools to build locomotives in this country? If there is any solid reply to this then I would certainly agree that at least some portion of the great portion of the reserves that is being built up would be used in this country upon these industries, necessary for our Railways and for employing Indian labour for the manufacture of locomotives, rolling stock and wagons. Of course, some wagons are being manufactured in India.

Now, Sir, it has been said that this 25 per cent increase is with the intention of reducing the travelling. Already we have on record that no less than 87 per cent of the passenger trains have been cut down. And we have also seen, as was pointed out with regard to the passenger service, that if not 50 per cent at least 30 per cent of the accommodation meant for the ordinary passengers is used by the Military. Not only that, but we have seen and we have felt it and the Honourable Member cannot deny it that there is extraordinary congestion in the railway trains. Who would like to travel in those conditions? I quite agree with my friend, Sir Muhammad Yamin Khan, that usually, except for the purpose of attending some *Mela* or some *Urs*, the general public does

not travel by trains for the sake of pleasure. In fact, a large portion of India—I would say 80 per cent.—cannot afford that pleasure. If there is a little increase in the passenger traffic at present, it is entirely due to an important war fact. For instance, important cities like Bombay, Calcutta or Madras or Karachi where war activities are going on the position is: The population of Bombay used to be 14 or 15 lakhs; it is now put down at 23 to 24 lakhs. Now, what is this population composed of? Most of these people have come from the neighbouring districts and even some from distant ones for doing war work. They are employed in workshops, factories, textile mills, or docks or railways. What has been the effect of this increase in population? There is not sufficient house accommodation for the people in Bombay and there is also scarcity of food. If we do not allow them to go back to their native towns at some intervals as they do now, they will have to keep themselves back or to bring their families to Bombay and if so to further swell the congestion. If we do not allow them to do that, then their health will suffer and the standard of morality even will be anything but desirable. This is all but natural. The same is the position in Calcutta, and also, I believe at Karachi and in Madras. I have been recently to Jubbulpore and other places where huge arsenals have been built up and I saw the same position also there. Then, again, if you make travelling very expensive, the result will be that you will have to pay more for labour and hence for the materials and it may be that you will not be able to have sufficient labour. The result will be that you will be creating in this country a burden which will be borne by the war industries and by those people who have to travel not because of their business but for their personal work. On the one hand we have been attempting—and my friend Mr. Jamnadas Mehta has pointed this out many a time—to reduce the prices of foodstuffs and everything because a large portion of our people cannot afford to buy foodstuff and necessities at the prevailing prices. We are trying in every way to reduce the price of foodstuff to agriculturist and also to control it. On the other hand, you are going to raise the fares for third class passengers, a large portion of whom are not able to buy the foodstuff at the present prices. In fact, unless and until you reduce the prices of foodstuff, you will not be able to get this extra fare. Furthermore, you are now asking your own workers to pay more for their travels to their native land because they have come to the ports and other centres for doing your important work. I cannot say how it helps my Honourable friend's endeavour to put this 25 per cent over the war activity as a whole. What will happen is this. The great business people will have to pay only 10 per cent and 90 per cent will have to be paid by our trustee, the Honourable the Finance Member. It will thus affect mostly the poor people and it will affect more on those very poor people who are now working at the war centres. Furthermore, you are now going to penalise a class of persons who for years together have been your best customers. If the Railway Administration's figures are studied properly, I am sure nobody will deny that it is the third class passengers who have contributed to the gain or surplus. The first and second class passengers enjoy at their expense. The restaurant cars and air-conditioned coaches are enjoyed at the expense of the third class passengers. If the Railways were a business concern, as my Honourable friend the Leader of the European Group pointed out, the first consideration of the Railway Administration would have been to spend as much as possible on the amenities of third class passengers, who are paying for all their traffic. But nothing of the sort has been done.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: We are suggesting it now.

Mr. Hooseinbhoj A. Lalljee: We have been saying it for a long time, but year after year you have been collecting money from these third class passengers. This is not business-like; this is not fair and this is not equitable.

Then, I want to point out this that so far as the poor people are concerned what you are attempting to do will certainly create a lot of embitterment in their mind. Nobody wishes to travel in these days. In fact, even

[Mr. Hooseinbhoj A. Lalljee.]

those who are travelling in first and second class compartments also feel that if it is not necessary they will not travel because of the great military people who are moving about. I have already given one instance. I think I mentioned it to our Transport Member or to some other Honourable Member. Your military officers get into the compartment even when it is full and make the passengers stand in order to accommodate them. Those being the conditions of travel, can you ever expect that people will travel for the pleasure of it? Besides, the Honourable the Transport Member is taking another risk. In the first place, this increase in fares will affect the people who are doing war work. In the second place, they will feel that you are so cruel as not to allow them to go to their own kith and kin and also deprive them of sufficient food and sufficient clothing. This is not what we should do. You are talking about rehabilitation proposals which you intend to place before this House, but see what you are doing here, and now . . .

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The Honourable Member has one minute more.

Mr. Hooseinbhoj A. Lalljee: In short, what I wish to say is this. If you increase the fares, you will be creating a bitterness in the minds of the people. No attempt whatsoever is being made for the betterment of the people who are in difficulties as regards food and other things. The whole object is to collect money for such purposes as people cannot understand.

Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta (Chittagong and Rajshahi Divisions: Non-Muhammadan Rural): Sir, I am afraid I cannot congratulate the Honourable Member for War Transport although he has a surplus Budget. Now, Sir, the central fact of this Budget is this increase of fares. I say this imposition is neither fair, neither just nor will achieve the purpose for which it was intended. I say it is not just because railway fares have been increased twice during the war. Railway earnings are rising, surpluses are mounting up, depreciation fund and reserve fund are swelling phenomenally. This is one side, but on the other side, the services are progressively deteriorating. Therefore, I say this increase of fares is not just. The more important question is, will it achieve the purpose which the Honourable Member has in view. Is it intended to solve the problem of overcrowding? To prevent overcrowding is it necessary to reduce passenger travel? Is there any scope for further reduction of passenger travel? That is the most important question. Passenger trains have been curtailed, the passengers are subject to all manner of restrictions and discomforts, and from our own personal experience we can say that nobody likes travelling unless it is absolutely unavoidable, not out of consideration for railway companies, but for their own sake, people are mortally afraid of railway travelling now-a-days. So far as civilian population is concerned, I maintain that there is no scope for further reduction. There are certain limits beyond which you cannot possibly reduce and that irreducible minimum has already been reached. As has been remarked by the Honourable the Leader of the European Group and other gentlemen, there is a lot of waste of transport services by the military people, not only by the military people but also by the Government Departments. May I say this, Sir that when a single Member of the Executive Council travels he occupies as much space as 20 ordinary passengers. There is a huge waste there. "Physician, heal thyself, you are preaching non-travel to other people, but you never follow your precept"—this can be applied to the Government Members. I ask, has there been any investigation into the question of fact whether overcrowding will be prevented by increase of fares? I do not know. Has there been a serious investigation into this question as to whether over travelling will be prevented by increase of fares. This was discussed in the Central Advisory Council. I do not find that there is any allegation that any investigation has been made. Therefore, what is the position? If there is no further scope of reducing passenger travel, it comes to this that this increase of fare is only in name an increase in fare,

but it is really in substitution a compulsory form of taxation on the travelling public. That is the real position. Call it fare, call it increase of fare, it is really taxation and that too compulsory burden.

An Honourable Member: Extortion?

Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta: Call it extortion, it does not make much difference. Taxing communications and transport services has always been condemned as a vicious principle in economics by all experts in economics. This was admitted even by the AcWorth Committee. Specially at a time when railways are the only means of communication in the country, this prohibition on railway travel ought to be condemned. There is no other means of travel. There is no bus service. Bus service has been stopped. We do not quarrel with that. The fact, however, is that at the present moment when railways are the only means of travel available to the public, communications ought not to be taxed. It would not achieve the object of preventing over-travelling. The matter was discussed in the Central Advisory Council. What was their verdict on the question? They voted against it. Coming now to the Honourable Member himself, I find he also agrees with the view of the Central Advisory Council. I may put it like this. I may say that his judgment and decree are at variance. He argues in one way and decides in another way. I do not know if that is the reason for this halting statement when he says, 'the effect that such increase may have on reducing passenger travel'. He does not make any positive statement. He only thinks, he feels inclined to think, that the possible effect may be to reduce passenger travel. In this connection the Honourable Member has himself referred to the experience of 1917 when after the last war, the fares were increased, what was the result? We knew that as a matter of fact, overcrowding was not prevented by increase of fares. It is a question of fact, and whoever goes through the literature on the subject of that time will feel convinced that overcrowding was not prevented. There is another unjust thing about this increase of fares, no discrimination has been made between upper class passengers and third class passengers, no distinction has been made between the rich and the poor. The upper class passengers will pay 25 per cent. increase and the poorest third class passengers will also pay 25 per cent. increase. I submit there ought to be discrimination. There is a very interesting point in the speech of the Honourable Member where he says "with money to spend and nothing else much to spend it on, travel the public will". The argument is people have got money which they have nothing else to spend on except on travel. All the time the Honourable Member is obsessed with the idea of railway travel and he thinks that people in the world have nothing else to do except to travel. Another aspect of this imposition is this. It is said that the yield of the increase will be earmarked for amenities to be given to third-class passengers. But they are not to be given now but in the years to come, according to the Honourable Member; nevertheless they will have to pay this 25 per cent. increased fare from this moment although the facilities will be given only several years after. I do not know whether that will be done or not, because we have got no faith in the promises of Government; the improvements may or may not be made. But supposing for the sake of argument that the promised amenities will be granted, why should you make them pay for these in advance? Admittedly the service is now very bad; it is described as 'uncomfortable' by the Honourable Member, himself. In view of that why should you compel people to pay in advance for bad services at the present moment and for promised better services some years after?

The increase is justified on the general level of prices. I wonder if the rise in prices is an argument for or against the increase of fares. The argument is simply this: the people are already suffering on account of rise in prices and why should not they suffer all the more and pay more to the railways? One thing which is perfectly clear from an analysis of the position given by the Honourable Member in his speech is that this increase of fares is a measure of

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finance for post-war development and post-war reconstruction. I do not know whether the tall talk about post-war development and reconstruction is reduced to this promise of amenities for third-class passengers, which amenities should have been given long before and should not have been reserved for post-war reconstruction. I am afraid this promise to earmark the facilities for third-class passengers is a mere bait for us to support this imposition; it is a camouflage and I do not know if it can be called shedding crocodile tears for the poor third-class passengers. Therefore, we cannot see our way to be a party to this increase of fares.

The second reason given is the deflationary effect. I cannot give any better answer than the one given by the Chief Commissioner of Railways, last year who said:

"As it is the policy of Government to do everything possible to check inflation it is not proposed to make any general increase in the coming year in rates and fares."

There are many other points which have been touched upon by the other speakers as regards the manufacture of locomotives and so on. But one thing I should like to mention and that is the most important subject of post-war rating policy. We have been crying hoarse over this question and the injustice of the rates policy in this country for over a quarter of a century. Our complaint has been and is that the rate policy is designed to promote foreign industry at the expense of indigenous industries. It is an old grievance about which nothing has been done all these years, and it is felt in all trade circles that one of the most important things after the war should be to revise the rates policy on the Indian Railways. I do not find any mention of that in the long list of improvements which it is suggested will be carried out after the war.

Sir, on personal grounds I should have been very glad to congratulate the Honourable Member but I am sorry that the whole picture of surpluses has been marred by this proposal for increase of fares.

One word more about this. If you are going to raise the fares, why such an enormous rise as 25 per cent? No reason has been given for that. Therefore, Sir, on all possible grounds we are opposed to this proposed increase.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta (Bombay Central Division: Non-Muhammadan Rural): Sir, when some two years ago a very distinguished gentleman of the commercial community in Calcutta was drawn into the Executive Council we had hoped that he would bring to bear a fresh outlook into the bureaucratic cob-webs. But office corrodes, and just as my Honourable friend and classical scholar the Finance Member has been getting corroded year after year,—with which we shall deal in a few days, he has given the infection to Sir Edward Benthall also. And this contagion has now reached the limit when it is becoming dangerous both for Government and for the people. Everybody will be impressed with the colossal figures of traffic which the Indian railways carry, as well as with the readiness with which they are meeting the other extraordinary demands on the transport services of the country. From that point of view it is my duty to congratulate every railwayman from Sir Leonard Wilson down to the humblest worker in the railway trade union. They have done their part magnificently. You find in the speeches of both the Railway Member and the Chief Commissioner one uniform generous tribute paid to the workers who have striven to keep the transport service of the country, as far as possible, up to its requirements of traffic. I do not want to occupy the time of the House with quotations but the workers are praised in more than four places by the Railway Member and by the Chief Commissioner in the other House. But it turns out that these praises are all hollow. In fact the whole speech of the Honourable the Railway Member,—I am not talking about him personally, it is in fact an impersonal reference to his speech,—is to my mind absolutely cynical in its outlook. It is predatory in its purpose, oppressive in its results and contemptuous of public opinion. It was Dryden who said that there is hardly any Government in the world in which there is not a sufficient quota of dunces and duds. I am not prepared to go so far

because I was once a man in office and I hope I preserved my robust intelligence. But I agree with Dryden's dictum that there is hardly any Government in which you do not find a sufficient number of idiots or dunces.

1 P.M.

I know my Honourable friend is the picture of gentlemanliness and common-sense, but so far as his speech is concerned it is absolutely cynical. He has simply repeated rhetorical platitudes which he knows to be hollow: "I call upon the Railwaymen to make more effort, to achieve glory. . . ."—to achieve glory presumably by dying without food. When I read your arguments about raising the fares, or your arguments to call upon the workers to achieve glory when you are starving them, they strike me as utterly cynical and even lacking in sincerity—of course this is all impersonal. While the figures of the earnings are most impressive, the Railway traffic instead of being a means of transport services has now degenerated into a transport traffic in blood—the blood of the traveller, the blood of the worker and the blood of everybody who helps them. 52 crores of rupees profit after paying 30 crores of interest and after taking about 8 crores of excessive allocation to the depreciation fund. . . .

Sir Cowasjee Jehangir (Bombay City: Non-Muhammadan Urban): How do you make that out?

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: It should never have been more than seven crores in spite of Sir Cowasjee Jehangir and Sir Henry Richardson. Sir Henry Richardson's speech was a soulless apologia for taxing people more and more. I was surprised. His whole speech is a warning to everybody that worse time is coming; that the traveller and the trader and the worker are to be further bled down to the thinnest part of their body where the blood does not exist, where there is all skin and bone. If that is the function of the European Members of this House, God help us! I think Hitler could not have asked for the blood of the Poles more recklessly than is foreshadowed in the speech of my Honourable friend, Sir Henry Richardson. There again my observations are impersonal, because they are gentlemen in their private life. But they do not imagine what happens to the worker whom they starve. If I ask them to take the benefit of the joys and the comforts which the railwaymen enjoy for their own children for a week and if I ask the Treasury Benches to put their wives and children in the same condition as the railway worker suffers under their regime they will realise how many children are going without the barest subsistence and even one drop of milk, how many women are going in rags and how many workers are today selling everything they have ever had and going more and more into debt while fifty crores of rupees is being earned as surplus. Jews are blamed in the Merchant of Venice for being blood-thirsty, but this Railway Board . . . (Interruptions.) I have great love for Jews. Jews have done more for humanity than people know. I am not referring to the Honourable the Finance Member. I say, Jews are supposed to be more usurious people. I ask Sir Edward Benthall to consider whether the transport service of this country has not degenerated into usurers of the worst kind. If we take into account even the history of the last five years, what do we discover? The Railway Board have profiteered 187 crores and 95 lakhs of surplus. 140 crores and 89 lakhs of interest charges, 10 crores per year of extra concealment of revenue and 8 crores of extra depreciation every year; and these figures when worked out, come very perilously near to 12 to 13 per cent. per year of net profit by a public utility company. All these huge profits are earned by the misery of the traveller. People call it overcrowding. That is a very mild word. It is extra-overcrowding; it is suffocating; it is worse than the mythical blackhole of Calcutta. Every train which goes from one station to another carries a load of helpless men, women and children who have not only no sitting room, but no standing room and even no crawling room. I have seen with my own eyes a mother putting her child into the compartment, she herself standing on the foot-board and the helpless husband wondering whether the train would leave and his child would be in and the mother would be on the foot-board and he would be on the platform. And the train moves. Once through the kind courtesy of a military officer I had the honour of admitting

[Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta.]

19 third class passengers into 1st Class, otherwise we knew the frightful conditions to which they would be reduced. Is this called transport? Is this called humanity? Is there any glory in this and yet you would like that we should give you credit for this.

I am not going into more than two further points: The overcrowding, I think, is simply disgraceful; it is no credit to this Government. The Government seem to be the enemies of the people when they watch this overcrowding unconcerned. Why don't they stop the selling of tickets? They know the capacity of every train. They know exactly how many persons it can carry. It is far more merciful that people should not travel at all than they should travel in such conditions of degradation, discomfort; and there are deaths occurring so frequently. I have got a letter from a friend who is a Christian and my Honourable friend the Chief Commissioner of Railways often tells me that they have honest Christian consciences. I entirely concede that; but the letter is from a friend of mine who is also an honest Christian—and he tells me that "deaths are occurring between Lonavala and Poona on account of overcrowding of workers and he also tells me that the officers here are living without safeguards". I do not know what it means—"European persons here are living without any safeguards". What do you make of it? But that is not the point. He tells me that they are living in a manner which requires their interests to be safeguarded. But he also says that men are dying and they are war workers. Why cannot you restrict the number that can travel? Every train's capacity is known to you but you will rather kill men than go without the rupee that you can get out of them.

I do not want to go into any other question except of the raising of the rates. My dear friend, I can assure you that if any examiner read your speech giving your reason for increasing the rates

Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi (Dacca cum Mymensingh: Muhammadan Rural): Whose speech?

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: Sir Edward Benthall's. If that was examined by a schoolmaster he would have put him in the Fourth Form. The arguments are childish. You say that you will give them comforts sometime after the war is over. For that purpose give me additional Rs. 10 crores per year. I think it is like the tale of Alice in Wonderland. That is your policy. When times are bad you say we cannot afford amenities. But when times are good, you say bad times may come: therefore do not do anything. That is Sir Henry Richardson's whole apologia. One is made to believe that the rates paid by the third class passengers do not include ordinary comforts today. I say the present railway rates entitle the traveller to all the facilities that you can give. Is it contended that these rates are exclusive of amenities except of travelling in an overcrowded compartment? So this plea that we will give them some comforts hereafter is to my mind so unconvincing that nobody will even entertain it for a moment.

But at the background of the whole thing is an unholy conspiracy between the Finance Member and my friend, Sir Edward Benthall. We all know the inquisitive instincts of the Finance Member. He will grab at anything. He does not care wherefrom. I remember that he was unwilling to give Rs. 4 crores of additional depreciation because it would have deprived him of Rs. 3 crores to his own general revenues; but being of a very inventive mind, he thought it was better to have something more than Rs. 3 crores, so he evolved this proposal—you give me Rs. 10 crores and I will give you Rs. 4 crores. He promises the country all kinds of amenities provided he can get the Rs. 10 crores. He on his part is prepared to give away Rs. 4 crores out of Railway earnings when the time for giving comforts comes, it will be discovered that it is better to allow the money to remain in the fund and to provide the amenities only from the interest thereon. In the meantime he gets Rs. 10 crores a year for his war finance; and an obliging Convention Committee voted the Rs. 4 crores.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: Including the Honourable Member!

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: I never voted for Rs. 4 crores. I wired my disapproval. The plea that the third class passengers are entitled to amenities at the present rates was fully ignored. Nobody believes this cock and bull story of more amenities. You have never done it and you will never do it.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The Honourable Member has exhausted his time.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: Very well, Sir. It is said that this is the cheapest rate. I wish to close my observation by the statement, which I will prove, that the fares in this country are 400 per cent. higher than in England. The average income of the Englishman is Rs. 13 whereas ours is one rupee, and the fares are 3 to 1. Thus third class fares are 400 per cent. higher and the claim that we are getting the cheapest transport is the biggest hoax circulated for misleading the public. Sir, on these grounds I declare my profoundest dissatisfaction against the Railway Budget.

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, I can only characterise this budget as the tyranny of a monopolist. For, after all the Indian railways today hold virtually a monopoly in transport, particularly because all other kinds of transport have almost disappeared on account of the rationing of petrol and coal and on account also of the failure of the Government to develop alternate forms of transport or of fuel and of power. It is a tyranny of the first magnitude which is being perpetrated under the smoke-screen of creating a fund for raising the standard of travel for the lower class passenger in the post-war period.

In making my observations on this budget, I am making three points: the first point is that this budget is based on totally wrong principles of economics. My second point is that this budget is deceptive as regards certain expenditure referred to therein. And my third point is that this budget reveals also a programme of acquiring rolling stock which is definitely detrimental to the country in the long run.

Now, about the first point, my Honourable friend the Transport Member said that he had three good reasons for raising the fares by 25 per cent. I am sorry to tell him that those three good reasons are to my mind three bad reasons; first, he said that deflation which will be achieved is valuable; he made that point, forgetting that only last year, while he was making his speech in this House, the Commissioner of Railways made a speech in the Council of State; and as you, Mr. Deputy President, pointed out, what did Sir Leonard Wilson state? He stated clearly—these are his words—“as it is the policy of the Government to do everything possible to check inflation, it is not proposed to make any general increase in the coming year in rates and fares”. He definitely gave an undertaking on the floor of the Council of State that it was not proposed to increase rates and fares in the coming year, as it would be inflation.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai (Sind: Non-Muhammadan Rural): How many promises do they keep?

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: The Gandhi-Irwin Pact!

Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi: None. The Honourable the Transport Member now speaks in a different tune and he puts forward his plea for increasing passenger fares, the deflationary effect of which combined with other measures which the Finance Member may take will be a very valuable contribution to the solution of India's most pressing economic problem. Therefore my first point is that my Honourable friend is wrong and that Sir Leonard Wilson was right. The present proposal will bring inflation, not deflation.

Then the Honourable the Transport Member puts forward another point. By increasing fares, he wants to cut down the traffic in civilian passengers.

[Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi.]

May I remind him that during the period of this war, an increase in rates and fares has been made twice

An Honourable Member: Thrice.

Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi: Then we find a notification depriving us of the free allowances. Even your walking stick has to be weighed; the bedding has to be weighed; and as regards third class passengers, even such articles of food as may be required on the journey have to be weighed

Mr. K. S. Gupta (Ganjam cum Vizagapatam: Non-Muhammadian Rural): Tiffin carrier also!

Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi: That is too big a thing: even the food must be weighed. On the top of all this, he puts another 25 per cent. after taking away all the facilities of travel. As Honourable Members have said, it is impossible to travel; people travel only when they must; and as regards lower class passengers, may I inform my Honourable friend as to who are these passengers? Mostly the labouring classes for war effort.

Mr. N. M. Joshi (Nominated Non-Official): Race-goers!

Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi: It is the labouring classes who are required for the war effort, and you are increasing their fares. As regards the salaried class that gets employment in Government and business offices and whose income is fixed, you call upon them to bear a further burden than what they are already bearing. All these classes of people who are already the worst victims of inflation are proposed to be made further victims of what I would like to call the "pay more campaign" in the form of this proposal to increase railway fares by four annas in the rupee. I say there is no scope for reducing the civilian passengers' travel. The only scope is in the reduction of military passenger traffic, as my Honourable friend, the Leader of the European Group, has also said. They travel long distances, they travel day in, day out, we see all these military men go out on leave. When I was travelling to Bangalore from Madras I saw a train full of military who were stationed at Madras, and who were having leave, but they travel right through to Delhi and Simla instead of going to Bangalore or to Ootacamund. Those are the people whom you must restrict.

My second point is that you have concealed certain expenditures which I should like to bring to the notice of the House. On page 11 of the Explanatory Memorandum you will find—doubling of the Bengal and Assam Railway costs Rs. 6½ crores, quadrupling of the E. I Railway costs one crore. Both these expenditures are stated to be meant for military requirements; they are meant to help the operations of the South-East Asia Command. Now, Sir, during the last Session of the Assembly my Honourable friend, Mr. K. C. Neogy, put this question to the Honourable the Finance Member.

"Will the Honourable the Finance Member be pleased to state whether the cost of doubling the existing Bengal and Assam Railway Metre Gauge lines in certain Zones, for which tenders have been recently invited by the Engineer-in-Chief, War Works, Saidpur, is to be borne by the Government of India or by His Majesty's Government?"

The reply was:

"The matter is still under consideration. . . ."

As indicated in the answer to part (a) the incidence of the cost of these measures is under consideration. Such expenditure as is debitable to His Majesty's Government in accordance with the principles of the Financial Settlement will be recovered from that Government."

Why is this 6½ crores being debited now to the railways? Why is this one crore about which the Honourable the Finance Member had given an assurance to the House that it would be met by His Majesty's Government—why is it debited to the railways, or why should the taxpayer pay that amount which His Majesty's Government should pay? In the same note it is shown that additional works expenditure of 3½ crores is also undertaken by Government. These additional works, the Honourable the War Transport Member said in his speech, were not contemplated in the original budget last year. He said that it was meant for war requirements. Why conceal this expenditure? If it is meant for war requirements why should you debit it to the railways? Here I find over 11

crores of rupees available for the amenities of lower class passengers; the above-mentioned costs are all debitable to His Majesty's Government and not to the railways.

I next come to the progress of locomotive industry in this country. This House, for the last fifteen years—I am a Member for the last 19 years—has been urging on the Government to construct their own locomotives in India. Every time, every year, it has been turned down because it was told to us—I was also one of the Members who misunderstood the position then and supported the Government wrongly

Mr. N. M. Joshi: Don't do it again.

Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi: Of course, not. The point that was advanced in this House was this, that the number of locomotives required in India would be insufficient to run a locomotive workshop in this country economically. That was the line that was all along taken up. Now, only 2 or 3 years ago they admitted that it was a mistake and that locomotives could be built in this country. What have you done till now to expedite construction of locomotives in this country? Shipping is not available. Shipping is available for 5000 wagons to come to India, shipping is available for locomotives themselves to come to India, shipping is available for all other commodities to come to India. But shipping is not available for machineries to be brought to India to make locomotives.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: Who said so?

Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi: Why did you not import the machinery and construct locomotives in this country?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: May I ask the Honourable Member who said so?

Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi: Government did not say so, but by their dealings we find that it was so.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: Government did not say so.

Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi: My Honourable friend says, he has not said so. I say the Government as a whole, not you individually. What have you done? (Interruption.) Why have you not brought out the machinery during this war? When you can bring locomotives into this country, when you can bring wagons, when your programme of imports—the Honourable Member himself said—has not been carried out—still you placed orders, large orders, huge orders which will be supplied at sky-high rates after the war is over. Is that fair to India? Why should you place orders now for things to come three years hence?

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

Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi: Why not in the meantime get the machinery for making locomotives in this country and try and build those locomotives in this country itself and not import them?

Sri K. B. Jinaraja Hegde (West Coast and Nilgiris: Non-Muhammadan Rural): If we examine the earlier reports of the speeches made on the railway budgets three things occur to us and they are, firstly, complaints regarding third class travel, secondly, the question of food supply on railway platforms and also in the trains, and thirdly, the manufacture of locomotives. We hear the same cry this year also.

Mr. K. S. Gupta: Till eternity!

Sri K. B. Jinaraja Hegde: We are told if we are to improve third class travel in this country we must vote for 10 crores. We have had sufficient promises in the past and we do not believe that the third class travelling is going to improve even for several years after the war comes to an end. It is the experience of everybody that unless it is absolutely necessary no person in this country ever travels. It is unnecessary to advertise and spend money and say, "Travel if you must. Otherwise, don't travel". It is in the experience of everybody that people cannot afford to travel for pleasure in this country, much more so during the period of war. Honourable Members have said sufficient about their experiences of third class travel. If we examine any train, we find that we cannot even

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stand near a third class compartment. The hot air that people breathe out comes out, whereas in the very next compartment, Government officers and rich men travel very comfortably in the second and first class compartments. Sometime ago it was said that it was not even possible to increase the number of third class compartments. I fail to understand the argument because we find these days on almost every train there is an increase in the number of wagons. Whenever there is a demand for an increase in the compartments for first and second class travel, the increase is easily made but when a demand is made for additional third class accommodation, it is never given. The result is that there has been all the more overcrowding in the third class compartments making it impossible to travel. In this connection, I wish to say one thing and that is the travelling in this country, especially on the railways, is usually a long journey. It is not a short journey because our country has cities and towns which are far removed from one another. How do you expect people to undergo travel for days together in crowded third class compartments, with absolutely no convenience for sleeping?

The second point is with regard to food supply. When people travel in these overcrowded compartments, you do not expect them to travel without food and I find that no care is taken at all with regard to the supply of proper food by the railways. We find a distinction in the railways between a white man's food and a brown man's food. Compare the dining cars attached for first and second class passengers in some of the trains with the dining car attached in the Grand Trunk Express from Delhi to Madras, which is the only train which has got an Indian dining car. You find the white man's dining car is fully lit, painted and furnished with fine seats. It is almost a palatial compartment. The Indian dining car, has no proper lights, no proper seats and the whole thing is dirty and as regards the food supply, the less said the better. I had a curious experience this time while coming here. I travelled *via* Mysore and I happened to travel by the M. and S. M. Railway on the metre gauge between Mysore and Poona. At Karad station the guard came to me and asked me if I wanted food at the next station. I said 'Yes'. When the train reached the next station, I neither saw the guard nor the hotel-keeper. I was made to purchase the ticket beforehand. Then I made inquiries. I was shown a room where there was no water. There was no food supply as well, and I was told that it was the dining room for Indian passengers for the supply of Hindu food. After 15 minutes, I tried to find out the man who was the food contractor. He brought a *thali* and put it before me and there was no water even to drink. I asked him 'Where is water'. He said he was bringing it and when he brought the water, the train had whistled. I had to leave the dining room and catch the train, otherwise I would have missed the train. I complained to the Station Master and I have not heard anything about it since then. This is not the first experience. I have complained earlier to the Agent of the G. I. P. Railway and my letter was not even acknowledged. It is the experience of everybody so far as the supply of Indian food and Indian catering is concerned. No attention is paid to it. They think 'These people are bound to travel and somehow they travel and carry food with them'.

With regard to food supply on railway platforms, see the way in which tea is served. It is well known that tea contains certain acids. The tea which is supplied in every platform is prepared in metal vessels and it is distributed in metal vessels. Some of my Honourable friends may remember that some time ago we had a case of tea poisoning on a certain marriage occasion and still we see that railways have taken no steps to improve the condition of food supply. In these days, I find soldiers, Government officers and civilians taking their tea on the platforms, because the tea is not supplied to the passengers in their compartments. A notice by the G. I. P. Railway says that passengers should not expect tea to be served in their compartments. This platform vendor's tea is taken by all people who travel and it is most injurious to their health. No

attention is paid by the Railway administration to the problem of providing healthy food and drink.

The third point is about the manufacture of locomotives. Enough has been said on this subject. Formerly it was said that it was not economical to manufacture locomotives in India. After some time, it was argued that we had enough locomotives. Now, probably because for the first time a non-official Member has become the Railway Member, he has admitted that third class travel is bad and it is also necessary that locomotives should be manufactured in India and that we must secure the necessary plants. I am glad he has admitted it, but what has he done? When we asked the Railway Department 'why don't you manufacture these locomotives and wagons in India', no reply comes. If there are enough facilities here, why do you import them from abroad? You cannot say that no funds were available. For the past one year, you had enough funds. You could have manufactured any number of third class compartments and even locomotives but you have done nothing. You want to make it part of your post-war reconstruction work. We have absolutely no faith in this post-war reconstruction work and we cannot be a party to increasing the fares further for the purpose of financing this post-war reconstruction work.

It is said that there has been an increase of railway traffic. I have examined the figures which appear in the speech of the Railway Member. I find they are misleading. I am quite sure it is within the experience of every Honourable Member that there has not been additional civilian travelling. Even excluding the military trains, we know that in ordinary trains there are a large number of military officers and soldiers travelling. They form a larger number than the civilians in any train. When this is taken into consideration, I am sure it will be found that the statement that there has been an increase of 7 crores in the number of passengers is entirely wrong. There might have been a slight increase because we know that after the war started and after the

S P. M. rationing of petrol came in and also because of the rationing of tyres, the motor transport suffered heavily. On account of this factor there might have been a slight increase. Under these circumstances, to say that the rates should be increased so that we may be able to build a good reserve for the future is certainly against the principle of transport. It won't be helping the poor man's transport.

Then, Sir, with regard to the increase of 25 per cent. which the Railway Member wants us to vote, I cannot agree with him. We are told and I believe it is true that the railways have been making a profit of 12 per cent. over the capital invested. I want a categorical statement from the Railway Member whether it is so or not. If the railways are making a profit of 12 per cent. and more on the capital invested, it is criminal to ask for more profit from the passengers if they are to serve as transport services. Even from the business point of view, it is wrong to ask for 25 per cent. increase in railway passenger fares. Sir, the railways in this country are going to be, which they are not at present, the national assets and any future National Government will certainly realise their responsibility of maintaining the railways in proper order and it will be their business to see whether the railways should be improved and also whether the third class travelling should be improved or not. So far as we are concerned, we have absolutely no faith in the present Government and we do not believe for a moment that third class travelling is going to be improved or the several complaints which we have been making since several years and which are voiced almost every year in this House are going to be remedied at any time by the present Government. Therefore, we are not prepared to vote for this increase of fares.

Sir, the Honourable the Railway Member has mentioned three objects in his speech. One of them is the participation of railways in road services and the development of railways in accordance with the Government's general policy of road and rail transport. We are ignorant as to how the railways are going to participate in the future road services and what their policy is with regard to the development of road and rail transport. We do not know how they are going to

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improve them; but we are conscious of one fact, namely, that a huge fund that was being built by taxation on petrol has not been used in the past or even now on the development of roads and we are having as bad roads, if not worse, as we were having several years ago. Therefore, we are not going to vote even on that ground for an increase of railway fares in order to facilitate these improvements.

Mr. Frank E. Anthony (Nominated Non-Official): Sir, the Honourable the Railways and War Transport Member has been particularly lavish of late in paying tributes to the railwaymen in this country and it is because of this that I feel I must deplore the sweeping allegations made by my Honourable friend, Dr. Banerjee, about the inefficiency of railway servants. If he had qualified or particularised his statement, there might have been some justification for it.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: Except the Anglo-Indians.

Mr. Frank E. Anthony: Except everyone. Any one who is aware of the increasingly difficult and unfavourable circumstances under which the railwaymen have had to do their work in this country must be aware of the fact also that only unqualified praise is their due. No service in this country under such hostile and unfavourable circumstances has made a more valuable contribution to India's war effort than India's railwaymen. But unfortunately, in spite of the tributes that the Honourable the War Transport Member has rightly paid to the railwaymen, it seems to have become the policy of the railways to stop short at tributes. They seem to have forgotten, or choose not to remember, the wonderful record of service that India's railwaymen have given to them, a record of pioneering, of achievement, of building and of maintaining the railways at a level of efficiency which compares favourably with the railways of any part of the world. I would ask the Railways and War Transport Member to translate his tributes into some practical expression of appreciation. Do not stop short at paying tributes which the men have earned. They deserve more than that. They cannot be satisfied with mere verbal bouquets. Today they are doing, as they have always done, a magnificent job of work. All that they ask from you in return is some amelioration, some partial measure of relief, of the increasingly impossible living conditions to which they are being exposed today. They have made possible the enormously increased profits which the railways have earned and are earning. It is the railway employees who have made these enormous earnings and they have the right to demand from you some measure of relief from the earnings which they and they alone have made it possible for you to have. They ask from you a little bread, but so far your policy has been a policy of offering them in return stones, stones of a bitter policy of denial to the railwaymen, on the one hand, and of building up enormous profits and reserves on the other. Although the War Transport Member may not be aware of it, those of us who are in touch with railwaymen and who know their immediate needs and desires know that the railwaymen are amongst the most hard-hit of all workers in this country today. And unfortunately they can see no tendency on the part of the Railway Administration to afford them the slightest relief. Grain shops, of which much capital has been made by the Railway Administration, might have brought some relief to those who are known as the menial staff and to those who are in the lower strata of life, but to persons who are drawing anything from Rs. 150 to Rs. 300 a month these grain shops are virtually futile and are bringing no appreciable relief. A man who is getting Rs. 150 a month has to pay for his more numerous needs in the open market at prices which are about 400 per cent. above their pre-war level. All manner of tortuous, unacceptable—I won't say dishonest—arguments are trotted out from time to time in order to deny to the railwaymen their proper share of relief. This bogey of inflation, which my friend, Mr. Jamnadas Mehta, so violently attacks and exposes and which is paraded as an argument against affording the railwaymen some measure of relief, convinces no one and deceives no one. If what the Honourable the Railways and War Transport Member tells us is told him by the Honourable the Finance Member

and is correct, namely, that the inflationary tendency in this country can only be kept down by keeping down wages, then there will be some consistency if this deflationary principle were applied to all wage earners in this country. Don't use it only to deny railwaymen. I shall speak at greater length on this subject in a cut motion which I have put down. The workers who are doing not a whit more than the railwaymen towards war effort, the workers in Gun Carriage and Ordnance factories are getting all manner of allowances. This bogey of inflation which the Government are trotting out, in season and out of season, has not prevented a foreman in the Gun Carriage Factory who was getting Rs. 750 a month before the war, by various war time allowances from receiving today about Rs. 1,300 as his salary. Today with allowances which are euphemistically called, furniture and education allowances and so on, he almost gets double his previous salary. I say if you want to do any justice to railwaymen, if you are really concerned to look after your most valuable workers, then at least see that there is some consistency in the application of this alleged deflationary policy. Do not deny to railwaymen the same measure of relief which you are giving to the foremen and others in the Gun Carriage factory. If you give some relief to a railway worker who is getting Rs. 125, does it mean that it will amount to accentuation in the inflationary spiral? At the same time to give by way of allowances Rs. 550 to a foreman drawing Rs. 750 pre-war salary and thus bringing up his salary to Rs. 1,300 it does not amount to inflation! Let there be some consistency at least in the application of this policy of yours. By denying this relief to a few thousand railwaymen in this country, how do you propose to place any kind of effective check on the inflationary spiral? Today we know that there are thousands of American and British troops in this country in receipt of high war-time levels of income and they are buying almost all their things in the military canteens at pre-war prices with the result that they have in their hands an enormous margin of purchasing power over which the Honourable the Finance Member has absolutely no control and has so far not been able to do anything to mop up this tremendous margin of purchasing power. Still, when it comes to giving a little relief to railwaymen, you deny it to them. You deny giving to railwaymen a paltry dearness allowance on the ground that you want to check inflation in this country.

Sir, under State management of railways one would have thought that the lot of railwaymen would have improved. Unfortunately with the acquisition of company railways by Government, the lot of the railwaymen has progressively deteriorated. When you talk to railwaymen, a majority of them will tell you that the old company days were synonymous with a system of despotism, but it was a benevolent despotism. The General Managers and officials who worked in the company-owned railways knew their men, they got to know their men, they tried to understand their needs and cater for their needs. But since these company railways have been taken over by the State, there has been a progressive overlooking and relegation to the background of the real needs of the railwaymen. Today, believe me, Sir, there is no security of employment for railwaymen in some of the State-owned railways. The Honourable Member for War Transport may not agree with me. Whenever any case is sent up, I do not say it is deliberate, but it has become a matter of policy finally to endorse the action of officials in the lower strata. Today, Sir, in the name of discipline, under the aegis of discipline, I do not say in all the railways, but in railways like the G.I.P., particularly, all manner of official licence, all manner of official abuses are practised with impunity. And I venture to say that there is no service of Government where there is less security for employees as for men in the railway services. There is no service of Government where a servant of this Government is more completely at the mercy and whim of the autocratic official. The Honourable Member usually talks of discipline. We all realise the need for discipline in the present day crisis, but it is merely an excuse today, an excuse to cover up all manner of official licence and malpractice. If discipline is so important, then I would advise the Gov-

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ernment of India to militarise the whole of the railways. Let the military authorities take over all the railways, let them be completely militarised. They will then maintain discipline. I deal largely with both the military and the railway authorities, and can say without qualification that a soldier in the army has a much greater chance of justice and fair play and of getting a hearing than a railway employee. If you want discipline, then militarise the railways, hand over the railways to the military and I shall be the first to endorse that policy because I know that under the military regime a railway employee will have some chance of being listened to, he will have some chance of getting justice, of getting fair play.

An Honourable Member: Where will the Honourable War Transport Member go?

Mr. Frank R. Anthony: He will join the Army. The Honourable Member envisaged in his Budget Speech greater burdens to railwaymen. He said that they had already to work under very difficult circumstances, but they would have to face even more difficult circumstances and he would expect even greater effort from them. I do not know how he proposes to extract this extra work from railwaymen. I would ask him if he is really serious about getting every available ounce of effort from railwaymen, if he is really serious about it, to effect some change of heart in the railway administration. Do not blindly endorse everything that your officials tell you. Do not sow seeds of class warfare and class discrimination. You have already begun to sow seeds of class warfare and class discrimination. Everything that the worker or a subordinate employee does is wrong, equally everything that a higher official does is right and justified. If this policy, if this ominous tendency in railways of blindly supporting the official class against workers is persisted in, it will bring to fruition the most bitter class warfare in this country. Already your railway administration is beginning to be characterised by the more unfortunate characteristics of capitalist exploitation, of making enormous profits and of denying to your workers some share in the profits which they were instrumental in earning for you, and on the other hand of upholding, in season and out of season, rightly or wrongly, the official class against your workers, and against your subordinate employees. I would ask the Honourable Member for War Transport to try to effect some change of heart. I deal with this subject now as a man who is in daily touch with thousands of railway workers. I know these men, they are hard working, honest folk, they have their real grievances, go to them, try to find out directly from them what their grievances are. It should not be *infra dig* for the higher officials to move with the railway worker. Don't try to find out their grievances from the officials who have no contact with them. By this method alone you will be able to attract additional work from the railwaymen. I have no doubt about it. If you will try to go to the railway worker and meet him and give him a little consideration, give him some measure of relief to improve the living conditions which he is facing today, you will find that it will pay handsome dividends. He will respond to your call for extra effort. If you think that by intensifying your present system of terrorising railwaymen, attempting to extort work from them, you can carry on the administration, then all I can say is you would stultify your own purpose, you will retard the war effort. I would appeal to the Honourable Member to pay some attention to the views of leaders of railwaymen like my Honourable friend, Mr. Jamnadas Mehta and myself. Don't be led away in the belief that all that we say is seen with jaundiced eyes of the railway workers. What we tell you is the result of actual experience, after sifting their grievances. They come to us and present their grievances and after satisfying ourselves about the truth of those grievances, we place them before you for redress. As I say, Sir, if you want the railway worker to respond more heartily to the needs for greater effort, you cannot pursue a policy which at present has not produced very great results and which, if persisted in, will only tend to accentuate the already keen resentment among railway workers. Today with this policy of denying everything possible to the railway worker, you will not even

make the smallest concession to the railwaymen. When even comparatively small matters are placed before the Railway Board, they are as a matter of course rejected.

Let me give the House one instance, which unfortunately is an instance which refers particularly to my community. But it is symptomatic of the way in which the railway administration today is prepared to treat its best employees. When the railways were in a hole, they wanted volunteers for war units, known as military railway operating units. Quite rightly they said that the volunteers from my community would get certain facilities, to which we have been accustomed, namely, accommodation, rations and other things. They got these volunteers by the hundred. They filled that gap, they helped you out of a hole; and then after you had used them you suddenly found that those facilities which you offered them did not cover railway travelling. The result was grotesque and monstrous; the man who in a civilian capacity for years had enjoyed, say, second class travelling, because he volunteered on the terms which the railway offered him was degraded to third class travelling. If you refer a matter like this to the Railway Board they begin to indulge in hair-splitting and technicalities. Here is a man who volunteered and did a yeoman job for you and yet you indulge in a technicality in order to do him out of something that he deserves. It has been characterised by these men,—and they have come to me by the score,—as a gross breach of faith on the part of the railway administration: and if that is going to be the attitude towards men who volunteered for service, then today you have plumbed the lowest depths of injustice.

Sir, there is one important matter which I would ask the Railway Member to apply his mind to. It is the case of men,—and there are many of them,—who have volunteered for service in the railways. They have also volunteered for military service but the railways will not release them because they are required for railway work. We know that appointments, in a very large degree after the war to the railways, will be made from among those men who have a record of military service. These men who today are working on the railways and who are not allowed to volunteer for military service will not be able to show this record of service. I would ask the Railway Member to devise some provisions for them and to see that they are not penalised for no fault of theirs and because they have no record of military service.

Finally, I think it is a good thing that the State is going to acquire the South Indian and the Madras and Southern Mahratta Railways. One of the most urgent needs of today is a need which has long been overdue, and that is the need for introducing some co-ordination, some uniformity in the conditions of service on all the different State-managed railways in this country. No two railways have the same conditions of service; no two railways have the same rules governing emoluments, allowances and so forth. Today when most of the railways will be under State control I would ask the War Transport Member to introduce this long-due measure of reform. Introduce some uniformity in the conditions of service and allowances and emoluments in all the railways in India. It will lead to satisfaction and you will remove the appalling conditions that obtain in some of the railways like the South Indian and the G. I. P. Railways.

Lastly, Sir, I will conclude by repeating my appeal to the Honourable Member. Because you are today earning enormous profits on account of the effort which has been made for you by the railway men, you are in a position to afford them some measure of relief. Tributes, however lavish and grandiloquent, can bring no comfort to the economically hard-pressed railwayman. Give him something of a fair deal; you can give it to him if you choose to. If you do that you will find that it will not only pay you handsomely but the increased response that you have asked for from the railwaymen will be forthcoming in abundant measure.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: Sir, I propose to make a short speech just now by way of introduction to the speeches which I propose to make during the next few days. Although I intended to make many speeches I am afraid I may not have many

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opportunities on account of the cut which the Governor General or the Government of India have made in the number of days on which we can discuss the railway budget. As I happen to be an old Member of this House I remember that when the question of separation of the railway budget from the general budget was discussed I felt then that it may be an advantage to the Legislative Assembly if the two budgets were separated, and if at the same time a much longer time was made available to the Legislature for the discussion of the two budgets. I thought at that time that the railways did not receive sufficient attention during the discussion of a budget which contained both the general budget as well as the railway budget. I also happened at that time to be a member of the committee which considered the question of the separation of the railway budget from the general budget, and from the point of view which I held at that time I insisted in the committee that the discussion of the railway budget should have no less than six days provided for it, and so far as my memory goes, that was put in the Convention itself. But today we are given only three days instead of six, including a day for the general discussion. I want to know from the Government of India whether their faith in the Parliamentary control of Government has become dimmed and is being reduced along with the number of days which the Government of India have given for discussion of the railway budget. Sir, I ask the protection of the Chair in this matter because in my judgment the Chair is the guardian of the privileges of the Legislature. The Government of India are taking away that precious privilege of the Legislature. I feel that it is still possible for them to allocate a larger number of days for the discussion of the railway budget. It is no argument to say that some Members of the Legislature choose to absent themselves from the discussions here and so the number of days should be reduced. That is no justification for this reduction. I, therefore, feel, Sir, that you as the Chair should protect the rights of the Legislature and insist that no less than six days shall be allocated for the discussion of the railway budget in this Legislature and that the Government of India are in honour bound to follow the Convention which they have agreed to.

Having said that much I would say that during these days when money is so plentiful and overflowing the framing of a budget is child's play. I do not wish to say that the Honourable Member does not spend a lot of his time in supervising the administration of the railways, but surely to make a budget and show a surplus at this time is not a very difficult thing. Fortunately these Members of the Executive Council help each other. The Honourable the Finance Member by following the policy of inflation is making it easy for the Railway Member to get cheap money so that he can show huge profits and also try to be generous and promise at some future date some facilities for passengers. These are days when the profits of the Railways are to be counted by crores and crores; in any case we are having a profit of more than fifty crores. Now, Sir, the question is how did the profits come, what has to be done with them. The profit has come, in my humble judgment, on account of: (i) the policy of inflation which the Honourable the Finance Member has consistently followed in order that this country should overflow with money; and (ii) on account of, as my Honourable friend, Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi, has said, the Railways having established monopoly or the Government of India having established monopoly for the Railways. These being the causes of the profits, let us see. . . .

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman (Finance Member): Non-existent causes.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: . . . how these profits are being distributed. A large part of the profit goes to the tax-payer—the General Revenues. As the tax-payer in this country is responsible for the finances of the Indian Railways, I am not against the General Revenues getting something out of the profits of the Railways. If the tax-payer is to be responsible for the losses of the Railways, the tax-payer is also entitled to have a share in the profits made by the

Indian Railways. But, Sir, the tax-payer in India, as I know him, does not want to benefit beyond what is due to him. I feel, Sir, that the profits which the tax-payer is given against his wishes are more than he desires. The tax-payer takes some risks on account of the money which is invested in the Indian Railways. By all means, therefore, give him his due share, but the tax-payer is at present, in my judgment, given a much larger share than he either deserves or he needs. What the Government of India is doing is not only giving to the tax-payer what he deserves on account of the responsibility taken by him for the finances of the Indian Railways, but the Government of India wants the railway finances to contribute as a fresh taxation on the general population of this country. The rates and fares are made to contribute as a fresh taxation on the Indian people. I feel, Sir, that a tax on transportation is wrong in principle and inequitable in its application. A fair measure of taxation is one which falls on the people according to their ability to pay. A tax on transportation does not fall on the people according to their ability to pay; it falls in unequal measure. Therefore, Sir, it is a wrong tax.

Secondly, the Government of India is paying the tax-payer in a double way: It is paying a certain amount of money to the General Revenues in a direct way and also putting in the Reserve an equally large amount of money. I feel that the tax-payer does not need the benefit of both these methods. If you are having a Reserve Fund then you need not pay the tax-payer for the responsibility which the tax-payer takes for the finances of the Indian Railways. If there is enough Reserve Fund as a sort of a fund for equalization of profits then where is the need for paying the tax-payer by way of addition to the General Revenues again? I feel that you need not have a Reserve Fund for equalization of profits and also pay tax-payer for the responsibility which the tax-payer takes for the finances of the Indian Railways.

I am not against the Railways building up Reserves. My Honourable friend, Sir Henry Richardson, pointed out certain methods of using the Railway Reserve Fund. He mentioned equalization of profits. May I also suggest to the Honourable the Transport Member that there are other equally necessary and equally useful methods of using your Reserve. I feel that there is necessity for equalization of wages and there is necessity for improvement of the conditions of work of the Indian railwaymen. I remember the times when the railwaymen have suffered on account of the depressed financial conditions in this country and therefore a part of the Reserve must be given for equalizing and improving the conditions of life and work of Indian railwaymen. I feel that the Government of India have made no provision for this purpose. I am very grateful to my Honourable friend, Mr. Anthony, for having pointedly referred to various grievances of the Indian railwaymen. I shall not on this occasion go over that question in detail, but I shall content myself by pointing out that there are several ways in which the conditions of the Indian railwaymen can be improved. The Indian railwayman has suffered on account of inflation, but the Honourable the Finance Member says that the dearness allowance must not be increased beyond a certain limit, because the payment of dearness allowance will give rise to inflation. Sir, it is a very wonderful argument. You cause inflation and then you are unwilling to pay those people who are the victims of inflation because payment to them will mean inflation again.

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: You blame the Government for inflation, but you are not willing to support any measures to counter-act it.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: The inflation is not due to payment of dearness allowance to workers. The inflation is due to your bad currency policy. Therefore, if you want to check inflation, change your currency policy.

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: Mystical terms will not get you any further.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: We shall discuss that subject when the next budget comes. There are many improvements needed in the life and conditions of

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work of Indian railway workmen. The hours of work in India are terribly long for them. There are stations where the Station Master and the Assistant Station Master have to work twelve hours a day; they cannot leave the railway station for twelve hours. We want the Indian Railways to give reasonable conditions of work. If the Honourable Member had suggested that the Reserve Fund should be utilized to build up a Fund which will enable the Government of India to reduce the hours of work for the railwaymen, I could understand it. But he makes no such proposal.

Then, Sir, the Indian Railways have got a Provident Fund system. The benefit of that fund is given only to a small number of chosen people. We would like the Provident Fund to be given to all railwaymen. Unfortunately, the Honourable the Transport Member has not said a word about this method of using the Reserve Fund.

One word about what the Government of India is doing in respect of the import of locomotives and wagons. My Honourable friend, Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi, was quite right in saying that if you are able to get shipping space for importing 600 locomotives or more, for importing 5,000 wagons or more, and so on, surely you could have got shipping space to import machinery and you could have started building locomotives and wagons in India. The Government of India have to explain why they did not do so. I am not suggesting, Sir, that the locomotives which are needed today and the wagons which are needed today should not be imported. But during the last three or four years the Government of India could have imported machinery and workshops could have been working to build locomotives and wagons. Government has failed in this matter.

There is one matter on which I shall speak a few words i.e., regarding the conditions of travel for the third class passengers. Sir, the conditions are abominable and the people in this country have to travel under conditions under which no human being should be asked to travel. Even in war time the Government of India must give greater attention to the conditions under which people have to travel. We understand, Sir, that during a war you cannot have more coaches. You cannot have enough locomotives. You have also dismantled certain railways. But the Government of India must remember that they have created a monopoly on account of petrol shortage and on account of the various steps which they have taken. If they have created a monopoly it is their duty to see that people are enabled to travel under proper conditions.

Now, Sir, I shall refer to one very small matter before I sit down. I find that one of the reforms which I suggested in the administration of Indian railways, that the Railway Inspector should not be under the Railway Board, has been agreed to and the Railway Inspector is now under the Posts and Air Department. Sir, the change is good, but I do not understand the propriety of putting the Railway Inspector under the Posts and Air Department. In any case the Airways are also responsible for accidents taking place and a time may come when like the Railway Inspector we may have an Airways Inspector to see that people do not suffer from accidents. I thought, Sir, that the Government of India could have put the Inspector of Railways under the control of the Labour Department, which in my judgment is a Department for the welfare of the people, or under some other department.

Mr. Deputy President (Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta): Your time is up.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: I shall not take more than a minute. The Railway Inspector could even be under the Home Department, which we do not like, but which, at least in theory, is responsible for the safety of the lives of the citizens of this country. But I would not like the Inspector of Railways to be under a Department which is also a department likely to be responsible for causing accidents.

Sir, I have done.

Sardar Mangal Singh (East Punjab: Sikh): I wholeheartedly support the suggestion which has been made by my Honourable friend, Mr. Joshi, that more

days should be allotted for the discussion of the Railway Budget. A budget in which crores and crores of rupees are involved is only given three days for discussion. I fully agree with my Honourable friend, Mr. Joshi, that at least six days should be allotted for the discussion of this budget.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: At least follow the Convention; honour your Convention!

Sardar Mangal Singh: The speech which we heard the other day by the Honourable the War Transport Member was a very poor performance in this House. Never before has the budget speech of the Railway Member been criticised in this House as well as outside in the country as it has been done this time. It has created bitterness, disaffection and despair all over the country. When there were crores and crores of rupees of income in the Railway Department, we were expecting that the Government would come forward with some proposal of relief to the poor third class passengers in the shape of a reduction in fares. I entirely agree with my Honourable friend, Mr. Jamnadas Mehta, when he said that the child is inside, the mother on the footboard and the father is on the platform when the train whistles and moves. Under these conditions it is inhuman to charge more fare than what was being charged previously.

Sir, the arguments advanced by the Honourable the War Transport Member for the increase of fares are very amazing. He says inflation or deflation. If that is the argument, then we should be prepared to hear from the Honourable the Finance Member many more proposals for taxation. They might increase the postal rates, the telegram rates, the telephone rates, etc., in order to bring down inflation. Sir, this proposal for the increase in the railway fares has been opposed by every section of public opinion in this House as well as outside in the country. May I ask the Honourable the War Transport Member that he will get up this evening and in deference to public opinion he will declare in this House that he is not going to press that proposal and that he will withdraw it in view of the vehemence and strength of public opinion expressed in the press and platform and in this House also. I have absolutely no sympathy for the Honourable the Railway Member when there is not a single non-official Member who has said a good word for him or for his performance in this House. Formerly, I remember when there was any statement from the Honourable the Railway Member that there has been so much income the House used to cheer him, but this time his speech has created a gloom in all parts of this House.

Now, Sir, I do not wish to cover the points which have already been covered by the other speakers. I wish to bring to his particular attention the sufferings and the hardships experienced by the public in my part of the country. I speak with full responsibility when I say to the Honourable the Railway Member that he has not treated this part of the country fairly. Shall I say that he has been particularly vindictive because he had a controversy with the Punjab Ministers? Shall we presume it that he has treated this part of the country vindictively because he had a certain controversy with the Honourable Sardar Baldev Singh or the Honourable Sir Chhotu Ram? Now what has he done on the North Western Railway? Seventy-one railway trains have been cut down, ostensibly for the reason that there was a shortage of coal. I ask the Honourable the Railway Member what reason has he to cut down such a large number of trains? Again, Sir, in cutting down such a large number of trains the department has selected those trains which were most suitable and convenient for the public. I shall give you an instance. In my city of Ludhiana there were three trains coming from different directions at 10 o'clock; that was for the convenience of the litigant public; and what has the department done? They have cut down all these three trains and the litigant public has to come one day earlier in time for the courts. I ask the Honourable the Railway Member to go there and make inquiries and see for himself how the people are cursing his department. If he has to cut down certain trains, only those trains should be cut down which are least convenient for the public. Therefore, I say that the Railway Department has treated the public in this part of the country from which I come

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most vindictively; they have cut down 71 trains and they have selected those trains which were most convenient to the public, and further they have stopped loading—probably to punish the Punjab growers so that the prices of these things may come down. I charge the Railway Board

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: Do not give them grain.

Sardar Mangal Singh: I say, Sir, that he has treated us vindictively.

Then what about overcrowding in the Punjab? There is overcrowding all over the country; I have travelled all over the country; but I have never seen such overcrowding as you will see in the Punjab. I invite the Honourable the Railway Member to pay a visit to this part of the country and see how the trains are overcrowded. This is to use a mild expression; they are overcrushed, suffocated; why? Because in this part of the country about 10 lakhs of people have joined the army; and of them at least one lakh is on leave and moving about; and if you see the trains in which these military people are sitting, they will not allow any civilian to come in; they may be lying down while people get crushed or left over on the platforms. Several lakhs of people have joined the army and they come and go on leave and so there is overcrowding. The railway has cut down 71 trains and so this has made things absolutely unbearable and I would invite the Honourable the Railway Member seriously to take up this point and reconsider the whole position, and if possible restore those trains immediately in the Punjab. It is almost a war necessity, I should say.

I was rather surprised when the Honourable the War Transport Member interrupted my Honourable friend, Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi, when he said "You can find space for so many wagons but you cannot find space for the machinery for the manufacture of these wagons". The Honourable the War Transport Member got up and said "Who said that?" I say, you said that. The Government of India has been saying that you have sent orders abroad for the import of so many wagons: why could you not import machinery to manufacture these wagons? In this House and all over the country everybody has been vehemently demanding from the Government of India that locomotives and wagons should be manufactured in this country, but the Government of India of which the Honourable the War Transport Member is a member now, has been persistently and consistently evading this issue. Now, when he is short of wagons and short of locomotives, he has sent an S.O.S. to other countries to send wagons here. It is the Government of India that is to blame. They have reduced the number of trains in the Punjab on the ostensible reason that there is a coal shortage. Very few people in this country know the coal position better than the Honourable the Railway Member. He is personally acquainted with the coal conditions in this country; but I would again remind him that the colliery owners in this country have not done their duty, have not faithfully worked the coal mines and—I do not say deliberately but somehow or other for reasons best known to themselves—it may be profiteering or something else—the colliery owners who are mostly Europeans in this country have not worked the coal mines properly, and in this way they have sabotaged the transport system of this country. I hope the Honourable the Railway Member will look into this matter and set right the coal industry so that the transport may go on regularly and normally.

I make these observations in no spirit of controversy or criticism; I make these observations in order to bring to his personal notice and attention that these are the grievances and the hardships borne by the public in my part of the country; and if he personally examines these questions I hope he will take immediate steps to remove them, so that the unnecessary hardships to which the public in my part of the country are put may be removed. Sir, I have done.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: Sir, I should like to commence my remarks by expressing my appreciation

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: On a point of order, Sir: Will it be that we will be allowed to speak hereafter or that we cannot speak after the Railway Member has spoken?

Nawabzada Muhammad Liaquat Ali Khan (Rohilkund and Kumaon Divisions: Muhammadan Rural): Of course, we will be entitled to speak.

Mr. Deputy President (Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta): That will depend upon the time.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: If no other Honourable Member will be permitted to speak after me according to the Rules of the House, I shall be quite prepared to speak at a little later stage.

Mr. Deputy President (Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta): There is no trouble. The Honourable the Transport Member has said that if there are any other Honourable Members wanting to speak, he will speak later on. Mr. Neogy.

Mr. K. C. Neogy (Dacca Division: Non-Muhammadan Rural): Sir, this is the second annual budget which the Honourable Sir Edward Benthall has presented to this House describing himself as the War Transport Member—I am referring to the description which he has chosen to give to himself in the official copy of the speech that he delivered the other day. I thought that so

4 P. M. far as the railway budget is concerned we have to deal with the Honourable Member in charge of Railways, and when I looked up the list of subjects

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: The War Transport Member is in charge of War Transport and Railways.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: When I looked up the list of subjects which are included in the War Transport Department I did not find any reference to the railways at all. The Railway Department, I take it, is a separate department, though it so happens that the Member in charge of Railways is also the Member in charge of War Transport. My Honourable friend may be quite enamoured of his war paint, and it is perhaps because he wants to treat the Indian railways as a machine of warfare rather than as a commercial proposition that he chooses to be taken as the War Transport Member and not the Member in charge of Railways. The warfare which he has to conduct is directed as much against the Axis Powers as against the travelling public. My Honourable friend, Mr. Joshi, wanted from the Honourable Member in charge a declaration of the faith of Government in parliamentary control over railway administration. I think I have taken him down correctly.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: They have broken the Convention.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: Mr. Joshi and myself well recollect the imagery in which Sir Charles Innes indulged while presenting the first separated railway budget in the Legislative Assembly in 1925. He said, "I should like to be treated as the chairman of a company presiding over the annual meeting of the shareholders", and he added that that was the respective positions to which he thought the Government and the Legislature should approximate. Now, Sir, 18 years after that, Sir Edward Benthall, interrupting my Honourable friend, Mr. Nauman, when he was speaking on the railway budget last year, asserted that—It is not the people who are the shareholders of the railways, but it is the Government that really own the railways. If my Honourable friend wants to have the reference, I would ask him to look up the Assembly Debates of the 23rd February, 1943, at page 522. That is what I have got to say to my Honourable friend, Mr. Joshi, in reply to his request for a declaration of policy in this matter.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: I wanted to refer him to the Convention.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: I know something about the Convention. We, some of us, had a hand in the actual shaping of that Convention, and although we were, some of us, sceptical about the soundness of the measure which was then being introduced, we gave our consent to it in the end. Our fear was that in the name of commercial efficiency of the railway system, the control which the Legislature exercised over the railway administration was in danger of being reduced by the acceptance of that Convention. The Convention was a result of certain recommendations made by an expert committee known as the Acworth Committee. The committee which came out shortly after the last Great War

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found certain very startling and fundamental defects in the railway administration and made certain recommendations of a very fundamental character. As a result of those recommendations, the Secretary of State has relaxed his authority over the Government of India in regard to railway administration. The Government of India, in their turn, have delegated a good deal of their authority and power in favour of the General Managers. Again, within the Government of India itself, the Finance Department has relaxed its control over the railway administration. In the picturesque language used by Sir William Acworth in referring to a similar system that he recommended for adoption in the case of the Austrian railways, under the scheme of separation of railway finance from the general finance, the duty of the Finance Department would consist of "barking" and not "biting", that is to say, henceforward the Finance Department would be content to be a sort of watchdog and not interfere in the administration of the railways in a meticulous fashion. Sir, the Railway Department has further achieved one other point. The audit that used to be exercised by and on behalf of the Auditor General, has been relaxed as a part of the separation of the railway finance from the general finance—another sequel to the treatment of the Railway Department as a commercial department. The audit staff in the past used to be responsible also for the accounting of the railway. The accounting has now been transferred to a staff of officers who are directly under the railway administration, and the Auditor General has to content himself with a percentage audit only, a very small percentage of the cases being actually brought under review by his representatives. All these measures which followed one after another as a sequel to the adoption of the separation Convention have made the Railway Department completely independent. And now my Honourable friend comes from a commercial community and he is put in charge of this department, for the reason that the railways have to be treated as a commercial proposition. He ignores all the assurances that were held out to us in regard to the control of the Legislature and in regard to the relations between the railways and the public. He ignores all that and asserts that it is the Government and not the people that really own the railways.

My Honourable friend's attitude in regard to constitutional reforms is not unknown to us. Years ago he gave his blessing to, or rather he associated himself with, a particular circular which goes by his name and which I find has been enshrined in the pages of a published book. I am not going to embarrass my Honourable friend by making any quotation from that . . .

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: My Honourable friend won't embarrass me at all. I only wanted to know what is that book.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: My Honourable friend's remarks in regard to democratic changes in the system of Government are rather interesting in this connection, because what he said there was :

"It must not, however, be supposed that when we agree that reforms are necessary, we advocate democratic reform. All that we mean is such change in the system of Government as will improve its efficiency."

I suppose my Honourable friend still holds that view, and that reflects his attitude towards this House while dealing with the railway budget. Now, the Acworth Committee held out the hope that, although the Legislature would under this system be expected to relax its control in regard to the details of administration, it would still be in a position to discuss and determine questions of policy. Moreover, they recommended the setting up of several advisory councils, with the Central Advisory Council at the top, for the purpose of bringing public opinion into closer touch with the Indian railway administration than hitherto had been the case.

Now, Sir, how is the Central Advisory Council being treated? I have in my hand the proceedings of the Central Advisory Council meeting of the 16th November, 1943, and I find that it has a very distinguished personnel, I mean the Honourable Sir David Devadoss, Mr. Stokes, Dr. Sir Ratanji Dalal, Khan

Bahadur Muhammad Shahban, Sir F. E. James and others, and yet what do we find? I am quoting from the proceedings of the Council. This is what it says—

“The Council voted against any increase of passenger fares in principle, two members dissenting—.”

That is out of 20 or so present. And what respect has the Honourable Member shown to the opinion of that Council in regard to this matter, and what respect has he shown to this House or to another body elected by this House, namely, the Standing Finance Committee for Railways? I shall give one illustration in regard to the powers of the Standing Finance Committee, and that is in connection with the scheme for cheap grain shops. It is a scheme that was very generally and briefly referred to by the Honourable Member in his last year's speech, and I find that whereas they thought that it would cost three crores of rupees, the expenditure has reached ten crores during the current year; and not a word of it was said to the Standing Finance Committee. This proposal was never put before the Standing Finance Committee for sanction, and I find that at a meeting which was held only on the 16th December last, certain members noticed this subject for the first time. This is what the proceedings say:

In regard to cheap grain shops questions were raised as to why the concession of cheap grains was allowed to railway servants irrespective of pay and why the approval of the Standing Finance Committee for Railways to the grant of this concession and to the provision of funds for the purchase of grains for the running of these shops had not been obtained. It was also alleged that the rations allowed to railway servants were in excess of requirements, and part of them had found their way into the black market, and so on.”

This is the complaint which the Standing Finance Committee for Railways had to make, and I should like to know from the Honourable Member whether this is the way he proposes to deal with the Standing Finance Committee and this House.

I should like to say something about locomotives because I find that the Acworth Committee had something to say on this subject as well:

“The Great War is an explanation, if not an excuse, for many practices which no one would defend under normal circumstances Till quite recently, India produced hardly any of the supplies that her railways require. Locomotives, carriages, wagons, or at least their component parts were all imported from Europe. Even now, India produces only a very small part of what she needs.”

It seems as if these observations were made with reference to the present day conditions. If the Acworth Committee or any other Committee of a like nature were to be appointed today, they would perhaps have to make the very same observations. What have the Government been doing all these years? My Honourable friend was quite upset when it was pointed out that we are not going to import machinery for the manufacture of wagons and locomotives. (*An Honourable Member*: “Because it would prejudice the position of European manufacturers.”) The manufacture of locomotives, I find, has been included among the list of subjects with which the new Member, Mr Misra, is concerned, as a part of post-war reconstruction programme of the Railways. Speaking last year, I think my Honourable friend also pointed out that although it might be desirable to start the manufacture of locomotives, practical difficulties stand in the way of starting operations now. So, my Honourable friends who raised this point were not altogether wrong when they thought that Government had no serious intention of starting the work now.

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

I should like to say just a few words about the coal scandal. My Honourable friend in his budget speech has referred to the very serious position about the stocks of coal. He says that the stocks of coal on the railways have fallen to the lowest figure on record. What are the reasons? We had a discussion only a few days ago regarding the question of employment of women underground in this connection. I do think and I do assert that the railways have made their own contribution to the shortage of coal. I have no time to deal at length with this point, but I would read out just one sentence from a memorandum which is

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being submitted or has been submitted to the Coal Commissioner, and where the position has been summarised. This is what it says:

"The introduction of the system of half Rake supply, Bulk supplies, abolition of Group Supply system and the gradual reduction of the total number of Provincial quota wagons definitely reacted adversely on the output of small collieries since the beginning of 1943."

I very much hope that my Honourable friend's past affiliations do not stand in the way of a fair consideration of the claims of the smaller collieries which produce second rate coal. But, Sir, it is alleged that they are not having a fair deal, and that they are being treated in a stepmotherly fashion; and although they are in a position to increase their output, I do believe they are not getting the facilities which they can very reasonably expect.

There is only one other matter to which I should like to refer in this connection and that is a scandal of the first magnitude. For the last one year or so, I have been pursuing a point in this House as regards the shortage of stocks in the collieries. At long last, on the 7th February, I was given this answer by the Honourable Dr. Ambedkar:

"Coal stocks were checked at the end of May, 1943, and a shortage of over 2 million tons was found during 1942. A number of collieries had given fictitious figures of raisings probably in order to obtain a better wagon allotment. Proceedings have been taken against a number of collieries for submitting incorrect returns."

I want to tell the House that this evil has been going on for a number of years. False returns by bogus collieries have obtained for them wagon facilities; have obtained for them orders from the Railway Department for coal; and it required a series of questions on my part to get the position cleared up. The evil is of a greater magnitude, as far as I understand, than appears from this short answer. It is an instance of the prevalence of corruption in the railways, and it is an instance which shows utter inefficiency on the part of the higher controlling authorities even in a matter of such vital importance as coal supply. This state of affairs has been allowed to go on from year to year. I want to tell my Honourable friend candidly that I have heard charges of a very serious character in connection with this matter, not today but for the last two or three years; and if some of those charges are really well founded, some very responsible officers deserve to be dealt with severely. I am glad to find that some of the people who submitted misleading returns are being proceeded against, but there are responsible officers of the Railway Department who should be called upon to explain how this shortage was not brought to light, and the bogus collieries went on getting the patronage of the Railway Department from year's end to year's end.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: I think the stocks referred to were the property of the public.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: But the coal should have been available to the public today. There is no coal available corresponding to the figures by which the stocks were short. That is my point. You are faced with a great crisis.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: I am sorry the public collieries seem to have faked their stocks.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: I take my stand on the statement made by the Honourable Dr. Ambedkar that the object of submitting fictitious returns was to get certain facilities from the Railway Department and they got those facilities all right. But for this mismanagement and corruption, there would have been this, if not a larger, stock in the collieries today. The Honourable Member had better tighten up his control rather than take umbrage at frank observations made by the Honourable Members of this House.

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

Mr. K. C. Neogy: Just one word more. I take it my Honourable friend has read Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas' observations on his budget, which appeared this morning. He says:

"The colossal surplus shown by the Railway budget is no consolation for the country but make them wonder where the country is being led to."

Let me remind the House that Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas was a member of the Acworth Committee and had a great hand in shaping the Convention under which we have been working all these years.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: Sir, I should like to commence my observations by expressing my appreciation of the personal attitude of Honourable Members towards me when I am supporting an unpopular measure and I can assure my Honourable friend, Mr. Neogy, that I do not take umbrage at any of the remarks which are made here. It is true that my Honourable friend, Mr. Jamnadas Mehta, remarked that after eighteen months in office I cannot help becoming a dunce or an idiot but with his usual courtesy he mitigated it by saying that at least I was a gentlemanly one. He went on to say that I had caught a contagious disease from my colleague and neighbour, the Finance Member, and I can only assume that he meant to convey that he thinks he has detected us both scratching about for rupees. But I can assure the House that I do appreciate that although there have been strong expressions of opinion against the line which I am advocating, the expressions of opinion have been, on the whole, voiced in such a moderate manner.

I will begin first by answering some of the points raised by Honourable Members and will close my remarks at the end by dealing with the principal subject of the debate, the question of fares. On the question of the policy of cheap food for railwaymen and what is being done for the railwaymen in general, I seem to detect, as often before, a difference of opinion between various Members of the House. Dr. Banerjea and, I understood also, Mr. Neogy, quoting the Standing Finance Committee, appeared to be censuring the Government for the loss of 10 crores of rupees on the railway shops. Dr. Banerjea pointed out that one of the objections of the Standing Finance Committee, or some Members of it, was that cheap food was being supplied not only to the poorer classes of railwaymen but also to the officers. In order that the magnitude of that concession may be properly understood, I should like to inform Dr. Banerjea that the total amount spent on the officers would not exceed 3 lakhs of rupees, at the outside, out of the 10 crores to which he refers. The Standing Finance Committee appeared to take the view that the rations given to the railwaymen were excessive and there was danger of the rations being sold in the black market. That is a point of view with which we do not agree. On the other hand, I found other speakers standing up and saying that, like my friend, Mr. Jamnadas Mehta, in spite of the fact that we have supplied one million maunds of foodgrains monthly to the workers at cheap prices, we are starving the workers. These sort of views are just not consistent and I maintain that, taken as a whole, we are doing a very great deal to mitigate the hardships of war for the railwaymen. The total amount by which the railwaymen are being benefited, given under various headings, amounts to:—under dearness allowance 7.1 crores, under cheap food shops 10 crores and under Defence of India units 1½ crores, or a total of very nearly 19 crores of additional benefits which the railwaymen are getting. And yet my Honourable friends sometimes seem to hesitate to support measures of strengthening the railway finances which will secure the position of the railwaymen in the future.

In connection with staff matters, Mr. Anthony suggested that we had made a breach of faith in the terms which are offered to Anglo-Indian railwaymen when they are enlisted. I must point out that Mr. Anthony apparently did not read the papers when they were circulated in the first place or, if he did, he failed to understand them and to bring to the notice of his people what these papers meant. In any case in the strictures which he applied to the Railway Department he was accusing the wrong Department. The regulations as regards the classes by which the Anglo-Indians are entitled to travel are military regulations. I mention this because the Honourable Member continues to make misleading statements of this sort in spite of the facts having been pointed out to him and I cannot refrain from saying that these misrepresentations are hardly calculated to pre-dispose Honourable Members of Government to respond to his personal appeals.

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Now, Sir, Sir Muhammad Yamin Khan touched on what all of us know to be a very controversial subject, the question of the abolition of the lower gazetted staff. In my Budget speech I made a statement which I thought had met the Committee. I stated there that we were not proceeding with the proposals. He asked me if I would give my reasons for disagreeing with the Committee. But, on the whole, it is better not to ventilate disagreements on communal matters when we are not proceeding with the proposals. We have agreed to abolish the lower gazetted service but the methods of abolition are matters for further consideration.

Dr. P. N. Banerjea: You are putting it aside for the moment.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: Yes, we are putting it aside for the moment in response to the general view of the Standing Finance Committee.

Mr. Lalchand Navarai: For how long?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: One Honourable Member asked what I meant by the appropriate time. I would define that, if the Honourable Member wishes, as the time which the Government considers to be appropriate for bringing it up. The Honourable Member asked that we should bring it up within one year after the war. It is a very difficult phrase, 'within one year after the war'. The war with whom? Is it to be brought up after the armistice or after the signature of the peace? Personally, I think it is better to leave these matters open and bring it up again when the times seem to be ripe, it may even be that the Standing Finance Committee will wish to bring it up again.

On the subject of post-war development, the House expressed a very great deal of interest last year and some time was spent upon it. This year it appears to me that the House is not quite so interested and it seems to me also that possibly this is because the question of paying for post-war development has now come up and paying for these plans is not quite so pleasant a subject as talking about them. All sides of the House, I think, agreed that money must be spent on these amenities.

Dr. P. N. Banerjea: Immediately.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: I find that some Honourable Members wish that money should be spent immediately. But my Honourable friend, Dr. Banerjea, knows that it is extremely difficult to get materials at the present time. The Honourable the Deputy President asked that one of the subjects which we should discuss should be the rating policy, and he expressed surprise that I did not mention it in my speech. The Honourable the Deputy President is quite right, but I have mentioned this in public, at the meeting of the Indian Railway Conference Association when the rating policy for the post-war period was discussed by the President of the Association. It is a most important matter and it is one of those matters, including some of these or all of these which I touched upon in my budget speech which will in due course be discussed by the Post-war Transport Policy Committee which is being set up for the purpose of considering these matters. I take it also that in due course, the Central Advisory Council and the Standing Finance Committee will be seized of some, at any rate, of these various proposals.

My Honourable friend, Dr. Banerjea, made, right at the very beginning of the debate, what I think was a rather damaging, but I feel to be an incorrect statement that lack of transport had heightened the famine in Bengal

Dr. P. N. Banerjea: I said it was a contributory cause.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: That is how I understood it. I should like to point out that on the whole the food programmes of India have been fully implemented. There have, of course, been delays, but there has never been lack of food in Bengal owing to shortage of transport into Bengal. There have been local difficulties in distribution, which I understand have now been very largely got over with the help of the army, but there has never been a shortage owing to failure to transport foodgrains to Bengal.

Dr. P. N. Banerjea: May I ask if transport is available for distributing food within Bengal just at the moment to an adequate extent?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: I believe that adequate transport arrangements are now in existence, adequate arrangements also to handle the goods, which were lacking before, are now in existence. On the whole, the grain programme, the sugar programme and other food distribution programmes have in the last year gone reasonably satisfactorily because the movement of grain's have enjoyed the highest priority.

Next, Sir, with regard to the comments of my Honourable friend, Sardar Mangal Singh opposite, he suggested that we had cut down the trains in the Punjab for some vindictive reason. I deeply regret that owing to shortage of coal, the N. W. R. had to cut down these trains. That was the sole reason, the shortage of coal. So far as any vindictive action behind it is concerned, I can assure my Honourable friend that that is absolutely opposite to the truth.

Sardar Mangal Singh: However that was the impression gained by the public.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: I entirely share the views which were expressed the other day from the President's Chair, I admire the achievement of the Punjab, and I would do everything I can to help them through their difficulties. I will look into the cases of hardship due to the cancellation of particular trains and will endeavour to restore the services as soon as the coal position has been built up. In the meantime, I understand that the N. W. R. are putting back eight of the trains, and I think they will probably be operating from tomorrow morning so that I can assure my Honourable friends that it is only with deep regret that we had to make this cut and the trains will be restored as soon as possible.

My Honourable friend, Mr. Joshi, referred to the question of provident fund. This has been under discussion for a number of years. The provident fund has been extended to wider circles of railway men from time to time. The question has been raised again by the All-India Railwaymen's Federation at the last meeting, and while I do not want to appear to prevaricate by saying that the matter of extending it further is under active consideration, that is the case and all I can add to that statement is that we are looking into it extremely sympathetically.

Then, Sir, a good deal has been said about the question of the construction of locomotives. I welcome the opportunity of clarifying the position regarding the construction of locomotives and boilers in India, in spite of the fact that I made a categorical statement in this House and in another place last year as to what exactly we were doing. The House will remember, and in fact it has been quoted in debate, that in 1940 it was decided to go ahead with the manufacture of locomotives. That had to be cancelled on account of the necessity for making munitions. Last year, I announced that we have definitely decided to set up a locomotive construction shop and we are now proceeding with this as fast as we can. The preliminaries for the construction of locomotives in the workshop at Kanchrapara are, in fact, proceeding apace. The position is that when the matter was referred to them, the Consulting Engineers stressed the difficulties of organisation which would have to be faced if the manufacture of the full number of locomotives and the renewal boilers programmed after the war were attempted in this single workshop and they recommended that the works should be designed for a lesser number of locomotives but with a lay out suitable for extension, that the building of renewal boilers should be initially undertaken elsewhere, and that the Kanchrapara site should be reconsidered in view of the possibility of selecting another workshop which could be converted more advantageously. The Board, anxious to proceed without further delay, decided that two locomotive building workshops must be provided, but that they would proceed forthwith with the planning necessary to adapt the Kanchrapara works for approximately half the requirements. In making this decision, they had in mind the difficulties likely to be experienced in obtaining buildings, the machinery and plant both during and immediately after the war, and the consequent need for utilising such facilities as exist at Kanchrapara to the fullest possible extent if the introduction of locomotive building in

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India is not to be further postponed. The work is proceeding on those lines. It is hoped to finalise the blue-prints with the Consulting Engineers at a very early date and as soon as the plans are finalised orders will be placed for delivery of the necessary machinery and plant at the earliest possible date. The construction of the locomotives in these shops during the war is unfortunately still not a probability as it will almost certainly be impossible to spare these workshops from the very important munitions which they are still making and the locomotive repair work on the B. and A. Railway which, of course, has increased with the additional number of locomotives which are coming on to that line. But the Board are anxious to get the plant into the country at the earliest possible moment and if we can get it into operation before the end of the war we shall do so. Some Honourable Members have suggested that locomotives might be built in this country as a rush job to meet the present shortage of locomotives. But I am sure Honourable Members will appreciate that even if we had the plant on the site today it would still probably be 18 months or two years before we could get the first locomotive on to the line. The present emergency which is caused by the entry of Japan into the war can, therefore, only be met by the importation of locomotives in the meantime. Meanwhile we are giving consideration to the inauguration elsewhere, as a war measure, of a boiler construction works which, if the scheme can be got through and the necessary existing works released, will be operated by an Indian firm. Discussions are proceeding and inquiries have actually gone back for the additional plant which is to be procured from overseas. From what I have said, therefore, I am sure Honourable Members will see that whatever the difficulties in the past, the plans for the construction of locomotives in this country are now proceeding in right earnest and with all possible speed.

As regards the wagon construction programme I must merely remark that there exists a large wagon capacity in India, more than sufficient for our normal needs; but unfortunately owing to the difficulty of getting component parts, both constructed in India by Indian firms and from abroad that programme has fallen behind-hand. That is the reason why we have had to order from abroad an additional 5,000 broad-gauge wagons.

Dr. P. N. Banerjea: Cannot these parts be manufactured in India?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: They are manufactured in India but unfortunately the people who manufacture them are not always up to date with their deliveries and the programme has fallen behind-hand owing to the general congestion of industry both in this country and abroad.

As regards the cost of railway extensions to which my Honourable friend, Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi, referred, generally speaking the cost of these extensions of the lines are covered by the assisted siding terms which are ordinarily brought into use for providing railway facilities to industry. That means that the cost of the earthwork and other expenditure which cannot be of any use to the railways after the war is borne by the defence expenditure. And the rails and the steel work and anything else which is of a permanent value to the railway is borne by the railway. Such assets, of course, can be picked up and used elsewhere, so that for these items the railway gets value for money. The correctness of some of the terms is under discussion and the Standing Finance Committee are, I understand, seized of the point and they will be consulted before any final decision is reached. But, broadly speaking, you will see that so far as the railways are concerned they are getting full value for the money which they are laying out.

Now, I must pass on to the question of passenger fares. I must confess that when I first considered the proposals my reactions like many of those of my Honourable friends were unfavourable. It was a natural impulse not to incur the odium of imposing extra charges when the need was not at first sight obvious. But since then the more I study the implications the more certain I am that the action is right. What was to me at first quite frankly a doubtful duty has become a conviction; and I am not unsanguine, in spite of the recep-

tion which was given to me by the House, of persuading Honourable Members or some Honourable Members of the intrinsic wisdom and fairness of these measures. I am anxious, therefore, to give to Honourable Members some further points for their consideration and to deal with some of the false premises on which the opposition has been based.

Critics have maintained that nobody who is not insane travels in these days unless he must. There must be a surprising amount of insanity about, to judge by the number of people I know of who take remarkably long journeys on pleasure bent.

Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari (Tanjore *cum* Trichinopoly: Non-Muhammadan. Rural): To attend the sittings of the Legislative Assembly?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: I said, on pleasure bent.

An Honourable Member: Lately a lot of touring has been done by the Executive Councillors.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: I have already quoted figures in the House to show that if this rate of travelling continues, 156 million more journeys aggregating 6,300 million more miles are likely to be made in the current year than in the last year. This is equivalent to six hundred train loads of people a day even under present conditions. Clearly something drastic has to be done to check this increase. Can it be really conscientiously maintained that the whole of this travel is due to increased war activity? It is in fact not borne out by an inquiry extending over 15 lakhs of passengers which we recently carried out, nor by actual observation. As a matter of fact 10 per cent. of these 15 lakhs of people admitted that they were travelling purely for pleasure. Whether the adequacy of the reasons of the other passengers for travelling is sufficient or not is another matter. Why did these people not travel in 1941-42 when there was almost equally great war activity? In these two years 1941 and 1942 the total number of people travelling remained practically constant. The answer is that in the year 1943-44, the circulation of money increased, and with the increase people, having nothing else to spend it on, purchased something that was relatively cheap, namely, travel. Mr. Joshi himself has said that that is the reason why people are travelling—because money is flowing. Actually the rise in the number of passengers travelling is in keeping with the curve in the rise in prices and the resultant greater prosperity among those who have goods or services to sell. The curve goes up in much the same way. Is it too much to ask many of these passengers to travel less even on pilgrimages or home visits during war time? Cannot they postpone some of this travel until conditions become easier?

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: Marriages also may be postponed.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: But if they will not do so, is it unreasonable to try and check this tendency by making it more expensive to travel?

The argument that the increase in travel is entirely due to the military is not correct. There are actually no exact figures available of the respective civil and military passengers, but the respective earnings from these two classes, which we have, show that while earnings from military passengers have increased by about 60 per cent. as against 40 per cent. increase in the public passengers, the disparity is still so great in the numbers that a 10 per cent. reduction all round would still mean that the reduction in public travel would have $6\frac{1}{2}$ times the effect of the reduction in military travel. That represents roughly the ratio between the two. With regard to military travel, we are again discussing with the military authorities the means of reducing travel so far as it is possible, but, of course, with increasing military activity in the country any reduction in the total of military travel naturally presents a difficult problem. The Honourable the Leader of the European Group mentioned this point and I can assure him and other Members of this House that we are doing all we possibly can to restrict such travel.

It is argued that although the price of travel has increased little, the standard of service has decreased. That is so. The accommodation has decreased although the 87 per cent. cut in the passenger trains since pre-war days, which

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has been quoted as the maximum decrease, is an over-statement of the percentage cut in service as more vehicles have been run on the remaining trains. The actual cut is probably nearer 20 per cent.

May I proceed beyond Five O'clock, Sir?

Some Honourable Members: Yes, yes.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: Trains certainly are slower today and the amenities of lighting and so on are certainly less. It is the same tale of cut services, slower trains and less comfort in other countries which are at war as anybody returning from the United Kingdom or America will tell you. Slower timings are a normal concomitant of denser traffic, inferior coal, etc., and if the lamps and fittings which are broken or stolen—and there is, in fact, a systematic system of thieving going on in some of these—are not replaced, it is solely due to the inability to obtain fresh supplies. The shortage of these goods is exactly akin to the shortage of other consumption goods and the steps to rectify the matter have not yet borne fruit. On some Railways you may have seen brass fittings being replaced by wooden fittings and we are going ahead with indigenous manufacture of lamps. The same Member has complained about the uncleanness of lavatories. It is largely due to the water shortage difficulties due to overcrowding, but this subject has been taken up three times during the last six months with the Railways and the Railways have been instructed to make it their business to see to this improvement, and where they are not already engaged on it the Medical Departments have been instructed to look into the matter.

On the question of restaurants and feeding. . . .

An Honourable Member: A very important subject.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: Yes, a very important subject—I have suffered from it myself, but I have not complained about it to myself.

Sir Cowasjee Jehangir: What percentage of the travelling public is affected by these restaurants?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: It is not only restaurants as one Honourable Member from the Congress Benches pointed out. He referred to tea stalls and other things as well.

I quite agree that the feeding arrangements on the Railways are not as good as we should like to see them and we will certainly carry out a drive, in both Indian and European feeding arrangements, to deliver a better service if we can.

Dr. P. N. Banerjee: And a larger number of services.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: Although there are difficulties in these days which are entirely due to the war, nevertheless the trains do get you there and they get you back, and that is the principal service which they are supposed to perform and they are rendering this service to a surprisingly larger number of persons. If the quality of the service is lower, lower than in peace-time,—that is not unusual in other lines of manufacture or of service, and the people who complain most are often those who themselves deliver the most shoddy value for money. It ill becomes anyone who is charging two to three hundred per cent. more for his goods and services to complain of an increase of 25 per cent. which is pledged to be given back to the user later on.

Dr. P. N. Banerjee: Are there any such persons in this House?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: I would not like to be personal, Sir. The main charge against the increase is that it is an unreasonable burden on the third-class passengers, particularly in the suburban areas where men must go to their daily work and where they cannot find accommodation in the city. That is a point which my Honourable friend, Mr. Hoosimbhoy Lalljee, has made. Here an explanation is due and I would like to ask my Honourable friends to give particular attention to what I am going to say on this point. In addition to the exemption of suburban season tickets, the instructions which were sent to the Railways—and, incidentally, they were sent prior to my

budget speech—have been so framed that there will be no increase in fares except where the increase will amount to one anna. The effect of this on short-distance travel is marked. 83 per cent. of third-class passengers, excluding military passengers, and passengers holding season tickets, travel in the zone from 1 to 50 miles. The average fare paid by these passengers, i.e., the average fare paid by 83 per cent. of the third-class passengers, is about five annas. That is arrived at by dividing the total earnings from the passengers within this zone by their number. Even those persons who travelled the full length of this zone in most cases paid less than a rupee. They have, therefore, so far paid nothing extra for rail fares since the war began. Even with the proposed increase in fares, passengers travelling up to about 10 miles will not have to pay anything extra and since the average lead in this zone is only 17 miles, the number travelling for distances up to 10 miles must be a considerable proportion of the total in the zone. Thus in addition to the exemption proposed for suburban season ticket holders, those who reside within about 10 miles of large towns and may be described as suburban dwellers will also be exempt even if they have no suburban season tickets.

Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari: On a point of information, may I point out that in the speech delivered by the Chief Commissioner of Railways in the other House, as it is printed, it reads that season tickets suburban fares will be excluded from the proposed increase, and subsequently a correction appears to have been made so as to exclude suburban fares from the exemption contemplated?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: There was a mistake in nomenclature.

Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari: Was it not that there was a revision of the intentions of the Government?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: No. This was a mistake in nomenclature.

Sir Cawasjee Jehangir: Will the Honourable Member repeat one statement? Am I right when I say that the Honourable Member said
5 P. M. that 83 per cent. of the third class passengers pay only 5 annas for a ticket on the average?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: That is correct. 83 per cent. of the passengers travel within a zone of 50 miles and the average fare is five annas and as there is no increase of less than one anna, everyone paying below four annas for a fare avoids any increase and that means that anybody travelling less than 10 miles will travel at exactly the same cost as before the war.

It is obvious from what I have been saying that the measure has been so framed as to minimise the effect on the short distance passenger of the poorer classes, who having to reside away from his work has to travel in everyday by train. If I may quote a local example: a third class passenger from New Delhi or Delhi to Delhi-Shahdara will pay no more than he does now. The framing of the increase in that way affords a very great measure of relief to the poorer classes of workers and to people who make short journeys.

As regards the ability of other classes to pay more, I am still unrepentant. The fact remains, as I have said before, that 150 million people a year or more are travelling and because the public travels more already so it is paying out more. What we want them to do is to travel less and if they do not travel, they do not pay. The charge is still only enhanced with the undertaking that they will get it back in better service later on when it is physically possible to do something to improve that service. The sacrifice that we are asking of them is that they should stay at home, but if they insist on travel then and then only we take what amounts to a temporary loan of their money. The hardship really isn't great. The war worker generally who must travel now over distances for which increased charges will be made, be he rich or poor, is making good money. I quoted the case of the farmer who was getting Rs. 40 for his wheat which he formerly sold for Rs. 10. Somebody said it was not

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the farmer but the intermediary, but presumably the intermediary pays the farmer a fair price. But under this budget wheat can be sent by rail at the same price as before the war and the farmer will be able to travel to his local market at the same cost as before, and if he wants to go further he can make a journey which cost him previously Rs. 10 for about Rs. 13 now. I referred to the wheat grower and much the same applies to the growers of every kind of agricultural produce, and when you turn to the industrial worker, I would ask Honourable Members to consider the case of the Ahmedabad millhand who to-day gets something like Rs. 111 (*An Honourable Member*: 117.) Including Rs. 77 as dearness allowance, etc., against his previous wage of Rs. 34/9.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: How many workers are there in Ahmedabad as compared to the total population of the country?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: I am merely quoting one instance. If you look into the case of Bombay and Cawnpore, you will find much the same conditions prevailing. Ahmedabad may be exceptionally high. Nevertheless those conditions prevail and I maintain that it cannot be seriously argued that the mill worker enjoying this relatively large remuneration who wants to travel 50 miles cannot pay another three annas to do so.

Syed Ghulam Bhik Nairang (East Punjab: Muhammadan): May I ask the Honourable Member to explain one point? At present the railway fares are charged like this: the schedule fare *plus* a surcharge of one anna per rupee. Now the Honourable Member proposes to add 25 per cent. To what will the 25 per cent. be added? Will it be the schedule fare *plus* surcharge *plus* 25 per cent.?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: On the existing fare except in the cases which I have just explained.

I should perhaps say that the man who will suffer is the man with the fixed income and that I am afraid is the case in all these measures of increased charges. To a very large extent the people who have no means of increasing their incomes are Government servants. If they are travelling on Government account they will not pay. If they are wishing to travel on their own business then the sacrifice we ask for is, in fact, to curtail their travel by 25 per cent. That is the measure of the sacrifice we are asking.

Objection has been taken in principle to the increase in railway charges when railways, due to their increased operating efficiency, are making substantial profits. The principle of charging what the traffic will bear is an old established one in the fixing of rates and fares, but it is not the principle which governs railway rates and fares today. If so, we could increase rates as well as fares. As to the future my views on the probable trend of receipts and expenditure were given in my budget speech and whether I turn out right or wrong in the near future I commend what I have said to the very careful study of the House, because sooner or later I will wager that I shall be right. Our gross traffic receipts before the war were in the neighbourhood of Rs. 100 crores and our expenses inclusive of depreciation and interest charges were of the same order. Our expenses in the budget year 1944-45 are estimated to be Rs. 135½ crores inclusive of normal depreciation and interest charges, and it is possible that these may be much under-estimated, since as I have explained to the House these expenses only include increases which we can definitely foresee now. Nobody will question that when the war traffic falls off again we shall see a very rapid fall in earnings, and the point which I wish to emphasise once again is that this fall within a very short time may bring our receipts down to below our expenses at the new high level. We have seen before how in a few years of bad trade our reserves can disappear in paying out interest charges—a point made by the Leader of the European Group—and I repeat that then the only course will be to increase rates and fares just when other price levels are falling and drastically to cut wages and the price of our pur-

chases, such as coal. Well, I say for Heaven's sake let us learn the lessons of the past and avoid such a catastrophe which will bring all our reconstruction schemes to naught and contribute to plunging the country into chaos just at the outset of its new Constitution.

Nawabzada Muhammad Liaquat Ali Khan: But where is the new Constitution?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: In your pocket; it is for you to frame. It will be difficult at any time in any case to finance additional improved amenities for third class travel and so let us set aside funds now to make sure that these amenities, which everybody in this House agrees are necessary, should be actually provided.

The Deputy President remarked that the Central Advisory Council had opposed the increase in fares, and he said that, in saying that I agreed with them, my judgment and my decree appeared to differ. The Central Advisory Council were discussing the question of stopping over-crowding and they opposed the increase as being likely to be ineffective in stopping overcrowding and as I said in my budget speech, I agreed with them. I do not think an increase of fares alone—unless you increase them by say 100 per cent.—is likely to be very effective in stopping overcrowding, but it will certainly check the steady increase of 156 millions. To the best of my belief the numbers are still rising today, and we must do something to check it. If we look back to what happened in the last war, you will find that when 25 per cent. increase was put on fares then, the number of passengers immediately fell from about 43 crores to 38 crores in the next year, though with increased activity it rose again to 41 crores. That is the sort of effect I anticipate that it will have this time, a checking effect, but probably not a great deal more, especially in view of the exemptions that we have made on short distance traffic. But when the Central Advisory Council was considering this matter, it did not consider it from the other and broader aspect, and it did not even consider what was the effect in 1917: it did not consider the deflationary aspect and it did not consider the financial aspect; and I think when you consider it from all these aspects, then it is quite a different matter than considering it purely from the aspect whether it will effectively stop overcrowding

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: I think full consideration was given to all these; we expressed it all there.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: No. I will not take the further time of the House on this point, but I would just like to say that so far as the Central Advisory Council's deliberations are concerned, we are taking into careful consideration and are acting on all the points which were raised during the course of those discussions so far as action is possible

Sir Muhammad Yamin Khan: Did they agree to the increase in fares?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: No; they disagreed with it, for the reason that it alone will not effectively stop overcrowding.

Reference has been made to the fact that the Chief Commissioner in his speech last year said that an increase of rates and fares would be inflationary. Actually he particularly had in mind goods rates. Conditions have changed. The facts which I have quoted earlier show that the increase in railway travel is the result of an inflationary tendency and I am very glad indeed to have the support of Mr. Joshi in this diagnosis. He has stressed this more eloquently and convincingly than I have been able to do. You will observe that the possible inflationary effect will be minimised by the incidence of this increase

Mr. Hooseinbhoj A. Lalljee: Then you do not want money for the amelioration of the third class passengers: does it come to that?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: I am dealing with the three reasons I gave and this is the second one. The possible inflationary effect will be minimised by the incidence of this increase and the deflationary effect of taking this money off the market now for spending later on must, I think, really be patent to every Honourable Member. It is surplus money which will be collected now

[Sir Edward Benthall.]

and put into circulation again when deflationary tendencies are resulting in a decline in activity and prosperity.

My Honourable friend the Leader of the European Group said that he was not satisfied with the ear-marking of this money in the fund and one or two Honourable members expressed some doubts as to whether the Government of the future would in fact spend money on this purpose. It amounted to the same thing, may be they all wish to see this fund more specifically earmarked. I think technically that involves a separate grant—I do not quite know what the mechanics of it are but if it is the wish of the House that it has to be earmarked into a separate fund, and the mechanics of it can be overcome, the Government will be perfectly willing to accept that. In fact, if the House should express any desire that the fund should be made available for any other purpose—and in that connection I may say that we originally had in mind the benefit to the employees—if the House has any views in that respect, we should naturally be perfectly willing to meet them.

My Honourable friend, Mr. Jamnadas Mehta, said that promises for the future were not enough: it is always jam tomorrow and jam yesterday, but never jam today. He was quoting from what I understood him to say was Alice in Wonderland. It is extremely difficult to give the third class passengers their jam today. If we wanted to go ahead with all these amenities which we are determined to go ahead with, we could not get the material owing to other war priorities. If we can get the material we will go ahead with it, and in the meantime we will endeavour to alleviate the overcrowding by the provision of bus services in the most congested areas.

I have only two more points to make. A vigorous case has been made out that the contribution to general revenues should be reduced and the increased sum apportioned to railways should be put into the amenities fund. I need not labour the point which was made so often last year, that the surplus which was largely if not entirely derived from activities due to the war should rightly be apportioned largely to paying for war expenditure. I would here only make one further point in all solemnity, namely, that if this were done and if the Honourable the Finance Member did not get his allocation in full, he would be bound to replace the difference by increased taxes from other sources.

I have answered, I think, most of the points which have been raised in the debate on the increase in fares, and I shall doubtless have a further opportunity to speak on another occasion. But I would ask my Honourable friends to examine this question dispassionately in the light of the observations which I have made, particularly this afternoon, and the explanations I have given regarding the incidence of the increase. Although I do not imagine that this is ever going to be a popular measure, I still believe that many Honourable Members will yet be convinced, as I am, that it is a wise measure, and that it has been so framed as to be a fair one.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: I want to know whether the Government have agreed to our request to give a larger number of days for the demands for grants?

The Honourable Sir Sultan Ahmed (Leader of the House): The matter was just mentioned during the debate by Mr. Joshi. We will consider it and make our submission on Wednesday next.

Nawabzada Muhammad Liaquat Ali Khan: The Honourable Member stated in the course of his speech that Members opposed measures which would secure the position of railwaymen in the future? What measures was he referring to?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: General measures such as the one now proposed, to build up the financial strength of the railways.

Nawabzada Muhammad Liaquat Ali Khan: Does the Honourable Member mean increase in railway fares? Is that the measure that he had in mind?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: That will build up the general strength of the railways and enable them to put through these amenities which the Honourable Member's Party among others has asked for for so many years.

Nawabzada Muhammad Liaquat Ali Khan: Then the Honourable Member said definitely that the increased income from this source will be utilised only for providing amenities for third class passengers.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: Yes. I have said lower class passengers. I have gone further, I have given an undertaking to the House that, if they wish this to be put into a separate fund for the purpose, Government would have no objection.

Mr. Hooseinbhoy A. Lalljee: If there is no more travelling

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): I understand that tomorrow is a public holiday. I adjourn the Assembly till 11 A.M. on Wednesday next.

The Assembly then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Wednesday, the 23rd February, 1944.