

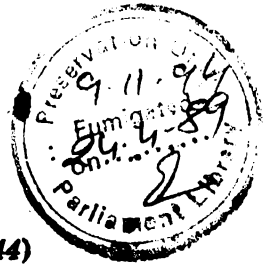
25th February 1944

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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Deputy President :

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Committee on Petitions :

Mr. AKHIL CHANDRA DATTA, M.L.A. (*Chairman*).

Syed GHULAM BHIK NAIRANG, M.L.A.

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

Friday, 25th 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.

STARRED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

(a) ORAL ANSWERS.

TECHNICAL EXPERTS RECRUITED FOR TRAINING OF WAR TECHNICIANS.

222. *Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad: (a) Will the Honourable the Labour Member please state the number of technical experts recruited by the Government of India for the training of War Technicians? What is their monthly emoluments including salary and other allowances?

(b) What is the total number of centres of War Technicians, and how many of these are in close association with Engineering Colleges and Railway Workshops?

(c) How many of these expert Instructors are posted in War Technician Centres associated with Engineering Colleges and Railway Workshops?

(d) Now that the Indians have already been trained, can these Instructors be more usefully employed elsewhere?

(e) Is it a fact that these expert Instructors have also been allotted a duty of inspecting other centres in addition to teaching work?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: (a) Apparently the reference is to British Specialist Instructors.

100. British Specialist Instructors were recruited, of whom 87 are now in service. Their emoluments range between Rs. 620 and Rs. 872 per month with free furnished quarters or lodging allowance in lieu *plus* conveyance allowance in suitable cases.

(b)

Total number of training centres under the Technical Training Scheme	270
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Centres in Engineering Colleges	12
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Centres in Railway Workshops	27
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(c) 10 in each.

(d) In the opinion of Government they cannot be more usefully employed than in connection with the training of technicians.

(e) Yes, in a few cases.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: Has any centre been established in Karachi?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: I want notice.

Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad: Is it not a fact that these expert instructors who are deputed to centres associated with Engineering Colleges or workshops have got additional duties of inspecting centres which have been established outside these institutions.

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: As I said, yes, in a few cases.

Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad: May I know if these experts who are associated with Engineering Colleges are subject to the discipline of Government or are associated with other members of the staff of the college concerned?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: I want notice.

Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad: Are the Government aware of this fact that these experts who are associated with Engineering Colleges do not consider themselves to belong to the staff of the Engineering College and they do not consider that they are subject to the discipline to which members of the staff are subjected; are the Government aware of the fact that they spend a good deal of time in inspecting other institutions and they consider the teaching job to be unattractive, and they have no heart in their teaching work?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: I will enquire into what my Honourable friend has said.

DEVELOPMENT OFFICERS FOR EVOLVING POST-WAR RECONSTRUCTION PLANS.

223. *Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari: Will the Honourable the Food Member and the Deputy President of the Post-War Reconstruction Committee of the Council please state:

- (a) whether Government propose to appoint Development Officers, who would be entrusted with the work of evolving post-war plans of reconstruction;
- (b) how many such Development Officers the Government of India have decided to appoint;
- (c) under what Department of the Government of India they would work;
- (d) what would be their status *vis-a-vis* the Departments of the Government of India;
- (e) on what principles selections of such Development Officers would be based;
- (f) what would be the qualifications of these Officers;
- (g) whether the Government of India propose to assure that these Development Officers would be recruited from Indian nationals, and that no foreigners or Britishers would be preferred; and
- (h) what would be the scale of salaries of these Development Officers?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: (a) and (b). Yes, one for each of the subjects: Electrical Development, Industries, Irrigation, Roads and Road Transport and Agriculture. Others may be appointed later.

(c) and (d). They will be officers of the appropriate Departments.

(e) and (f). On merit and knowledge and previous experience of the subject concerned.

(g) It is intended to obtain the best men available, but subject to this consideration—Indians will naturally be preferred.

(h) This will depend on the qualifications, previous experience and present emoluments of the candidates.

Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari: Have any of these appointments been made now?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: I am not aware of any having been made. But as I have stated the Departments concerned are making the appointments and I have not been told yet that any appointments have been made.

Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari: Is the Honourable Member not consulted about any of these appointments before they are made?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: No, Sir.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra: Will the Honourable Member tell us what is the amount provided for under part (h)?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: That is a matter for each Department.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra: With regard to salaries, the Honourable Member said that that would depend upon qualifications. I want to know what monetary provision has been made.

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: It will be for the Department concerned to decide that. I have not been asked in the matter.

Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari: Has the Honourable Member indicated any ceiling for these salaries?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: No, Sir.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: Would appointment of officers from foreign countries be limited to any particular foreign country or would extend to all foreign countries including colonies?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: I have stated that we want to get the best men; as far as possible, we will get Indians.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: Even from such colonies as ill-treat Indians and who do not give Indians equal and proper treatment?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: The main consideration here is to get the best men.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra: Will Government keep in view that only persons with experience of Indian conditions would be appointed?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: Yes, Sir.

Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad: What would be the principal work which these officers would do in connection with food?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: The officer will tour through the Provinces and the States and submit an All-India plan with a brief covering report in respect of the subject with which he is concerned. He will indicate what central and provincial projects can be taken up in his own line.

Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad: I am talking of post-war development. The duties which the Honourable Member has just mentioned are of the nature of trips or excursions or holiday journeys.

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: It requires a good deal of investigation.

Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad: May I ask on what lines the post-war development in food problems are contemplated leaving out holiday trips?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: As regards food problems, I do not know whether the present emergency relating thereto applies to post-war conditions.

Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad: Is it not a fact that the less the Food Department interferes with the food problem, the better it is for the country.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: With regard to appointment from foreign countries, will the Honourable Member take into consideration the fact that India is strongly against appointment of any member, howsoever competent from colonies which ill-treat Indians?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: I am aware of that feeling.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: May I ask whether Government of India expects to get reports on post-war reconstruction from these officers?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: They have been asked to complete the reports as soon as possible.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: Will the Government of India place before the House a statement giving us what they have done so far regarding post-war reconstruction?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: I will consider.

DISCONTINUANCE OF FREE SUPPLY OF GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS TO CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE AND TRADE ASSOCIATIONS.

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

(a) why the free supply of Government publications to the Chambers of Commerce and Trade Associations has been discontinued by Government;

(b) whether he is aware that this has placed a serious handicap on the commercial bodies as, without reference to these documents, they are handicapped in studying adequately the various problems affecting their interests and in ventilating their views on various questions; and

(c) whether the Honourable Member proposes to take immediate steps to see that free supply of these documents to the commercial bodies is resumed forthwith?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: (a) Presumably the Honourable Member is referring to publications of the Commercial Intelligence and Statistics Department. Copies of some of the publications are still being supplied to recognized Chambers of Commerce and Trade Associations but in respect of other publications, partly due to paper economy and partly for security reasons, it has been found necessary to curtail or suspend the supply.

(b) Government much regret the inconvenience caused to the commercial bodies.

(c) It does not seem feasible to restore the pre-war level of printing and distribution so long as the existing paper shortage lasts, but the matter will receive my best consideration.

INDIA'S REPRESENTATIVES AND THE UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND REHABILITATION AGREEMENT.

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

(a) whether the Government of India's representative at Washington, before or after signing the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Agreement, or at the First Session of the Council of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation, proposed any amendment or made any attempts to amend the Articles of the Agreement so as to include in the functions of the Administration, the function of relief and rehabilitation in those countries or areas of the United Nations which, though not actually being theatres of war or war-torn, are stricken by conditions of starvation, privations and scarcity of food and other consumers' goods;

(b) if the answer to (a) is in the affirmative, the amendment proposed by the Government representative at Washington, or what attempts he made in this regard; and

(c) if the answer to (a) above is in the negative, whether the Government of India had conveyed to their representative at Washington that the conditions arising out of famine, food shortage and scarcity of consumers' goods in India should necessitate such an amendment in the Articles of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Agreement?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: (a) The Agent General was given full instructions as to the attitude which he should adopt at the deliberations leading to the signing of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration Agreement. It is not considered in the public interest to disclose the precise directions given to him at any stage.

(b) and (c). Do not arise.

Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari: May I ask if those instructions that have been given to the Agent General are such that could not be disclosed for security reasons or merely because of public interest?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: It is never the practice for discussions or instructions at this stage to be disclosed.

Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari: Is the Honourable Member aware that there has been a considerable amount of agitation in this country in regard to the participation of the Agent General in the U. N. R. A. affair?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: I want notice.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR SUPPLYING ACCURATE INFORMATION TO SECRETARY OF STATE ON INDIAN FOOD SITUATION.

226. *Sir F. E. James: Will the Honourable the Leader of the House be pleased to state:

(a) which authority (or authorities) under the present constitution and during the present emergency is primarily responsible for keeping the Secretary of State constantly and accurately informed as to the food situation in British India and the Indian States generally, and in Bengal in particular, with special reference to mortality statistics, the availability of medical supplies, and any other matter arising out of food shortage or famine conditions;

(b) if he is aware of the importance of ensuring that the Secretary of State is accurately and constantly informed on these matters so that he may acquaint Parliament and the people of the United Kingdom who are so deeply interested, with the facts;

(c) the machinery, if any, available to the Central Government for the collection, tabulation and periodical dispatch of up-to-date and accurate information on these matters to the Secretary of State; and

(d) the action taken by the Central Government to ensure that accurate statistics are collected in the Provinces most concerned?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: (a) The Food Department is responsible for informing the Secretary of State about all matters connected with the supply and distribution of food throughout India, and, therefore, of matters

arising out of food shortage or famine conditions generally, except in so far as these are the direct concern of other Departments, *e.g.*, of Education, Health and Lands in the field of medical aid, public health or agriculture. Vital statistics and the availability of medical supplies are the responsibility of the Education, Health and Lands Department. To the extent that vital statistics can give an indication of deaths from starvation in any area, and, therefore, of development or improvement in famine conditions, Food Department is concerned, and in consultation with Education, Health and Lands Department have provided such provisional estimates as have so far been available to the Secretary of State.

(b) Yes.

(c) Statistical information of all kinds is collected from Provincial Governments and tabulated departmentally by the Government of India.

The Food Department sends a weekly report to the Secretary of State on the Food situation in India, generally supported by statistics of movement of food-grains.

The Government of India's Public Health Commissioner sends a fortnightly report to the Chief Medical Officer of the Ministry of Health of His Majesty's Government on the number of deaths due to cholera, small-pox and certain other epidemic diseases in the provinces; the Education, Health and Lands Department sends a weekly report on the health situation in Bengal to the Secretary of State.

(d) The Honourable Member is referred to the 2nd paragraph of the report on the progress of recommendations of the Foodgrains Policy Committee, which has been laid on the table of the House. On the urgent representation of the Government of India steps are being taken by certain Governments, where the need is most urgent, to improve their agricultural yield estimates. In Bengal, the Provincial Government have removed certain unnecessary links in the chain of reporting agencies for vital statistics, so that delays in compilation may be reduced.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: In view of the fact that the Government of India should hold themselves as much responsible to the legislature as to the Secretary of State, will they place on the table of the House the weekly reports which they send to the Secretary of State and the Ministry of Health?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: I do not know whether I can do that, but I will look into the matter.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra: Do I understand the Honourable Member to say that all statistics regarding deaths from starvation and food shortage are supplied by the Food Department in consultation with the Education, Health and Lands Department?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: As I have stated, we have no separate figures for deaths from starvation. We have never been able to ascertain the exact number of deaths due to want of food.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra: In view of the fact that there has been so much public clamour as to the accuracy of these statistics, do Government propose to keep separate statistics as to deaths from food shortage and famine conditions?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: The main defect is in the reporting agency; they are not able to tell us who have died of starvation and who have died of disease.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra: What steps are Government taking or propose to take to ensure the accurate reporting of these cases?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: We have taken up the matter with the Provincial Governments but, as the Honourable Member will understand, the man who reports the deaths is not capable of finding out the cause of the death.

Sir F. E. James: With regard to part (a) of the question did I understand the Honourable Member to say that the Food Department, with regard to food shortage questions and the Education, Health and Lands Department in

regard to mortality statistics, were responsible for keeping the Secretary of State advised as to the position in the Indian States generally as well as in British India?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: I have purposely omitted the Indian States in my reply because they do not come under my charge.

Sir F. E. James: Then may I take it that neither my Honourable friend nor his colleague in the Education, Health and Lands Department has any direct responsibility for advising the Secretary of State on matters within the jurisdiction of the Indian States?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: The Honourable Member may take it so.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: Who is the Member on behalf of the Government of India who will answer questions regarding food in connection with the States?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: I do not know whether it arises out of this; in any case it is not for me to answer that.

DISCUSSIONS WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE SUDAN AND EAST AFRICAN GOVERNMENTS ON COTTON CROPS.

227. *Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: Will the Honourable Member for Industries and Civil Supplies please state:

(a) if there were recently discussions between the Government of India and the representatives of the Sudan and East African Governments regarding the 1944 East African Cotton Crop and the Sudan Cotton Crop; if so, whether the representatives of cotton trade and textiles were consulted at the time;

(b) if the interests of the Indian cotton growers were taken into consideration at the time of the discussion; who represented them, or whose advice was sought either before or at the time of those discussions;

(c) whether agreements have been reached as a result of the discussions regarding the cotton crops between (i) the Government of India and the East African Government, and (ii) the Government of India and the Sudan Government; whether these agreements are subject to ratification by the respective Governments;

(d) whether the discussions were initiated and negotiations opened for these cotton crops by the East African Government and the Sudan Government;

(e) whether this is the first time that these Governments have entered into agreements about cotton crops with the Government of India;

(f) when this cotton is likely to be imported;

(g) to what use this cotton will be put;

(h) whether any conditions other than those of price of the varieties of cotton have been laid down between the two Governments; and

(i) whether these agreements are revocable under any circumstances?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: (a) Yes, the Conference was held in order to fix the prices of the cotton to be marketed in 1944 by the Sudan and East African Governments. Representatives of the cotton trade and the Textile industry were included in the Government of India's delegation.

(b) Yes; a representative of the Department of Education, Health and Lands was present at the Government of India's preliminary discussions.

(c) Yes; the agreement with the Sudan Government is subject to ratification by their Government.

(d) No.

(e) Yes.

(f) This cotton will be imported as soon as possible.

(g) The cotton will be supplied to cotton textile mills for the manufacture of cotton textiles both for war orders and civilian consumption.

(h) Agreement was reached on certain other minor details regarding terms of sale, commission etc.

(i) The agreements are intended to be binding on both sides until the cotton concerned is disposed of.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: In case one party does not fulfil the terms of the contract, is there any ground on which the agreement can be cancelled?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: I shall require notice of that question. **Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh:** Who initiated the negotiations?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: The conference was held at the suggestion of His Majesty's Government in the Ministry of Supply.

CONFERENCE CALLED BY BURMA GOVERNMENT AT SIMLA.

228. *Mr. K. S. Gupta: (a) Is the Honourable Member for Indians Overseas aware of a Conference called by the Government of Burma, at Simla? If so, is it with the consent or consultation of the Government of India that such a Conference is called?

(b) What is the total cost of such Conference?

(c) Which Government has to bear the expenses of such a Conference?

(d) What is the object of convening such a Conference at this time?

(e) Is it with the object of rehabilitating Indian interests in Burma after its reconquest?

The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare: (a), (d) and (e). First part of (a) yes. As regards the second part of (a) and clauses (d) and (e) the Honourable Member's attention is invited to the answer I gave in the House on 8th February, 1944, in reply to a short notice question on the same subject, by Mr. K. C. Neogy.

(b) The Government of India have no information.

(c) The Government of Burma.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: Has the Honourable Member received any report of this conference either formally or informally?

The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare: No, Sir.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: Does the Honourable Member expect to get any report of the proceedings of this conference which, I understand, has concluded its deliberations?

The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare: Normally I do not expect to get a report.

Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari: Does the Honourable Member propose to interest himself in the results of this conference?

The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare: Certainly, Sir.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: At what stage does the Honourable Member think the Government of India will come into the picture?

The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare: We will come in at the proper stage.

Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari: Which is the proper stage, may I know?

The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare: There are no milestones, but it will come.

Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari: What a hope!

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

MONEY INVESTED BY INDIANS IN BURMA.

229. *Mr. K. S. Gupta: (a) Will the Honourable Member for Indians Overseas please state the total amount invested in Burma by those Indians who had established years of connection with Burma in various ways?

(b) Do the Government of India propose to give this House an assurance that those interests will receive adequate consideration at the time of post-war settlement?

The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare: (a) The information asked for is not available.

(b) The Government of India will do all they can to ensure that Indian interests receive due consideration at the post-war settlement of Burma.

Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari: Will that include Government of India's interests in any such conference that is held in order to safeguard Indian interests?

The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare: Why not?

Sir Muhammad Yamin Khan: May I know from the Honourable Member whether the Government of India propose to give any monetary help to those people whose houses and other property have been demolished in Rangoon and other places in Burma?

The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare: Sir, I want notice of this question.

Sir F. E. James: May I ask my Honourable friend whether in view of the increasing importance of this matter, the Government of India will consider the advisability of reappointing its own accredited representative to the Government of Burma.

The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare: Yes, Sir.

STRIKE IN THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA PRESS.

†230. ***Qazi Muhammad Ahmad Kazmi:** (a) Will the Honourable Member for Labour please state if it is or it is not a fact that as a result of great discontent among the employees of the Government Press, a strike took place on the 1st December, 1942, which was pacified by the visits of the Labour Secretary and the Labour Welfare Officer, to whom the major grievances were given by the workers?

(b) What has been done by Government to remove their grievances especially about the following:

(i) the grant of dearness allowance to the Press employees on the lines of Railway rates;

(ii) the grant of casual leave to all the industrial employees;

(iii) the levy of a uniform rate of five per cent. house-rent on all the employees, irrespective of their date of occupation of Press quarters;

(iv) the revision of the numerous existing grades of pay of the employees of the Binding Branch into one time-scale of pay, so as to afford a living wage; and

(v) the grant of at least old scales of pay to all the employees of the Press?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: (a) Yes.

(b) (i) and (iii). As the questions affected all services, the requests of the Press employees for separate treatment have not been acceded to. I may add that it was decided on the representation of the Press Workers that dearness allowance should not be included in calculating the rent payable by occupants of Government residences.

(ii) and (iv). Both the questions are at present under consideration. Steps are being taken to expedite a decision on them.

(v) This is not the opportune time to undertake a general revision of scales of pay. Such a revision can only be undertaken after the war in the light of post-war conditions.

PROMOTION OF QUALIFIED COPYHOLDERS AND REVISERS AS READERS IN THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA PRESSES.

†231. ***Qazi Muhammad Ahmad Kazmi:** Will the Honourable the Labour Member be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the case of amending the rule regarding the promotion of qualified copyholders and revisers as readers in the Government of India Presses, is pending consideration in the office of the Controller of Printing and Stationery, India, for more than 1½ years;

(b) whether it is a fact that the views of all the Government of India Presses, their Works Committees and Workers Unions, were invited by the Controller of Printing and Stationery on the subject;

(c) whether it is a fact that the Controller of Printing and Stationery also suggested to postpone the Readership Examination for an indefinite period, i.e., till all the qualified men on the waiting list were absorbed as readers permanently;

(d) whether it is a fact that some qualified copyholders and revisers with more than fifteen years' service at credit have, according to the present rules, been rendered junior to those who have put in only four or five years' service, though all qualified together in the same examination;

(e) whether it is a fact that some who passed the Readership Examination in the year 1936, in the first attempt, have become junior to those who qualified after four years (in 1940), in the second attempt; and

(f) if the answers to parts (a) to (e) above be in the affirmative, whether the Honourable Member proposes to remove the anomalies of the rules, and to

expedite the final decision of the case, so that the Readership Examination, due in May, 1944, in the Government of India Press, New Delhi, may not be postponed for want of decision; if not, what advantage is in view in keeping the decision in abeyance for so long?

The Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar: (a), (b) and (c). Yes. The delay in finalizing the decision of Government on the points raised is due to the widely divergent views expressed by the different parties whose opinions were invited.

(d) Certain anomalies involved in the application of the rules have been brought to the notice of Government. Proposals to remove them are at present under the consideration of Government.

(e) The question does not arise. Appointments to the posts of readers are made by seniority and not by merit on the results of a qualifying examination.

(f) As stated in reply to (d) above, proposals regarding the amendment of the rules on the subject have been received and are under examination. It is hoped to issue orders well before the next readership examination in the Government of India Press, New Delhi (due in May 1944), is held.

MALARIA EPIDEMIC IN BANIYACHUNG IN SYLHET.

232. *Mr. Ananga Mohan Dam: Will the Secretary for Education, Health and Lands please state:

(a) if he is aware of the unprecedented virulent type of malaria epidemic which broke out in the village of Baniyachung in the district of Sylhet in Assam and killed about ten thousand people by the 30th December last;

(b) if he received any representation from the Government of Assam for the supply of quinine to meet the epidemic conditions;

(c) how much quinine and synthetic quinine substitutes have been sent to Assam;

(d) if he has received any mortality figure from the Government of Assam and what is the number of deaths in Baniyachung up to the 30th December last;

(e) if he is aware that this special type of malaria epidemic has been imported into the village by the war labourers who went for war works to Demapur, Lusai Hills and other War Fronts; and

(f) if the Government of India recognise their responsibility for the special measures necessary for the protection of the people whose disease and suffering are due to war conditions?

Mr. J. D. Tyson: (a), (d) and (e). No, but information has been called for from the Government of Assam and will be placed on the table of the House in due course.

(b) A request for quinine recently received from the Government of Assam does not refer to conditions in any particular village. The Provincial Government's request for further supplies of anti-malarial drugs has been met in full by the Government of India.

(c) The following allotments of anti-malarial drugs have been made to the Assam Government so far for the year 1943-44:

Quinine—11,050 lbs.

Cinchona Febrifuge—2,570 lbs.

Atebrine tablets—2,800,000.

(f) Measures for the protection of the people are primarily the responsibility of Provincial Governments.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra: What is the usual allotment made by the Government of India to the province of Assam?

Mr. J. D. Tyson: I am not sure what the Honourable Member means by 'usual allotment' because in peace-time the provinces look after themselves, but it represents a definite increase on the original allotment given for this year.

Mr. K. O. Neogy: Is the Honourable Member in a position to indicate the allotment that was made in the previous year?

Mr. J. D. Tyson: I am afraid I have not got the figures of last year here.

Mr. Ananga Mohan Dam: Is the Government of India aware that Baniyachung is the biggest village in the whole of India?

Mr. J. D. Tyson: I understand that that is the fact.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: May I know whether the Government of India supplied as much quinine as was needed, or as much as they could spare?

Mr. J. D. Tyson: We have complied with all the requests from Assam.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: May I take it that as much as was demanded was sent?

Mr. J. D. Tyson: I believe that is a fact.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: With reference to part (a) of the question, may I know whether the facts of the situation were reported to the Government of India, or did the Government of India make an enquiry on the subject from the Government of Assam?

Mr. J. D. Tyson: The fact that there has been an outbreak was gathered from a request received from the Government of Assam for more quinine.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: When was that?

Mr. J. D. Tyson: Very recently; within the last fortnight.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: Is the Honourable Member aware that reference to the situation appeared in all the leading papers of Eastern India?

Mr. J. D. Tyson: No, Sir. I was not aware.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: Is it any part of the duty of the Honourable Member's Department to keep him informed about such serious matters which are reported regularly in the press?

Mr. J. D. Tyson: Yes. But even if a reference to an outbreak was made in the press, we would not take action in the matter here unless the Provincial Government concerned approached us.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: I did not want to know whether the Honourable Member had taken any action. My question is this. Was the Honourable Member's attention drawn to the press reports about the situation when these reports appeared?

Mr. J. D. Tyson: My personal attention was not drawn to it, but I do not handle the day to day distribution of quinine at all.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: But is the Honourable Member in a position to tell us whether the attention of any responsible officer attached to his Department was drawn to this matter?

Mr. J. D. Tyson: I require notice of that question.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra: With reference to part (e) of the question, do the Government of India propose to disclaim all responsibility for the outbreak of disease due to war conditions?

Mr. J. D. Tyson: The primary responsibility must fall on the Government in whose area the outbreak takes place, but we will certainly help that Government in any way that we can.

Mr. H. A. Sathar H. Essak Sait: May I ask whether Honourable Member's attention has been drawn to a letter which appeared in today's *Dawn* and in which it is stated that it is not malaria which is taking a heavy toll of life in Baniyachung but some other very serious epidemic called cerebrospinal fever? It is feared that the epidemic may spread very soon all over the province.

Mr. J. D. Tyson: I regret I have not seen today's edition of that paper: I left my house before my copy of *Dawn* was delivered.

Mr. Ananga Mohan Dam: I visited the locality and from the doctors there I learnt that it is feared that after the advent of rains the epidemic will become of such a virulent type that it will be very difficult to prevent deaths even with all the possible efforts of the Government of Assam. In that case do the Government of India propose to help the province in getting out of this epidemic?

Mr. J. D. Tyson: We will certainly help the Government of Assam to the best of our ability and my impression is that when, in this connection apparently, they recently addressed us for additional quinine, we supplied it almost by return of post.

Mr. K. O. Neogy: As the attention of Government has been prominently drawn to the very serious situation that prevails in that part of the country, will the Honourable Member consider the possibility of deputing the Public Health Commissioner to that area without any further delay?

Mr. J. D. Tyson: We will consider that in the light of the information that we expect to get from the Government of Assam, to whom, as I have already stated under (a), we have made a reference.

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

CONSUMERS' GOODS IMPORTED FROM THE UNITED KINGDOM.

233. *Mr. K. O. Neogy (on behalf of **Mr. R. R. Gupta**): (a) Will the Honourable the Commerce Member be pleased to state the major categories of consumers' goods which have been imported into India, month by month, from October, 1943, to January, 1944?

(b) Is it a fact that India Office secures all the shipping space required by exporters in the United Kingdom for the export of certain classes of consumers' goods to India?

(c) Is it a fact that importers of certain classes of consumers' goods, such as whisky, razor blades and bicycles, etc., from the United Kingdom, are simply to apply for and are granted import licence on the basis of bills of lading and other shipping documents at the importing centres in India?

(d) Is it a fact that the Government of India have no discretion in the matter of allotment of the available shipping space for importing into India of goods other than those directly concerned with the war efforts?

(e) If the answer to part (d) be in the affirmative, do the Government of India propose to consider the desirability of having effective voice in determining the imports into the country and allotting the available shipping space in consonance with India's needs? If so, (i) what categories of consumers' goods Government consider essential for purposes of imports; and (ii) what ratio do Government propose fixing for the allocation of the available shipping space between these categories of imported goods?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: (a) A list showing the major categories of consumer goods which are being imported is placed on the table. I regret that exact information concerning the categories imported from October 1943 to January 1944 is not yet available, but it may be assumed that most of the categories mentioned in the statement were imported in each month of that period.

(b) As the Honourable Member will observe from the reply I shall give to part (d) of his question, shipping space for consumer goods from the United Kingdom is allocated by the India Office in accordance with the desires of the Government of India. Owing to that Government's desire for increased imports of consumer goods and to the recent improvement in the shipping situation, it is possible that shipping space may have been made available of late for the full amounts of some categories of consumer goods which exporters in the United Kingdom were able to offer.

(c) A sudden improvement recently occurred in the shipping situation and the Government of India accordingly made arrangements to increase the scale on which import licences are issued. The effect of such an expansion in licensing, however, takes some time to be felt, and as an interim measure it was arranged with the India Office that consumer goods would be shipped from the United Kingdom without an import licence being previously obtained in India, and the import licence would be granted on the receipt of advices of shipment. This arrangement, which applies to all categories of consumer goods, ceases to operate at the end of this month.

(d) No, Sir. Shipping space for civil imports is allocated for each half year by the shipping authorities in the United Kingdom on the basis of a programme of requirements drawn up by the Government of India. In the case of the United Kingdom, the shipping space actually available month by month is then filled in accordance with a directive issued by the Government of India after a

consideration of the cargoes offering, details of which are supplied to them by the India Office. Shipments are confined to goods covered by import licences issued in India, full particulars of which are made available to the India Office.

(e) Does not arise.

Statement showing the main items of consumer goods (other than foodgrains) actually imported during the period October, 1943 to January, 1944.

Books.

Clothing and wearing apparel.

Cutlery including razor blades.

Cycles and cycle parts.

Electric bulbs and lamps.

Electric fans.

Radio apparatus and parts.

Tinned provisions.

Glass and glass ware.

Metal lamps.

Agricultural implements.

Other implements and tools.

Other miscellaneous hardware.

Liquors.

Medical stores.

Chemicals.

Paints.

Packing and wrapping paper.

Printing paper.

Tissue paper.

Writing paper.

Miscellaneous paper.

Photographic apparatus and appliances.

Stationery.

Toilet requisites.

Cotton thread.

Other cotton manufactures.

Haberdashery.

Wool yarn and knitting wool.

Woollen manufactures.

Artificial silk thread.

Other miscellaneous civilian requirements.

Earthenware.

Sewing machines.

Motor Car spares.

Typewriters.

Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari: May I ask the Honourable Member, arising out of the answer to part (b), whether the Government have made a specific request for supplies of whisky?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: I do not think the Government of India specialises in that. All I can say is that if there have been demands for the different kinds of consumers' goods they might include whisky and other commodities. We have merely issued the import licence.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: Is the Honourable Member prepared to state the proportion of the shipping space occupied by whisky?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: I think it must be a very small quantity. All I can say that these articles of consumer goods include books, clothing and wearing apparel, cutlery including razor blades, cycles and cycle parts, electric bulbs and lamps, electric fans, radio apparatus and parts, tinned provisions, glass and glassware, metal lamps, agricultural implements, other implements and tools, other miscellaneous hardware, liquors, medical stores, chemicals, paints, packing and wrapping paper, printing paper, tissue paper, writing paper, miscellaneous paper, photographic apparatus and appliances, stationery and so on. Liquor is one of the items.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: What portion of the available space is occupied by whisky?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: As I said, I am totally ignorant of that.

Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari: Has the Honourable Member been advised that the importation of whisky is a definite anti-inflationary measure?

The Honourable Sir Jeremy Raisman: He has not but it is.

Rao Bahadur N. Siva Raj: On a point of order. When a Member of the House who has tabled a question is present in the House

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Order, order. That question does not arise. Next question.

STEEL RELEASED FOR USE OF CIVILIANS.

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

(a) what quantity of steel has been released for the use of the civilian consumption in the first quarter of 1944; and

(b) whether Government have fixed any definite proportion of the total supplies of steel available in the country to be released for civilian consumption; if so, what the proportion is, and whether it is to be increased by stages, and at what rate?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: (a) 39,000 tons.

(b) Government are doing all they can to release a greater quantity of steel for civilian consumption during 1944.

COMMODITIES RELEASED FOR CIVILIAN CONSUMPTION.

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

(a) the commodities which the Government of India have released in increasing quantities for civilian consumption;

(b) whether he proposes to place on the table the figures as to the quantities released in case of each article since this policy has been put into practice; and

(c) whether Government have fixed any quantity of each commodity which they will release from time to time; if so, the percentage of the quotas so allotted in respect of each article to the average annual consumption by the civilian population during the last three years?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: The quantum of relief given to the civil consumer as a result of the measures taken by Government cannot be assessed by way of question and answer. In the case of organised industries like Woollens, Cotton Textiles, Leather, Cement, etc., additional quantities made available in terms of percentage of the total production can be given but they would not give the whole picture; for apart from such releases relief to the civil consumer is being given in increasing measure by the encouragement of indigenous production of consumer goods, greater imports of goods not produced in sufficient quantities in India, reduction in the demands for the Defence Services, the dehoarding of stocks and the control of prices.

Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari: May I ask the Honourable Member if he has devised any other means of letting the public know what releases are made by the Government in regard to civilian requirements?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: I take it that answers to these questions are always given due publicity.

PADDY GONE WORSE AT STATIONS ON BENGAL AND ASSAM RAILWAY.

236. *Mr. K. O. Neogy: (a) Has the attention of the Honourable the Food Member been drawn to recent discussions in the Bengal Legislative Assembly, and in the Bengal Press, regarding very large quantities of paddy which had long been awaiting despatch from several stations of the Bengal and Assam Railway in the district of Jessore, and had seriously deteriorated due to exposure and negligence?

(b) If the answer to (a) be in the affirmative, what is the correct account of the position, particularly indicating (i) the quantity of paddy involved; (ii) the length of time the paddy was left at the stations; (iii) the extent of deterioration of the paddy; (iv) the degree of responsibility of different parties for the situation; and (v) the steps proposed to be taken to prevent a recurrence of such cases in future?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) From information supplied by the Bengal Government, it appears that about 3,700 tons of paddy mostly purchased at the end of November, was kept on railway platforms in Jessore district, for sometime, awaiting wagons. About three quarters of this stock was uncovered, but the damage done is reported to be negligible. The entire quantity has since been sold to the Calcutta rice mills.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: Is the Honourable Member in a position to state whether all the paddy that was stored on the different railway platforms had actually been booked by the railways, or they were awaiting booking facilities?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: Well, Sir, I am not able to answer that straightaway.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: Is the Honourable Member in a position to assure the House that necessary booking facilities are available and that the wagon supplies allotted for the purpose of moving these grains by the railways within the province of Bengal are sufficient?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: Well, Sir, the question of transport has been engaging our very serious attention and I can assure the Honourable Member that although there are temporary difficulties, we are trying to do our best.

CONFERENCE HELD FOR FIXATION OF ACREAGE FOR JUTE CULTIVATION.

237. *Mr. K. C. Neogy: (a) Will the Honourable Member for Commerce be pleased to state the conclusions arrived at by the Conference which was held at New Delhi on the 10th and 11th January last under his chairmanship to consider the question of fixation of acreage for jute cultivation?

(b) Who constituted the personnel of this Conference and what opinions were expressed on behalf of the different interests represented on the various aspects of the question?

(c) What effect is going to be given to the conclusions of the Conference by the Provincial Governments concerned?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: (a), (b) and (c). The Conference alluded to by the Honourable Member was between the representatives of the Government of India and of the Government of Bengal. It is not in the public interest to disclose what transpired at the Conference, but the Honourable Member's attention is invited to a Press Note, of which I lay a copy on the table, issued by the Bengal Government on the 7th February, 1944, on the subject of the restriction of jute acreage in that Province in 1944-45.

Press Note.

The question of acreage to be sown with jute this year and its probable effect on prices has been under consideration of the Government of Bengal for some time. The matter was recently discussed in a Conference with representatives of the Government of India at New Delhi and as a result certain decisions have been reached which are now announced for information of those concerned.

(a) The Government of Bengal will issue orders for licensing of an acreage of 8 annas of the basic acreage of 1940, and will advise and encourage the agriculturists to plant fully up to this acreage in their own interests.

(b) The Government of India will guarantee a minimum price of raw jute on the basis of Rs. 15 per maund of Indian Jat Middles at Calcutta (other qualities or grades of raw jute to be in parity with this price).

(c) The Government of India will undertake to buy all crop offering, old and new Up-country or at Calcutta in order to maintain prices at the above level at Calcutta and at parity levels Up-country.

(d) A maximum price of raw jute will be fixed on the basis of Rs. 17 for Indian Jat Middles at Calcutta (other qualities or grades of raw jute to be in parity with this price) with the right of the Government of India to requisition on the basis of the maximum price. The Government of Bengal will assist in such requisitioning from middlemen if necessary.

(e) Both the minimum and the maximum prices will be fixed under statutory orders to be issued by the Government of India. The Government of India will also under statutory orders simultaneously fix the maximum prices for manufactured goods.

The prices so fixed come into operation from a date to be notified shortly and will remain in force up to and including June 30th 1945.

The Government of Bengal are taking the necessary steps to give the growers the full benefit of these arrangements and to ensure to the cultivator the highest price possible in parity with the prices so fixed.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: What is the secrecy due to?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: It is due to the fact that it was a discussion between the Government of Bengal and the Government of India as to what should be the nature of restrictions this year, and obviously it is nature of discussion which cannot be disclosed because various points of view were considered.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: Is the Honourable Member in a position to give us an idea of the acreage fixed for jute as the result of these discussions?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: The Government of Bengal will issue orders for licensing of an acreage of 8 annas of the basic acreage of 1940 and will advise and encourage the agriculturists to plant fully up to this acreage.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: May I know if this matter is primarily the concern of the Provincial Government, why was it necessary for the Government of India to have a conference in Delhi?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: It is not only in the interest of the Government of Bengal and the Government of India but also in the interest of world trade. After all the Government of India, in the Commerce Department, is responsible to see that in the post-war reconstruction jute receives proper attention.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: Is the Honourable Member prepared to say to what extent the interest of world trade determines the acreage of jute in jute producing provinces?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: It is the consideration of all the relevant factors—world trade, the nature of food production, the nature of the crops, the seasons—that determine the question of acreage.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: Is the opinion of the cultivator taken into consideration?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: I consider that this year's position is the greatest boon to the cultivators, which has been pressed by everybody for the last 30 years.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: Is the Honourable Member in a position to assure this House that the 'Grow More Food' campaign would not be prejudiced in any manner by the acreage that may have been fixed?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: I can assure the House that it would not be so in any circumstance, and I think we are fully aware of the food situation not only this year, but last year and in the future in order to find out what should be the proper acreage.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: Is the acreage reduced or increased in comparison with last year?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: It is near about the same, though I am not sure.

APPOINTMENT OF BRIGADIER WHEELER AS DIRECTOR GENERAL OF ARCHÆOLOGY.

238. *Mr. K. C. Neogy: (a) Will the Secretary for Education, Health and Lands be pleased to state whether one Dr. Mortimer Wheeler has been selected for appointment as Director-General of Archæology in India? If so, when is he due to take over charge? What is his age, and for what period and on what pay and allowances, etc., is he being appointed?

(b) When is the present Director-General due to retire? Has he applied for leave preparatory to retirement? What will be Dr. Mortimer's position till the present Director-General retires?

(c) Did Government consult the Federal Public Service Commission regarding this appointment? Otherwise, who selected him? Is it not the ordinary rule or practice to consult the Federal Public Service Commission in such matters when an outsider is to be appointed to a departmental cadre, ignoring the claims of the existing officers of the department?

(d) Were the claims of the Indian officers in the department considered before this selection was made? If so, by whom and when?

(e) Was the Director-General ever asked to nominate his successor, or was he otherwise consulted in the matter of bringing out a foreign expert?

(f) Is it a fact that Indian Archaeology entails a study of Indian subjects like Indian languages, Indian epigraphy, Indian numismatics, Indian art, etc.? In what way has Dr. Wheeler qualified himself in any of these subjects?

(g) To what extent have the activities of the department been affected by war conditions? Are they allowed to publish any of their reports, monographs, journals, periodicals, etc.? What activities are the museums under the Government of India, such as the Delhi and Calcutta museums, pursuing at the present moment?

(h) How long has the post of Deputy Director General of Archaeology been held by the present incumbent? What extension has been granted to him, if any? Do Government intend to keep him on after the new Director-General takes over charge? Otherwise, whom do they propose to appoint in his place?

Mr. J. D. Tyson: (a) The reply to the first part of the question is in the affirmative. Dr. Mortimer Wheeler is due to take charge about the end of April. He is 53 years of age. He has been appointed for four years on a pay of Rs. 2,250 plus £13-6-8 overseas pay.

(b) The present Director General is due to retire on the 21st October, 1944. He has not yet formally applied for leave preparatory to retirement but has stated that he proposes to go on leave preparatory to retirement at the end of April. Until the present Director General goes on leave preparatory to retirement Dr. Mortimer Wheeler will be on special duty.

(c) The Federal Public Service Commission was not consulted regarding the appointment of Dr. Mortimer Wheeler. He was selected by the Government of India. It is not the practice to consult the Federal Public Service Commission as regards candidates selected through the High Commissioner.

(d) Yes, by the Government of India in 1943.

(e) No.

(f) A knowledge of the subjects mentioned is an advantage in the study of Indian archaeology. Dr. Mortimer Wheeler has no special qualifications in these subjects but he has other qualifications which the Government of India regard as necessary in existing conditions.

(g) Owing to paper shortage the publications of the Archaeological Department have been temporarily curtailed. The museums under the Government of India at Delhi and Calcutta are closed; other museums under the Government of India are still open.

(h) The post of Deputy Director General has been held by the present incumbent since the 2nd September, 1940. His period of tenure has been extended up to the end of March 1944. Government have reached no decision on the question whether his tenure should be further extended.

Mr. Muhammad Azhar Ali: Is it the policy of the Government of India to select non-experts in places where experts are required? If not, then why has this selection been made?

Mr. J. D. Tyson: No; it is not their policy.

Mr. Govind V. Deshmukh: What are those special qualifications that are referred to by the Honourable Member?

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra: A white skin!

Mr. J. D. Tyson: A knowledge of modern archaeological methods.

Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari: Arising out of the answer to part (d), what is the view of the Government about the efficiency of the senior officers who are now employed by the department, and will the Government consider whether it is worth while retaining them if they are not efficient?

Mr. J. D. Tyson: Certainly it is worth while retaining them. It was not, however, our view that any of them has the particular qualifications required at the present time for the post of Director General.

Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari: Does not the Honourable Member think that the particular qualifications include a knowledge of Indian languages, Indian epigraphy, Indian numismatics and Indian art?

the other from railway revenues—pay less to the worker and charge more to the traveller. Is that fair and just?

What is happening even about this sharing of the surplus between the Government and the Railways? The Honourable the War Transport Member and the Finance Member have illegally decided that three-fourths of the railway surplus will go to the general revenue. Where is the authority for this? Under what authority has he done that?

Mr. K. S. Gupta (Gunjam cum Vizagapatam: Non-Muhammadan Rural): Zoolum!

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: My Honourable friend will find the Resolution of last year quoted on page 35 of Volume I of his Report. That entitled them to get three-fourths share of the surplus for the current year only. But nothing prevents him from doing what he likes. He has misappropriated without any authority, changed the Convention of 1924 by a stroke of the pen and given to the General Revenue three-fourths of the surplus for 1944-45. Under what authority?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: With the consent of the Convention Committee.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: Convention Committee is not the final authority; it is this Assembly which is the final authority.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: I may point out that my Honourable friend also gave his consent.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: It was only for last year. The Resolution itself says so. I must read it.

The resolution for the year 1943-44 says: "For subsequent years the railway reserve shall be decided each year on the consideration of the needs of the railways and general revenues." That is the resolution. Who has to consider? The authority which gave you three-fourths in the current year is the authority which alone can give you for the future. You need a resolution of this House for continuing three-fourths payments, but you have misappropriated already! It shows the contempt they have got for this Assembly. They take its consent for granted. I assure you, Sir, that it is quite wrong to allocate in advance three-fourths of the surplus to General Revenues for the next year. You have no right. It is illegal, unconstitutional and against the Convention of 1924, which has not yet been varied, except for the current year. Remember you are taking away 32 crores without any authority. As you have taken away the whole of my country, I do not mind. The Honourable the War Transport Member said during the debate yesterday that it does not matter "whether you adopt this cut or not. I hope you wont, but if you do I am not going to reduce the fare. I am going to treat your vote with contempt."

Mr. N. M. Joshi: He did not say so.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: What is the effect of it? When a man says to me that no matter what you do this 10 crores will be earned by them, what else can it mean. Mr. Joshi, you should understand what he said!

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: Read the record.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: He said this 10 crores will go to the General Revenues, which means that the fares remain high. I think that that is the only meaning. You are trying to flatter him!

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: That is the meaning of the resolution for which my Honourable friend voted for yesterday.

Nawabzada Muhammad Liaquat Ali Khan: Nothing of the kind.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: It is that in effect.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: Not in effect at all, unless you wish to treat our vote with contempt. We do not want the fares to be raised.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: Why did not the Honourable Member move a proper motion?

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: It was not so simple. There was no time.

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

Mr. Jammadas M. Mehta: All right, Sir.

You do not want to obey us. You want to pile taxation upon taxation upon Railways in the hope that they remain sound, but at the same time you will bleed the traveller and the worker. That is not the way to have sound railway finance.

I support the cut for my own reasons.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: My Honourable friend, Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad, asked why railway finance should be treated in a somewhat different way to other finances of Government, and I think the answer is clear. The Railway Department is a commercial undertaking contrary to, for instance, expenditure for medical purposes. What I shall be saying about railway finance, with particular reference to post-war conditions, will, I hope, be based on sound business principles of finance.

Sir Muhammad Yamin Khan (Agra Division: Muhammadan Rural): But the Honourable Member said something else yesterday. You said yesterday that you are a Member of the Government and not only the custodian. . . .

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: That is so, but nevertheless this undertaking is a commercial one.

The second point which Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad made is that he is calculating on the war continuing for five years and that results in some optimistic financial figures. I am not trying to make a debating point, but I do feel, as I said last year also, that sooner or later, and sooner now rather than later, we must reach the maximum of our earning capacity by reason of the limitation imposed by our equipment. But it is quite clear from some of my Honourable friends that we have not yet reached the maximum of our expenditure especially if my friends, Mr. Jammadas Mehta's and Dr. Sir Zia Uddin's proposals are put through. It is quite impossible, and I am sure my friend realises it, greatly to increase the cost of the staff and at the same time reduce the fares six times, as was suggested.

We have made considerable progress in our preparation of plans since last year and I would like to deal with them under five or six heads, *e.g.*, rehabilitation, locomotive manufacture, improvements both operative and on account of staff welfare, amenities and construction of new lines.

As regards rehabilitation, it is obvious that as a result of the heavy wear and tear on the railways, the lack of repairs and renewals, and also owing to the fact that our asset is ageing, we shall have to spend a great deal of money on rehabilitation after the war. We have a programme of spending in the first seven years after the war a figure of Rs. 125 crores. I have the details of how that is allocated under different heads of workshops machinery, rolling stock, track, bridges, signalling and inter-locking and so on.

Sir F. E. James: That is on rehabilitation?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: Yes.

Sir Cowasjee Jehangir (Bombay City: Non-Muhammadan Urban): At what prices?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: Somewhat lower than present-day prices.

I will just touch on the building of locomotives as my Honourable friend failed to move his cut motion. I would like to stress once again to this House that the decision has been made to build locomotives in this country at Kanchrapara. We are finalising the blue prints for this, we shall order the machinery as soon as the blue prints are finalised and we shall then get the works started as soon as we can.

Babu Baijnath Bajoria (Marwari Association: Indian Commerce): When are you going to start?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: We are trying to build boilers elsewhere in collaboration with private enterprise during the war. We are considering setting up another locomotive works, probably in South India. We are quite prepared to consider any other proposals from private enterprise that

may be put forward. We want these works to be first class and up to date works and that is why we have spent more time than the House or we ourselves would have wished in getting out these blue prints. We do not want to put up second-rate works. We want to make Kanchrapara into a good show. We have difficulties at present. It is not as if we were trying to do this in peace time. About 80 per cent. of the shops in Kanchrapara are engaged on loco repairs and as you can well understand, loco repairs in that area are a vital war necessity, especially in view of the additional locomotives coming on to that particular railway. Also there is a certain difficulty in getting the priority from overseas for the machinery, because even if we started today, we could not possibly have the first engines on the lines until two years hence, and projects which come into fruition two years hence do not have the same war priority as those which come into fruition earlier. But that does not stop

1 P.M. us going ahead. We are determined to finalise these blue prints as soon as possible, and to get the machinery into the country and to get the works started as soon as possible.

Passing on to improvements, there is no question that our railways are not entirely up to date in their operational efficiency, and we have a great deal of work to do in technical improvements. I do not think I need schedule them all but I have a list of 11 headings, such as electrification of stations, signalling and inter-locking, additional equipment in goods yards and transhipment sheds and so on—a number of things for the improvement of operation on the railways; and in parenthesis I may add that one of our main difficulties in operating the railways is the difficulty we have in communications between different stations. That is a serious handicap to operation. On operative improvements we have a seven year programme of 45 crores.

On staff welfare we have a figure of 48 crores for the seven years. To take one item, a large item, I would mention housing. We have 139,200 subordinates and about 65,600 of them or 47 per cent. have already been provided with quarters. In addition to them we have on the clerical and inferior staff 516,000 of whom 190,000 or 37 per cent. have been housed. The increased housing for the balance of these people is the largest item under the heading of Staff Welfare.

Under the heading of Third Class Passengers amenities, we have a programme for the seven years of 45 crores; but I will not say anything more about it.

Under the heading of Construction of New Lines, we have altogether 14,000 miles of new lines surveyed or proposed, and if we were to go ahead at the rate of 500 miles per annum for 10 years, that will be a hundred crores; but actually in our seven year programme we have put down a figure of 56 crores. With regard to the construction of new lines I must point out that everything that we plan in that direction must be dependent on Governments road-rail plans. Government are considering a programme of widespread road development and that, of course, has to be considered in consultation with the Provincial Governments. This question has been under careful examination; very useful preliminary work has been done on it by a technical committee. Sooner or later, and the sooner the better, these conclusions will be laid before the Post-war Transport Policy Committee; and on that committee there are representatives of the Central Government, the provinces and of the public who are concerned in transport. On this committee will be representatives of all those bodies who are concerned with transport, whether they are road, railways or river steamers.

The total of that expenditure in the first seven years comes to 319 crores. A part of that expenditure is remunerative, ultimately we hope that the new lines will be, although in the initial stages many of those new lines must undoubtedly result in a temporary loss; and that loss will either be a burden on revenue or will have to be carried by the reserves. But if you look at this programme you will find that most of it is unremunerative, except indirectly in that it will increase the operating efficiency and help in retaining traffic.

[Sir Edward Benthall.]

Most of these improvements such as staff welfare, amenities and rehabilitation are directly unremunerative, nevertheless necessary.

My Honourable friend said, how do we propose to finance these and what resources have we got? I think the Honourable Member will agree that new lines should be paid for out of capital; that covers 56 crores out of 819. Next we pass on to the thorny subject of the depreciation fund. . . .

Sir F. E. James: Would that not be financed by borrowing?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: It would probably be borrowed capital though there might also be accumulated reserves to borrow from. We then pass on to rehabilitation and that will largely be paid for out of the depreciation fund. I should perhaps say that there are certain items, such as writing down stocks which have been purchased at high prices during the war and delayed repairs and renewals, which would normally be a charge against revenue; and these items are included under the general heading of rehabilitation for which we are contemplating an expenditure of about 125 crores. To meet that, we shall have on the 31st of March next year, in the depreciation fund, about 82 crores. Sir F. E. James has calculated that at the end of his two years, there will be 70 crores in the depreciation fund. He has also pointed out, quoting Sir Cowasjee Jehangir, that when we come to replace our assets after the war against this depreciation fund, we shall have to pay a price at least 80 per cent. above the cost at which the assets were installed. I would like to carry that a little further and quote the graphs which were put before the Convention Committee, which show that even if we only take into account the replacement cost at the same price at which the assets were installed, the depreciation fund will be exhausted in 1966—yesterday I quoted offhand 1960. So the depreciation fund will be exhausted, even if prices are not higher than they were before the war, by 1966. That shows the necessity for building up this fund to a much higher figure

An Honourable Member: But additions will be made year after year.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: Additions will be made; after allowing for the additions and deductions and assuming that prices are the same as in the years before the war, it will be exhausted in 1966. How then can Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad say that it is excessive? I will take Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad's own figures and accept that there should be a reserve of 15 per cent. i.e., of 120 crores; if the depreciation fund is exhausted you have got there to have, at his own figure, 120 crores in the reserve fund.

Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari (Tanjore *cum* Trichinopoly: Non-Muhammadan Rural): What would be the possible loss in working?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: All these subjects, the adequacy of depreciation fund, obsolescence, and the increased cost of replacements will be the subject of further examination the result of which will be laid before the House in due course. I have shown that 56 crores out of 819 will come out of capital and 125 out of depreciation fund, and that leaves a balance of 138 crores. Two years hence, on Sir Frederick James' calculation we shall have a figure of 50 crores in the reserve fund. Personally, I think that is somewhat speculative because I am not at all sure that the previous high level of surpluses will continue when expenses rise and income does not rise correspondingly. But in any case it will be seen that we have a deficit of about 100 crores if this programme is to be adopted and if the railways are to be brought up to modern standards. Hence my desire to try to build up funds. I have tried to give to the House a picture of what we in the railway department are trying to work to. Although the figures are set out in detail in our own plans they are really only at a very early stage. The figures are large judged by old standards and for that reason it will not be possible to put through a programme of this sort unless we make an effort to finance it. As I said in my budget speech it is fairly easy to make these plans but it is not easy to find the finance for them.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member has already exceeded his time-limit.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): No, he has not.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: I will conclude, to satisfy my Honourable friend, by saying two things. First, I will repeat what I have just said, that these figures must not be taken as in any way more than a general guide to what we have in mind. I should not like the House to hold the department to any particular figures, but I have given the general order of the preparations that we are making. Secondly, I should like to reiterate the point which I made last year, that the timing of such a programme as this is of great importance.

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

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: We contemplate 16 crores in the first year, 33 crores in the second, and thereafter 50 crores a year. It may be desirable to delay these programmes until there are times of recession or slump, when the expenditure incurred on these projects may be of real benefit to the country in evening out post-war economic fluctuations.

I must express my regret that my Honourable and very esteemed friend who spoke from the Congress Benches, expressed the feeling that my Honourable friends opposite are not prepared to discuss these matters at the present time. I appreciate her sincerity, and in return I would express the sincere hope that even though they may not be prepared to discuss these things at the present time, the work that we are putting in may yet be of value to India in the future. In view of what I have said, I hope the European Group will agree that we are getting on with this work and making the financial preparations for the same, and that they will withdraw this cut motion.

Some Honourable Members: Let the question be now put.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: If they do not, I oppose the motion.

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

"That the demand under the head 'Railway Board', be reduced by Rs. 100."

The Assembly divided:

AYES—17.

Abdul Qaiyum, Mr.
Choudhury, Mr. Abdur Rasheed.
Dam, Mr. Ananga Mohan.
Das, Mr. B.
Deshmukh, Mr. Govind V.
Gupta, Mr. K. S.
Hegde, Sri K. B. Jinaraja.
Kailash Bihari Lall, Mr.
Krishnamachari, Mr. T. T.

Lahiri Chaudhury, Mr. D. K.
Maitra, Pandit Lakshmi Kanta.
Mehta, Mr. Jannadas M.
Neogy, Mr. K. C.
Pande, Mr. Badri Dutt.
Sham Lal, Lala.
Srivastava, Mr. Hari Sharan Prasad.
Subbarayan, Shrimati K. Radha Bai.

NOES—38.

Ahmad Nawaz Khan, Major Nawab Sir.
Ambedkar, The Honourable Dr. B. R.
Banerjee, Dr. P. N.
Benthall, The Honourable Sir Edward.
Bhowmik, Sir Gurunath.
Bhagchand Soni, Rai Bahadur Seth.
Caroe, Sir Olaf.
Chatterji, Mr. S. C.
Daga, Seth Sunder Lall.
Dalal, Dr. Sir Ratanji Dinshaw.
Dalpat Singh, Sardar Bahadur Captain.
Habibur-Rahman, Khan Bahadur Sheikh.
Haider, Khan Bahadur Shamsuddin.
Imam, Mr. Saiyid Haider.
Ismail Alikhan, Kunwar Hajee.
Jawahar Singh, Sardar Bahadur Sardar Sir.
Jehangir, Sir Cowasjee.
Khare, The Honourable Dr. N. B.
Krishnamoorthy, Mr. E. S. A.
Kushal Pal Singh, Raja Bahadur.

Maxwell, The Honourable Sir Reginald.
Muazzam Sahib Bahadur, Mr. Muhammad.
Mudaliar, The Honourable Dewan Bahadur
Sir A. Ramaswami.
Ogilvie, Sir Charles.
Piare Lal Kureel, Mr.
Raisman, The Honourable Sir Jeremy.
Roy, The Honourable Sir Asoka.
Shahban, Khan Bahadur Mian Ghulam Kadir
Muhammad.
Siva Raj Rao Bahadur N.
Spence, Sir George.
Srivastava, The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad.
Sultan Ahmed, The Honourable Sir.
Thakur Singh, Capt.
Trivedi, Mr. C. M.
Tyson, Mr. J. D.
Wagstaff, Col. H. W.
Zahid Husain, Mr.
Zaman, Mr. S. R.

The motion was negatived.

The Assembly then adjourned for Lunch Till Three of the Clock.

The Assembly re-assembled after Lunch at Three of the Clock, Mr. Deputy President (Mr. Akhil Chandra Dutta) in the Chair.

Non-representation of Scheduled Castes in Railway Services.

Mr. Deputy President (Mr. Akhil Chandra Dutta): Mr. Siva Raj.

Rao Bahadur N. Siva Raj (Nominated Non-Official): Sir, I move:

"That the demand under the head 'Railway Board', be reduced by Rs. 100."

The object in moving this cut motion is to raise the question of the representation of the scheduled castes in the railway services. Sir, the Government last year by its August Resolution

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: August?

Rao Bahadur N. Siva Raj: Yes, August and August both. The Government by its August, 1943 Resolution has fixed a percentage for the scheduled castes in respect of recruitment in all central services. In that Resolution they say that the Administrations of all the company-managed railways have also been asked to adopt similar rules for the services in those railways. One finds, Sir, that in spite of the attempts that have been made from time to time from the floor of this House to secure for the scheduled castes a recognition and a representation in the services of the Government, the Government have not moved in the matter at all, as will be evident from the statements giving figures which they themselves have supplied to us. For instance, on page 25 of Volume I of the Report of the Railway Board one finds a statement of figures at the sight of which I am sure the heart of any scheduled caste man will leap with joy. The total number of scheduled caste employees, permanent and temporary, on all Indian Railways is given in column four; there are 1,23,277 depressed class employees in the railway services. As one gets on to the next page, he is at once given a clear picture of what is the actual fact. On page 26 of Volume I, you find the figures of direct recruitment by the State-managed and Company-managed Railways. This statement shows that so far as the engineering line is concerned for 12 Hindus, 6 Muslims, 1 Anglo-Indian, 1 Sikh, one Indian Christian there is not even one scheduled caste man. Similarly you will find the column empty against other services—Accounts, Transportation and so on. Then, Sir, in the hope of finding that situation may be better in inferior services, I went to Volume II of the Report. On page 246 in the volume you see the position quite clearly: You will find that in 1942-43 the same figure is repeated in the statement showing the number of all races—I like the word races—employed on each Railway and under the Railway Board at the close of year 1941-42 and 1942-43: 123,277 Depressed classes, 190,352 Muslims and so on and so forth. Then, immediately coming to the next page, which gives the classification of servants of all races employed on Class I Railways, you at once see how the percentage falls from practically 3 to 1—a very low figure. In Column 4 on page 248, you find the figures given for depressed classes. So far as the State-managed Railways are concerned, for 67,442 Hindus there are only 1,916 depressed class men. Under the Company-managed Railways for 97,399 Hindus you find 2,384 depressed class men.

As you proceed further, you find how the percentage of scheduled castes are being gradually dropped. In fact, you can see this as you go from page to page till in the final page you find that the scheduled castes have been reserved for, or they have got a monopoly of, lower and menial services.

Again, on page 28 of the Report Volume I, figures are given of gazetted officers on Class I Railways on the 31st March, 1934, 31st March, 1942, and 31st March, 1943. The column under 'Depressed Classes' is empty throughout, which shows that practically there is no recruitment of scheduled castes at all. Very often we find that the answer is that, in the first place, scheduled caste candidates are not available, and, in the second place, if they are available they are not suitable. Sir, it has also been stated in the Government Resolution of August 1943—whatever the reason may be—it is stated:

"While the Government of India recognize that this is mainly due to the difficulty of getting suitably qualified candidates they now consider that the reservation of a definite

percentage of vacancies might provide the necessary stimulus to candidates of these castes to obtain better qualifications and thus make themselves eligible for various Government posts and services."

I do not agree with the statement that is made therein. I can illustrate it in this way. I know that so far as my Presidency is concerned—and I am perfectly sure it is the case in other provinces also—when a scheduled caste man takes care to hide his identity and gets his education in colleges and is called upon to compete along with other people, he has been able to get appointed in the past. I dare say, this House knows that some years ago some of the educated scheduled caste men had necessarily to hide their identity in order to live their daily lives as normal human beings in this country. I know instances, Sir, where people occupied very high positions. In the Madras Presidency, I know one gentleman who was the Health Officer of the Corporation of Madras and who later on was appointed Honorary Physician to the then Viceroy, Lord Dufferin. Then there was another gentleman who was the Senior Surgeon in the Government of Mysore. There was yet another gentleman who was the District Registrar in the Madras Presidency. I can quote the instances of a number of people who occupied high places there. Or again, when the scheduled classes went to foreign countries like Burma, Malaya, South Africa, Singapore and other places, where neither the Government of India nor even the Congress, nor anybody existed to give protection to us, nor even make a show of sympathy towards us, we find members of the scheduled class have come up in large numbers and have occupied very high positions. There is no time for me to give details of those instances. I merely say that in this country we have not been able to secure positions the moment we declared ourselves scheduled castes. I do not know the psychological reason for that, but I certainly feel that it is often due to a feeling of abhorrence, if not actual resentment at the thought of scheduled classes trying to occupy and acquire a certain share in the administration of the country. I will also prove how this statement is one which I cannot support, namely, that suitable candidates are not available and it has happened only recently. Whereas it was not possible for the Government of India in any Department to find suitable candidates and recruit men from the scheduled castes to the Departments, it was however possible for the Labour Department which is in charge of a Member belonging to scheduled caste to recruit quite a good percentage in the last eighteen months that he has been in office to so many important posts. So far as the report goes, every one of them is doing quite well. So, I suggest that the lack of recruitment of the scheduled classes in the Government service and also in the Railway Board consequently is due in the first place to the lack of interest in the Departments generally, if not as I suggested to positive abhorrence of entertaining the scheduled castes in the various services and also due to the fact that there is no provision made by the higher authorities so far as this recruitment of scheduled castes are concerned. So, I feel that the Railway Board has been lacking in interest. In fact it has been forgetting its duty in the matter of securing representation to scheduled castes in the services. I have already reported once or twice to Col. Wagstaff on the behaviour of M. and S. M. and S. I. Railways where scheduled castes with necessary qualifications apply but they are turned down on some pretext or other.

I suggest that the Railway Board should particularly take care to see that they keep an eye on the various railways in the matter of recruitment of depressed classes. I also suggest that the Railway Board should in the first place, as they have tried in N. W. Railway, set up a service commission for recruitment so that they can take care of the interest of scheduled classes fully. Secondly, with regard to the allegation that qualified candidates do not come forward, I suggest the Railway Board should reserve some three lakhs for giving scholarships for training scheduled caste men in the railway schools and for recruitment to special services. It will also be better that the Railway Board should have an Administrative Officer to look after the scheduled castes. I suppose Col. Wagstaff would look into this question of examining recruitment to all railways and find out whether they have been following the rules laid down for the recruitment of scheduled castes. Sir, I move.

Mr. Deputy President (Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta): Cut motion moved:

"That the demand under the head 'Railway Board', be reduced by Rs. 100."

Mr. Kailash Bihari Lal (Bhagalpur, Purnea and the Sonthal Parganas: Non-Muhammadan): Sir, I rise to support this motion. Before I speak in support of this motion, I want to make my position quite clear as regards the question of this cut motion which seeks to discuss the non-representation of the schedule castes in railway services. I am against anything that seeks to perpetuate castes. I am an uncompromising nationalist and I give my support to this motion only because by this measure justice will be done to the down-trodden people and they will be brought to our level. I was, therefore, tempted to speak on this subject even when the cut motion regarding post-war reconstruction was under discussion. But as it is, very few of us sitting on the Nationalist Benches, specially back benches, who are attached to the Nationalist Party get an opportunity to speak. If I had an opportunity to speak on the post-war reconstruction scheme, I would have given the suggestion on nationalist lines. I may remind the House here that I tabled a question suggesting that the railway services should be distributed on territorial or provincial basis and not on caste or communal basis, based on religion, as the Government recognise today. I got an answer from the Honourable Member for Railways that the Government could not recognise that principle but only the communal principle, based on religious denominational lines. I had to bow down as the temper of the country was not opportune. I am certain that in order to regenerate the country, we must act on right lines. (Interruption.) My friend the Pandit is too much steeped in caste to come out of it to regenerate the country. But I think there are others to do so. It is the misfortune of this country that the Government think otherwise when it is a question of building up the nation in this country. I cannot think that those who are running the government of the country are so simple as not to understand the implication of dividing the country on religious or communal basis. They know full well. If they are sincere in this regard they can bring about a state of affairs in the country which will redound to their credit. I wanted to suggest in the post-war reconstruction scheme that once for all they should start on territorial nationalism, a thing that has built up the whole world today and a thing that is the motive power behind all nations of the world today. Without that, we cannot expect to build up any scheme of nationalism in this country. And it is on that line that I would suggest it. It may seem strange that I am supporting the demand of a particular caste. My scheduled caste friends may take a lesson from the state of affairs obtaining in the country. They may have the consolation of forming another group in the country like the Muslim group. In this unfortunate country encouragement is given to the people to form into groups on the religious denominational basis and in course of time these may be Arya Group, Sikh Group and other groups. Our scheduled caste friends are going to be made a party in the triangular shape which the nation is now taking.

Seth Yusuf Abdoola Haroon (Sind: Muhammadan Rural): The Honourable Member should remember that Muslims are not a group but a nation.

Mr. Kailash Bihari Lal: Yes, and I hope you will soon wake up to find yourself a part of the Hindu nation.

An Honourable Member: Also Sir Edward Benthall.

Mr. Kailash Bihari Lal: He may adopt this country and become a Hindu. The European Superintendent of Police in my district told me, "I am a Hindu". Anyway, the scheduled caste people are a part and parcel of the Hindu nation and I feel that they have been suppressed and their rights have been suppressed and we owe a duty to them to raise their status. I do not support them because they are a separate caste but because they as Hindus deserve our support. I suggest that Government should have some convention or instrument of instructions under which people who are responsible for making appointments should help them. Sir, I support the motion.

Sir F. E. James: Sir, I should like to support the plea of my Honourable friend, Rao Bahadur Siva Raj. I know from personal experience how difficult it is to secure employment for a member of the scheduled castes even when that person has the requisite qualifications. I know that young men belonging to these castes who appear before Public Service Commissions, on which their community is not generally represented, go into the room where they are to be interviewed with the feeling that the scales are weighted against them. That is a fact; I have been told of that by young men whose cases I know individually. I also know that even on railways where advertisements have been issued for appointments which may be reserved for members of the scheduled castes, applications have been received and then a statement made that no suitable candidates are forthcoming. In two cases I know suitable candidates were actually forthcoming and did apply. I do not want to say too much about it, but I do want to ask the Railway Member what steps his administration can take,—I realise it is very difficult for him,—to ensure that these applicants are treated just as other applicants are treated for similar posts. I am afraid it is a disagreeable fact that in many circles, not excluding my own community, there is an almost inherent prejudice against applications coming from this particular community. The scales are weighted against them, and it is no use our blinking the fact that they are definitely weighted against them. Therefore it requires all the more special care that every possible hindrance should be removed from their way when they do have the requisite qualifications. There are certain departments of railways, just as there are certain departments of other sections of Government service, which are of course dominated by Hindus of a very much higher status in the Hindu hierarchy. I have been told,—and I am now speaking specially of South India,—that in many cases it is useless for any member of the scheduled castes to apply for a particular post even though it may be reserved for that community, because the officer responsible for the appointment to that post will take every step to indicate that the applicants do not come up to the requisite standard.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: Just as Englishmen do about Indians.

Sir F. E. James: Yes; I am not suggesting for a moment that we are not guilty of the same sort of thing. But I am merely urging that what my Honourable friend, Rao Bahadur Siva Raj, has said is, in fact, perfectly true, as I can testify from personal experience. I do put it to the Honourable the Railway Member that the members of the scheduled castes not only deserve on humanitarian grounds every possible consideration in this matter but also deserve that consideration for the services which they have rendered in the past and are rendering today, particularly in connection with the war effort.

I was glad to see the other day that His Excellency the Viceroy and the Governor of Madras visited a camp in South India, not far from Coimbatore, a camp I had the pleasure of visiting not long ago. Between 60 and 70 per cent. of this camp are drawn from the community which my Honourable friend is representing in this House. That is just one indication of the willing and glad services which this community has been rendering to India in the war effort.

On these grounds I suggest that very special consideration is due to these people and I hope my Honourable friend, the Railway Member, will do all he possibly can to meet the complaints brought forward by my Honourable colleague in front of me.

Mr. Hooseinbhoy A. Laljee (Bombay Central Division: Muhammadan Rural): Sir, I rise to support the cut motion that my Honourable friend, the Rao Bahadur, has moved. From the facts that he has placed before the House it is clear that it is definitely a case which requires a very serious consideration. The facts which my friend, Sir Frederick James, has placed before the House make the position still worse. In fact, according to Sir Frederick James, we find that even in the case of the highest Selection Board there is a prejudice prevailing against this community or there prevails communal outlook. It cannot be denied that not only in India but even outside there is an element in the human mentality which favours its own community. We have often seen that amongst the European gentlemen, at least in India and sometimes even in

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England, there is a class known as Bara Sahibs and there is an ordinary labouring class and some differences do exist between the two but they are nothing so acute as or of the kind that often exists in India. Sir, it is very rare that I get up for communal or caste representation. I know that it is human for everybody, including myself and the other Honourable Members in this House, to do something first for our own community. Nobody can deny that such a fact does exist.

Dr. P. N. Banerjee: Not always.

Mr. Hooseinbhoy A. Lalljee: Please admit that it does exist, although the extent to which it exists is a different matter. So, we ought not to be satisfied by merely saying that we shall look after so-and-so. There must be a responsible body of people or the Government whose duty it should be to treat all the classes of people alike. We often hear in these days that the rights of minorities belonging to various castes and creeds are not looked after and this is often trotted out. For what purpose this is done? Many people have great doubt that it is done in the interests of Indians or of India as a whole. All the same, when such things are being trotted out, it is but fair and equitable that the Government of the country should look after the interests of all people alike and it is the bounden duty of the Government to help those who are in poor circumstances or who are handicapped by the fact that they have not got sufficient representation in the higher quarters which will help them to come up. So far as the scheduled classes are concerned, both these facts do exist. Because they are poor, they have not been able to get proper education. Furthermore, as it has been said, in the Selection Boards, unfortunately for them, there are persons who would naturally and humanly look to their own people in the first instance. The only independent party must be Government of the country, whether it is the Congress Government or the League Government or the British Government. I would not say, the same about all European Governments, although my British friends always like to call themselves Europeans. They often say and act as representing every European. Every European, therefore, is their partner or their own people so far as the Asiatics are concerned or so far as, if I may say so, this country and its people are concerned. As somebody said the other day, this Government consists of firstly, those who come to do business in this country and then of all the Europeans. Be that as it may, it is the bounden duty of the authority in power, so long as they claim to tax the people, to look after the interests of all those who also are poor and, therefore, are entitled to and require most help. That is the bounden duty of every good Government.

I hope, Sir, from the facts that my Honourable friend, Rao Bahadur Siva Raj, has placed before us it is amply clear that neither the Government nor these benches

Dr. P. N. Banerjee: Except these benches.

Mr. Hooseinbhoy A. Lalljee: I include these benches also. Who can take the credit for the fact that in all the services and more particularly in important services, from the stage of clerks upwards, there are very few or practically none of the depressed classes, remembering that their number is not less than 5 or 6 crores? My friend was telling us that we should arrange on territorial and provincial basis. But the fact is 90 per cent. people of a province remain in a province and serve or get services in the same province, whether it be Government service or private service. Very few go outside their province. Besides the Government, as regards the Railways, the Municipalities and other employing agencies, the complaint is there and it is a right one and we have got therefore to see that those in authority, whether they are local boards, municipalities, Local Governments, the Railways or the Government as a whole, do look after the interests of all classes and particulars of these persons. If you like, let them be not called scheduled classes. Let them be known as Muslims or Europeans. But they are the people who do require the help of the State, just as a sick man needs medical relief. From that point of view, which is the

strict humanitarian point of view, it is the duty of every Government to help them and we find that for long they have not done so. We are all to blame for it and I hope the Honourable the Railway Member will kindly make it one of his important duties to see that this injustice is put right as soon as possible, and class difference is done away with.

Mr. Piare Lall Kureel (Nominated Non-Official): Mr. Deputy President, I did not like to speak today as I am not feeling well, but when I heard the speech of my honourable friend, Mr. Kailash Bihari Lall, I thought it my duty to say a few words.

It is a well known fact that the representation of the scheduled castes in the Government services is notoriously inadequate. I can say that it is almost negligible. Everybody knows that and I do not want to explain that more elaborately. My Honourable friend, Rao Bahadur Siva Raj, has given ample proof that their representation in Government services is very inadequate. Their cases are often rejected. They are not given due representation in Government services. I can give many instances where the cases of the depressed class candidates are rejected under the made-up excuse of incompetence. The Government often say that suitable scheduled caste candidates are not available. That is a lame excuse. There are many suitable candidates who are rejected on one ground or the other, and in fact it is very easy for the Government to reject the candidates belonging to the scheduled castes because they have no voice of their own. The people around them either belong to the caste Hindus, or the Muslims or other communities.

Let me quote the instance of my brother, Mr. Nand Lall. He graduated from the Forman Christian College, Lahore and secured a high position throughout the whole province. He applied for an Emergency Commission just after the outbreak of the war. He had worked in the U.T.C. for more than 2 years. He was awarded a medal for efficiency and for cent per cent. attendance in camps and in parades. He was a member of the War Propaganda Committee of his district. He was also a member of the recruiting committee and was awarded certificates of meritorious war services. He was a member of the Civic Guard (order division). He has a very good physique. But when he applied for a commission, the reply he received was that if he wanted a Viceroy's Commission, the Government were ready to consider his application, otherwise not. He has many qualifications, and if I give those qualifications one by one it will take much time.

Sir, the candidate whose father served the British Government for 33 years in the Military Department and was awarded many war medals and was given a title for gallant and distinguished services in the field, and one of whose brothers is still a prisoner in Japanese hands, is not allowed an Emergency Commission. Now he is 2nd Lieutenant in the Civil Pioneer Force.

I can quote many instances to the effect that the scheduled caste candidates receive no consideration from the Government. They are rejected on the made up excuse of incompetence and physical unfitness. They have already suffered a lot at the hands of the caste Hindus and now if the Government are going to adopt the same repressive policy and is not going to consider their cases, I think their condition can never be improved and the Government will be accused of gross negligence by the future generations.

Now, here is my Honourable friend, Mr. Kailash Behari Lall, who says that the Hindus are doing a lot; who says that we are members of the Hindu society? They always say that. But let us test it and see whether we are members of the Hindu society. He says that we are members of the Hindu society but at the same time we are denied the most elementary rights of being members of the Hindu society.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra: Who denies it?

Mr. Piare Lall Kureel: You deny it. You say we are members of the Hindu society and are equal. How many of you have given your daughters to the untouchables in marriage—I mean the literate untouchables, and how many of you have the courage to do so now? If you think we are mentally weak, let

[Mr. Piare Lal Kureel.]

there be a competitive examination. If you think we are physically weak, let there be a medical examination. We are equal, why any hesitation in doing so?

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra: Does my Honourable friend want jobs or daughters?

Mr. Piare Lal Kureel: What is the use of saying that we are members of the Hindu society when you are acting like this.

Mr. Deputy President (Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta): Please address the Chair.

Mr. Piare Lal Kureel: Sir, there is no animosity or personal remark. Rao Bahadur Siva Raj has given enough figures and I will say only this much that the Government should consider their cases and that they should be given due representation in Government services. I support the motion moved by my Honourable friend, Rao Bahadur Siva Raj.

(Babu Baijnath Bajoria, at this stage, rose in his seat.)

Mr. Deputy President (Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta): I think it is almost time for the Honourable Member.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: Up to 4-15 P.M.

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

(Babu Baijnath Bajoria rose and resumed his seat and rose again without speaking.)

I am afraid Mr. Bajoria has lost his right to speak. I call upon Mr. Qaiyum.

Mr. Abdul Qaiyum (North-West Frontier Province: General): I wish to say this much on behalf of my Party that we are in the fullest sympathy with the cut motion which has been moved by Rao Bahadur Siva Raj. At the same time there are one or two things to which I wish to draw pointed attention. I was rather amused to listen to the speech of my learned friend, Sir Frederick James.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: He is not learned but rich.

Mr. Abdul Qaiyum: He is both learned and rich. He made a very learned speech in which he tried to sympathise with the scheduled classes. For some years we have seen a sort of change coming over the European elements in India and they have suddenly taken to like and have great regard and affection for the scheduled classes. They have been living in this country for quite a long time—about 200 years—and it is really a very interesting historical fact that throughout these 200 years they were parties to the exploitation and suppression of the scheduled classes in India. Not only that, but their conduct in India is proof positive of the fact that they are as much guilty as any caste Hindu as far as representation of the scheduled classes is concerned.

It is all very well to say take this much from the caste Hindus and that much from the Muslims and give it to the scheduled classes. But is Sir Frederick James conscious of the fact that his community which can be counted on one's fingers' tips—and a drop in the ocean as far as the Indian population goes—has monopolised all the best jobs in India? Why does he not set an example by advising his community to forego all the jobs they are holding at the expense of the people of this country? Let him set an example.

There is another thing. There are so many European firms in India. Let us see what these European firms have done for the scheduled classes. Will they look at the list of scheduled class men they have employed? Have they not got a weakness for the caste Hindus? All this shows that this sympathy with the scheduled classes has got a political motive. You are out to create another class in India; it is your duty to divide the people in this country. Therefore your words of sympathy will have no effect, I hope, on Rao Bahadur Siva Raj and those representing the scheduled classes in this House. You are out to divide and rule. The thing is absolutely clear to anyone. I want to know from the Government Member who is responsible for the fact that the scheduled classes have been denied all the facilities for proper education and uplift throughout these two hundred years of British rule in India? Who is responsible for the under-representation of these classes in the Government services? Certainly the Government of India, who firstly did not educate them,

and secondly, did not give them jobs. They are out simply to give the best jobs to their own kinsmen, namely, the Europeans, who monopolise all the higher jobs. Our sympathy is the sympathy of one Indian towards another Indian. We are very sorry for the deplorable condition of the scheduled classes in India and we wish them the best of luck in the efforts which many honest and public-spirited people are making in this country to raise them, so that they may become useful and helpful members of the Indian nation now in the making. But as far as the sympathy of the Europeans is concerned, we know that their conduct gives the lie direct to the words which are uttered by them on the floor of the House . . .

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: Quite right.

Mr. Abdul Qaiyum: I support the motion.

Mr. Deputy President (Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta): Sir Cowasjee Jehangir.

Babu Baijnath Bajoria: On a point of order, Sir: I understand that you ruled that I had lost my right of speech probably because I understand that you called me and I did not stand up to speak.

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

Babu Baijnath Bajoria: But I could not hear. Another point was that when Mr. Abdul Qaiyum, who is the Leader of the Congress Party, stood up at the same time when I did, I thought it was the convention of the House that when the Leader of any Party stands up, he gets the first chance to speak, and so I sat down. So I think I do not lose the right to speak.

Mr. Deputy President (Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta): I am afraid all this is academic discussion now. Having regard to the time-limit given to his party, I am afraid it is time for the Honourable the War Transport Member, if he agrees to get up; but there is still time.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: The Government member is prepared to reply at 4 O'clock.

Sir Cowasjee Jehangir: I will only speak for five minutes.

Mr. Deputy President (Mr. Akhil Chandra Datta): All right Mr. Bajoria.

Babu Baijnath Bajoria: Sir, I thank you for giving me this chance of speaking. I had no intention whatever of intervening in this debate, but for the fanatical speech of the member, Mr. Piare Lall, who spoke before the Deputy Leader of the Congress Party. He had no business whatsoever to abuse the Hindu religion in the way in which he did; and he had no business whatsoever to abuse the caste Hindus in the way in which he did. The question before the House was a very simple one. Rao Bahadur Siva Raj wants some loaves and fishes; I on my part would never grudge him that. But I find Mr. Piare Lall in his speech is not satisfied with loaves and fishes, but he wants the daughters of caste Hindus. I would ask the Railway Member whether he can provide him with those daughters.

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

I am very sorry that this contagion of communal and caste representation in the services has also affected my friends of the scheduled castes. In the services, in my opinion, we should have a fair field and no favour. First of all, you must deserve and then desire. Even if the scheduled castes and our Muslim friends get all the posts in the services I would not object if they are fit for it. But if they are not fit, if they want these posts only by virtue of their being members of the depressed classes or members of this community or that community, I will certainly object to that. If deserving members of the scheduled castes can stand their own in competitive examinations, I have got no objection that they should be given posts; their caste should not be a barrier to their getting posts; but it should not also be a privilege to get posts.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: The question may now be put.

Col. H. W. Wagstaff (Government of India: Nominated Official): Sir, my Honourable friend, Rao Bahadur Siva Raj, when he was moving this motion quoted two documents; one was the annual report for 1942-43 and the other

[Col. H. W. Wagstaff.]

was the Resolution of the Government of India of August, 1943. The latter document detailed what the Government proposed to do in this matter of reservation for scheduled castes in the future, and therefore nothing in that resolution can be reflected in the first document which pertains to 1942-43. But this annual report shows what the present position is. The present position is roughly this: in the railway service,—state-owned railways,—roughly 14·8 per cent. of railway servants come from the scheduled castes. Now, the population ratio is in the neighbourhood of 12·75 per cent.; so that it cannot be said as far as numbers are concerned that the scheduled castes do not have a fair share of railway service. (Interruption.) My friends ask and ask rightly, what about the higher appointments? It is naturally a very pertinent question. The figures are these. In inferior service, the percentage is 17·5 while in regard to the subordinates it is only 1·4. As inferior servants are very much more numerous than the subordinates, naturally they have more effect on the overall percentage: very roughly an inferior servant is one who is on a scale of pay of less than Rs. 30 per month.

Sir Syed Raza Ali (Cities of the United Provinces: Muhammadan Urban): I take it mostly they are sweepers.

Col. H. W. Wagstaff: No. There are many inferior servants, yardstaff, for instance, who are not sweepers, and sweepers are really only an
4 P.M. inconsiderable number of the total of inferior servants. Now, that is the position as reflected in the present annual return. The position as we hope it will be eventually is foreshadowed in the Resolution of August, 1943 to which my Honourable friend drew attention. In that Resolution Government decided to make a specific reservation of $8\frac{1}{3}$ per cent., in, as far as railways are concerned, subordinate as well as gazetted service. That was issued in August and it was necessary for the Railway Board to decide upon individual percentages which would be applicable to each railway so that railways as a whole should fill an overall $8\frac{1}{3}$ per cent. of the vacancies so long as qualified candidates were forthcoming. In order to do that, the varying population ratios in various parts of the country have to be scrutinised and co-related with the mileage of individual railways in various provinces in order to arrive at a specific reservation ratio for each railway. That has been done and instructions have been issued that railways in recruitment to subordinate grades shall work to their ratio and reserve that percentage of posts for the scheduled castes, which will, on railways as a whole, if qualified candidates are available, amount to $8\frac{1}{3}$ per cent. of the total intake of candidates to fill the vacancies in subordinate ranks. These subordinate ranks include apprentice mechanics where the railway provides the technical education. These orders will only be reflected in the figures for 1944-45, but the Railway Board will endeavour to ensure that the actual percentage is achieved—I say, will endeavour to see that it is achieved because fundamentally it must depend upon qualified candidates being available. Now, Sir, the mere allocation of a specific percentage to this community, it is hoped, will stimulate the scheduled castes so that they will be able to present the requisite number of candidates. In the Resolution to which I have referred the age limit has been extended in regard to scheduled castes by three years to give an opportunity for those scheduled castes members to achieve the requisite academic qualifications when such are laid down. Also as far as their financial position is concerned, any fees which are chargeable are to be reduced to a quarter. I can only say that the Railway Board will do their best to see that the principles laid down by Government in this Resolution of August, 1943 are as far as railway labour is concerned implemented.

Rao Bahadur N. Siva Raj: What about my suggestion regarding the giving of scholarships to at least sons of railway servants?

Col. H. W. Wagstaff: As I have said, in regard to certain technical grades the railways already provide the education at a very small cost, and although it will be considered, I am doubtful whether at the moment we could go beyond

what is laid down in this Resolution. But the mere presence of this specific reservation should stimulate the scheduled castes to acquire the requisite qualifications. I hope in view of what I have said the Honourable Member will be pleased to withdraw his cut motion.

Rao Bahadur N. Siva Raj: In view of what my Honourable friend, Col. Wagstaff, has said with reference to my cut motion, I beg leave of the House to withdraw that motion.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Has the Honourable Member leave of the Assembly to withdraw his cut motion?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): I understand there is objection. The question is:

"That the demand under the head 'Railway Board', be reduced by Rs. 100."

The motion was negatived.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): If Honourable Members will not carry on conversation loudly while I am putting the question, business will be better transacted. Have the Independent Party any more motions?

Mr. Hooseinbhoy A. Lalljee: We have no more motions.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): I take it, then, that unattached Members will move their cut motions.

Extension of Compulsory Provident Fund to all Railway Employees.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: Sir, I move cut motion No. 18.

"That the demand under the head 'Railway Board', be reduced by Rs. 100."

The object of this cut motion is to demand the extension of the Compulsory Provident Fund for all railway employees. Sir, the policy which the Government of India has been following in the matter of the treatment given to their lowest class of employees has been described by me on various occasions as being topsy-turvy, unfair and unjust. The Government of India try to protect the interests of their better class employees or those classes of employees who are better able to protect their interests and neglect the interests of those who are poorest and who are the least able to protect their interests themselves. This is illustrated by what the Government of India does in the matter of providing provident funds for their employees. I do not know why the Government of India should make any discrimination, least of all discrimination against their poorest class of employees in this matter. The Honourable the War Transport Member was good enough to say that all classes of railway employees had worked during the period quite efficiently and loyally and I expect him to be loyal to all classes of railway employees, not only loyal to the better classes of employees, who are in a better position. In the matter of the provident fund, the Government of India has provided for a compulsory provident fund for all those railway employees who get more than Rs. 20 per month. The Government of India at present is employing more than 700,000 employees and those who are given the benefit of the compulsory provident fund, I think, number about 160,000 or between 160,000 and 200,000. I do not know the exact figures. That is nearly one-fourth of them get the benefit of the compulsory provident fund and 75 per cent. are not given the benefit of the compulsory provident fund. After a good deal of agitation, the Government of India have recently altered their rules for the provident fund twice, once in 1941 and again in 1942, with the result that the poorest classes of employees are given the option of being members of the provident fund. In giving even that option, they have not given option to all. The Government of India rule, if I understand it rightly, is that those who get less than Rs. 20 and Rs. 15 have the option—all of them—to be members of the provident fund but those employees who get less than Rs. 15 cannot get even the option of being members of the provident fund unless they have put in ten years' service. I do not know why the Government of India have made this discrimination in the case of those employees who get less than Rs. 15. In the first place, those who get less than Rs. 15 and have not put in ten years service do not get the benefit at all and in the second place those who get less than 20 and have put in ten years service get only the option. In the matter of this option, I must state

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very clearly that if any compulsion is necessary in the case of any classes of railway employees, compulsion is more necessary in the case of the poorest classes of employees. They are generally illiterate, ignorant and do not know how to protect their own interests and if any classes of employees are to be protected against their own imprudence and even neglect of their own interests, it is the poorest classes of employees but the Government of India is always topsy-turvy. They compel those people to become provident fund members, who know how to protect their interests. I, therefore, feel that the House on this occasion should give a direction to the Government of India, that whatever they may do as regards their better educated employees or those employees who are in a better position, in the case of all those employees who get less than Rs. 20 they must get the benefit of the provident fund compulsorily. It is wrong to give the benefit of the provident fund only voluntarily because these people are ignorant. They do not know how to protect their own interests. Therefore compulsion is more necessary in their case than in the case of others.

The Government of India, I hope, will accept this cut motion, that is, the Honourable the War Transport Member will stand up in his seat and say that hereafter there is no discrimination between the higher officers and the subordinate officers and the inferior classes of servants and that every one will get the benefit compulsorily of the provident fund which they have established. I want them to remove these small discriminations which at present exist, because at present the benefit of the provident fund is enjoyed by a very small class of people. I told the House that on account of compulsion only between 160,000 and 200,000 railway employees get the benefit. Recently the Government of India have introduced this optional system and so far as my knowledge goes, the Government of India expects that out of those who are given the optional system as a matter of fact only 30 or 40 per cent. of the people will take the benefit of the option which they have given. I therefore feel that compulsion is necessary and I appeal to the Legislature also that in case the Honourable the War Transport Member fails to have sympathy for the lowest classes of railway employees this House should give a direction to the War Transport Member that whether he has sympathy or not the House as a whole has sympathy for the lowest class of railway employees. The House should give a direction to the Government of India that hereafter the lowest classes of railway employees will get the benefit of the compulsory provident fund.

I have not heard any argument against the proposal which I have made. Sometimes I have heard it stated that these lowest classes of railway employees may find it difficult to pay monthly the subscription to the provident fund. I have no doubt that in the case of the lowest classes of employees who get Rs. 15 or even less it is not easy to save even 4 annas or 8 annas or whatever may be the contribution to the provident fund but the remedy is not to deny them the provident fund. The remedy is

Col. H. W. Wagstaff: To increase wages?

Mr. N. M. Joshi: The remedy is, as the Honourable Member of the Railway Board has stated, to increase the wages. You should be ashamed to pay your employees such low wages that they cannot contribute to the provident fund at all. Therefore that argument will not be used by the Honourable Member and he will accept the proposal which I have made. In case he does not, the House will give him that direction. Sir, I move.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Cut motion moved:—

"That the demand under the head 'Railway Board', be reduced by Rs. 100."

Mr. Lalchand. Mr. Jamnadas Mehta.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: Sir, I wish only to take a few brief minutes to support the cut motion moved by my Honourable friend, Mr. Joshi. He has given the pros—because there are no cons—he has given all arguments in favour, and I do not wish to occupy the time of the House. There is only one point I wish to emphasise that this question has been before the Railway Board for at least 12 years.

Mr. J. D. Tyson: I have to some extent answered that already. These are qualifications which it is an advantage for the Director General to have; but they are not the only qualifications and some of them are not essential for certain branches of archaeology. In any case no single person can possibly have all these qualifications and the Department already has specialist officers to advise the Director General on most of these subjects.

**FACILITATING INCREASED IMPORT OF CERTAIN COMMODITIES AS AN
ANTI-INFLATIONARY MEASURE.**

239. *Mr. K. C. Neogy: Will the Honourable Member for Commerce please state:

(a) whether the Government of India have adopted a policy of facilitating increased imports of certain commodities into the country as an anti-inflationary measure;

(b) the names of commodities in regard to which increased imports are being or will be encouraged by the Government;

(c) whether Government have satisfied themselves as regards the extent to which the said commodities are locally manufactured, or their production could be increased locally; and

(d) whether the Government of India consulted any representative of industry in order to find out (i) if the supply of the said commodities could be increased through local manufacture, and (ii) what steps, including Government help, were necessary in order to increase supplies of the same through local manufacture?

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

(b) A list of such commodities is placed on the table.

(c) Yes. Government are satisfied that local production is not adequate and cannot be sufficiently stepped up in the near future to meet present day demands.

(d) No special consultations were held in this behalf but, as the Honourable Member is no doubt aware, Government are in almost continuous contact with representatives of all Branches of Indian industry and every assistance possible in war time conditions is being afforded to them.

List of important items of consumers goods imports of which are being encouraged.

Artificial silk fabrics.
Artificial silk yarn thread.
Books.
Chemicals household.
Cotton piecegoods—others.
Cotton sewing thread.
Crocery.
Cutlery including razor blades.
Cycle and parts.
Domestic sewing machines and parts.
Drugs and medicines.
Electrical lamps of all kinds.
Essential oils.
Glassware.
Handknitting wool.
Hardware.
Hosiery.
Hurricane lamps.
Light Motor cycles.
Liquors.
Newsprint.
Oil cloth and floor cloth.
Optical instrument, apparatus and equipment.
Paints.
Paper of all kinds.
Pipe tobacco.
Photographic apparatus.
Photographic negative and printing paper.
Polish and compositions.
Professional and scientific instruments.
Second hand clothing.
Stationery.

Toilet requisites.
Torches and components.
Typewriters.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: Is the Honourable Member sure that he can satisfy himself about the capacity for the expansion of Indian industries without consulting the industries concerned?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: Yes; we have been in constant consultation with the industries on this point.

Mr. Frank R. Anthony: Is the Honourable Member aware that certain articles are being imported which were originally manufactured in India before, for instance, armour plating, which was bought from Tatas before, but which is now being purchased from America?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: I do not think that comes within my list.

PROGRESS IN THE ADOPTION OF REHABILITATION SCHEMES IN BENGAL.

240. *Mr. K. C. Neogy: (a) Does the Honourable the Food Member propose to make a statement about the latest position in Bengal regarding the adoption of rehabilitation schemes, if any, for the benefit of (i) landless labourers, (ii) small cultivators who used to depend upon subsidiary occupations for their livelihood and have sold their holdings and lost their subsidiary occupations, and (iii) others among the poorer classes following non-agricultural occupations, such as fishermen, potters, boatmen etc., respectively?

(b) Does the Honourable Member propose to make a statement on any test relief works that may have been opened in famine affected areas of Bengal, indicating the localities in which they may have been opened and the number of men and women employed therein?

(c) Have any works been started at the instance of (i) the Provincial Government, (ii) District Boards, and (iii) private landholders, in Bengal, so as to find employment for the unemployed among the destitute population? If so, will the Honourable Member give such particulars thereof as may be available?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: An enquiry has been made from the Bengal Government and the information, if available, before the end of the Session, will be placed on the table of the House.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: Does the Honourable Member expect to be consulted in regard to the drawing up of such rehabilitation schemes, or is it simply when he is asked to furnish information in this House, that he communicates to the Government of Bengal for information?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: I do not know whether we have been officially consulted; but when I was in Calcutta last December I had a long discussion with the Bengal Government on this matter.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: I want to know whether the Government of Bengal is expected to consult the Government of India formally in regard to the drawing up of rehabilitation schemes.

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: I do not think so; formally they are not; but if they want our assistance in any matter then they will come to us; but we have been taking an interest in the matter and I suppose they will let us know what they are doing.

Mr. Kailash Bihari Lall: Sir, I have been authorised by Mr. Chattopadhyaya to put the questions in his name

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Very well.

NON-AVAILABILITY OF RICE AT CONTROLLED RATES OUTSIDE CALCUTTA.

241. *Mr. Kailash Bihari Lall (on behalf of **Mr. Amarendra Nath Chattopadhyaya**): (a) Will the Honourable Member for Food be pleased to state if he is aware of the fact that outside Calcutta and the area under rationing, rice is not available in the open market at the statutory price or the ceiling price either and only it is available in black market at Rs. 25 per maund?

(b) Is the Honourable Member in a position to state if procurement of *Aus* and *Aman* crops by the agents of the Provincial Government has been completed, and, if so, what tonnage of paddy and rice has been procured up till the 31st January, 1944?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: (a) No, Sir, that is not in accordance with my information. The Honourable Member is invited to refer to the figures quoted in the *Calcutta Gazette*.

(b) The total quantity of *Aus* crop purchased was about 12 lakh maunds of paddy. It is not in the public interest to disclose the purchase figures for the *Aman* crop at this stage.

JURISDICTION FOR PURCHASE OF AMAN CROP OF THE FOUR CHIEF AGENTS IN BENGAL

242. *Mr. Kailash Bihari Lall (on behalf of **Mr. Amarendra Nath Chatterpachyaya**): (a) Will the Honourable Member for Food be pleased to state the respective jurisdiction for the purchase of *Aman* crop of the four chief agents in Bengal?

(b) What quantity of rice or paddy each of the chief agents have procured up to the 31st January and at what price?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: (a) A statement is laid on the table.

(b) It is not in the public interest to disclose the information.

Statement showing the allocation of districts among the Chief Agents.

Name of the Chief Agent.	Districts allotted.
1. Messrs. M. M. Ispahani, Ltd.	Howrah. Midnapore. Bankura. Burdwan. 24-Parganas (jointly with Messrs. Shaw Wallace & Co.) Khulna. Faridpur (only as agents for receiving and storing purchases made by Chief Agents in other Districts.) Dinajpur (jointly with Messrs. Daulat Ram Rawatmull.)
2. Messrs. Shaw Wallace & Co.	Jessore. Birbhum. 24-Parganas (jointly with Messrs. M. M. Ispahani, Ltd.) Hooghly.
3. Messrs. Daulat Ram Rawatmull	Darjeeling (purchases mostly in Siliguri sub-division.) Jalpaiguri. Rajshahi. Dinajpur (jointly with Messrs. M. M. Ispahani, Ltd.) Malda. Bogra. Pabna. Nadia. Rangpur. Murshidabad.
4. Messrs. Raja Sreenath Raja Janoki Nath & Co.	Mymensingh. Dacca. Bakarganj.

NOTE:—The District Magistrates of Chittagong and Faridpur have been authorised to make purchases in their districts. The District Magistrate, Noakhali, has been authorised to make purchases in certain islands of that district. It is proposed to authorise the Deputy/Additional Deputy Director to make purchases in Dacca and Tippera and (the remainder of) the Noakhali districts. In Dacca the Chief Agent will, therefore, only undertake the reception and storage of Government stocks as and when required.

RICE PURCHASED FOR EXPORT TO CEYLON FROM BENGAL.

243. *Mr. Kailash Bihari Lall (on behalf of **Mr. Amarendra Nath Chatterpachyaya**): (a) Will the Honourable Member for Food be pleased to state what quantity of rice has been purchased for export to Ceylon from Bengal?

(b) Has the Regional Commissioner any right to control the distribution of rice in Bengal which would enable him to see that edible rice could be distributed and not such rice as would not be fit for human consumption? If not, who is in charge of examining the rice ready for distribution?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: (a) No rice has been purchased for export to Ceylon from Bengal during the years 1943 and 1944.

(b) No. The responsibility for arranging for the inspection of distributed foodgrains is that of the Bengal Government.

Sardar Mangal Singh: From what part of the country has rice been purchased for export to Ceylon?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: I would like to have notice of that question. This question related to Bengal and I have given the information as far as Bengal is concerned.

MEASURES FOR RATIONING, ETC., IN BENGAL.

244. *Mr. Kailash Bihari Lall (on behalf of **Mr. Amarendra Nath Chatterpadyaya**): (a) Will the Honourable Member for Food be pleased to state if the deficit districts of Bengal have been getting ample rice for their consumption? If so, at what price, and what quantity per head? Is this supply available in open market? Which are the deficit districts in Bengal?

(b) Has any step been taken for the rehabilitation of the destitute people who were sent back home from Calcutta last December on the initiative taken by Lord Wavell?

(c) Is the relief work in Bengal still going and who are supplying essential foodstuff to the relief committees?

(d) Has the Honourable Member taken into his consideration the rationing of all municipal areas in Bengal? If so, when does he intend to start it?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: (a), (b) and (c). The Honourable Member is invited to refer to the answer given to Mr. K. C. Neogy's starred question No. 11 of 7th February, 1944. A further enquiry has been made from the Government of Bengal and if the information is available before the end of the Session it will be placed on the table.

(d) No, Sir. The Government of India have asked Provincial Governments to introduce rationing progressively in all large cities beginning with those of a population of 1 lakh and over.

RE-PUBLICATION OF THE "RIYASAT."

245. *Bhai Parma Nand: (a) Will the Honourable Member for Industries and Civil Supplies be pleased to state if it is a fact that the security deposited by *Riyasat*, a weekly of Delhi, was once forfeited, and when its proprietor applied for another declaration, he was ordered to deposit a further security of Rs. 2,500?

(b) Is it a fact that when Sardar Sant Singh put a question in the Assembly, the Honourable the Home Member replied "There is nothing to prevent the publisher from restarting the paper, provided he deposited the requisite security"?

(c) Is it a fact that the requisite security was deposited and the declaration filed, but a few days after the publisher was required to obtain the sanction of the Central Government?

(d) Is it a fact that he applied to the Secretary, Department of Industries and Civil Supplies, for the requisite sanction, but the permission was refused on account of the irregularity in the publication of the paper?

(e) Is it not a fact that the irregularity was not due to any wilful fault on his part?

(f) Under the circumstances, do Government propose to grant him permission?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: (a) and (b). The Honourable Member's attention is invited to the answer given in this House on the 9th March, 1943, to starred question No. 270 by Sardar Sant Singh.

(c) and (d). Yes.

(e) There was nothing to prevent the newspaper from commencing publication immediately after the 22nd January, 1943, but before the 10th July, 1943, when the Paper Control Order was amended to prohibit the publication of any newspaper which was not being regularly published during the period immediately preceding the 7th November, 1942, without the special permission of the Central Government.

(f) Yes, Government propose to grant permission.

Mr. Kailash Bihari Lall: Was the irregularity in publication due to the fact that it was not given permission to publish?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: The Honourable Member might get that information from the paper itself.

SHORTAGE OF SALT IN BENGAL.

246. * { **Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra:**
Dr. Habibar Rahman:
Mr. Muhammad Hussain Choudhury:

Will the Honourable the Food Member be pleased to state:

(a) if he is aware: (i) that there has been acute shortage of salt in Bengal since January last; and (ii) that the price of ordinary salt has gone up enormously, and that in some districts of Bengal the price varies from Re. 1 to Rs. 2 per seer; and

(b) the steps, if any, he proposes to take to relieve this shortage?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: I am aware that there have been local shortages and have already taken steps to remedy the position in consultation with the Provincial Government. I have seen reports of a rise in the price of salt in the Districts but not to the levels mentioned by the Honourable Member. Recently for various reasons stocks in Calcutta declined, although they are still adequate, and steps have been taken to increase shipments and improve stocks. The Provincial Government have already taken up with the Regional Controller of Priorities special arrangements to speed up supplies to the mofussil and relieve any local shortages.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: The Honourable Member referred to various causes which led to the depletion of stocks of salt in Calcutta. Will the Honourable Member indicate the principal among these causes?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: I believe that there was some falling off in the shipments of imports.

PROSECUTION OF INDIANS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM UNDER THE NATIONAL SERVICE ACT.

247. * **Sardar Mangal Singh:** Will the Honourable Member for Indians Overseas please state:

(a) whether Government are aware that certain Indians are being prosecuted in the United Kingdom under the National Service Act for refusing call-up orders;

(b) whether Government have made any representations to His Majesty's Government for the exemption of Indians from the application of the National Service Act; and

(c) whether the attention of Government has been drawn to the "Swaraj House Statement" published in the Indian press on the 11th February, 1944?

The Honourable Dr. N. B. Khare: (a) Only one case of such prosecution has come to Government's notice so far.

(b) No.

(c) Yes.

UNSTARRED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

CIVIL SUPPLIES FOR SHAHDARA, DELHI.

70. **Mr. Kailash Bihari Lall:** Will the Honourable Member for Industries and Civil Supplies please state the arrangements made for supplies of day to day necessities of life of the civil population of Shahdara Town, Delhi Province?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: Shahdara town derives its supplies of day to day necessities of life from two sources *viz.*, the surrounding rural area and Delhi city. The commodities obtained from the latter source are provided under permits issued by the Commodity Control Office, under the Chief Commissioner of Delhi.

CIVIL SUPPLIES FOR SHAHDARA, DELHI.

71. Mr. Kailash Bihari Lall: Will the Honourable Member for Industries and Civil Supplies please state if it is a fact that the civil population of Shahdara Town, Delhi Province, is dependent for the supplies upon Delhi City; if not, the reasons therefor?

The Honourable Sir M. Azizul Huque: So far as foodgrains are concerned Shahdara derives its supplies partly from the surrounding rural area and partly from Delhi. As regards other commodities, the bulk of these are obtained from Delhi.

MUNICIPAL COMMITTEE, SHAHDARA, DELHI.

72. Mr. Kailash Bihari Lall: Will the Secretary for Education, Health and Lands please state:

(a) the notification under which the Notified Area Committee, Shahdara, Delhi Province, was constituted, and the local laws applicable to it (*i.e.*, United Provinces Municipal Act or Punjab Municipal Act);

(b) the notification under which its constitution has been changed into a Municipal Committee;

(c) the description of its present constitution, *i.e.*, the number of elected and nominated members with the qualifications prescribed for them;

(d) the qualifications prescribed for voters;

(e) the number of the divisions of the town into wards together with the boundaries of each ward;

(f) whether Government servants, who are debarred under Rule 23(4) of the Government Servants' Conduct Rules, are eligible for election or nomination with the permission of the Government; if so, under which rule or regulation; and

(g) the date from which the constitution of a municipal committee is in operation?

Mr. J. D. Tyson: (a) The Chief Commissioner's notification No. 5096-Education, dated the 25th July, 1916: the Punjab Municipal Act, 1911.

(b) The Shahdara Notified Area was raised to the status of a second class municipality by the Chief Commissioner's notification No. F. 4(57)/43(1)-L.S.G., dated the 6th July, 1943.

(c), (d) and (g). The conversion of the old Notified Area into a municipality has effect from the 1st September, 1943. Proceedings to form a committee under the new system are in progress. In the meantime, the former notified area committee continues to function and is deemed to be the Municipal Committee by virtue of sub-section (7a) of section 4 of the Punjab Municipal Act, 1911. The proposed composition of the new municipal committee is (i) nominated members six, and (ii) elected members four. No qualifications have been prescribed for nominated members. Qualifications of voters are given in the Shahdara Municipality Electoral Rules, 1943, published with the Chief Commissioner's notification No. F.4(57)/43L.S.G., dated the 27th December, 1943.

(e) The Shahdara Municipality has been divided into four wards. The boundaries of these are defined in the Shahdara Municipality Electoral Rules, 1943.

(f) Government servants are not eligible for election to a municipal committee. There is no restriction on their being nominated to such a body.

DISQUALIFICATION ON THE GROUND OF NEPOTISM FOR MUNICIPAL COMMISSIONERS SHAHDARA, DELHI.

73. Mr. Kailash Bihari Lall: Will the Secretary for Education, Health and Lands please state if there is any disqualification for Municipal Commissioners

of Shahdara in regard to the employment of their relatives in the Shahdara Municipal Committee; if so, what?

Mr. J. D. Tyson: Yes. One of the rules under section 240 of the Punjab Municipal Act, 1911, promulgated by the Chief Commissioner. Delhi, on the 15th October, 1940, prohibits, in general, the appointment in the service of any municipal committee in the Delhi Province of any relative of a member of the Committee without the previous sanction of the Deputy Commissioner.

LAND REQUISITIONED BY GOVERNMENT NEAR SHAHDARA RAILWAY STATION.

74. Mr. Kailash Bihari Lall: Will the Secretary for Education, Health and Lands please refer to the information given on the 7th February, 1944, in reply to parts (b) to (e) of starred question No. 287, asked on the 12th August, 1943, regarding contemplated return of certain land near Shahdara Railway Station Bridge to former owners and state:

- (a) the notification under which the said land has been requisitioned by Government; with the date of its publication in the *Gazette of India*;
- (b) the description and boundaries of the said land;
- (c) the names of the former owners;
- (d) whether the trees which were cut down were planted by the former owners; if so, when; and
- (e) whether all the other trees were planted on both sides of the road by the former owners; if so, when?

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

EXCLUSION OF SHAHDARA, DELHI, FROM RATIONING SCHEME.

75. Mr. Kailash Bihari Lall: Will the Honourable Member for Food please state if it is a fact that the civil population of Shahdara Town, Delhi Province, have been excluded from the Rationing Scheme under preparation for Delhi City; if so, the reasons therefor?

The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad Srivastava: Yes. Shahdara town has a population of 12,000 and is situated outside the Delhi urban area to which the Rationing Scheme applies. Having regard to its size and situation it is not considered necessary to apply full scale rationing to this town at present.

FACILITIES FOR EDUCATION IN SHAHDARA, DELHI.

76. Mr. Kailash Bihari Lall: Will the Secretary for Education, Health and Lands please state the arrangements made for the education of children of the civil population of Shahdara, Delhi Province, together with the number of children receiving education in each standard?

Mr. J. D. Tyson: The following are the six schools in Shahdara recognized by the Education Department of the Delhi Province for the education of the civil population at Shahdara:

1. D. B. A. V. Middle School.
2. Lokamanya Tilak Vidya Mandir A. V. Middle School.
3. Baptist Mission Primary School.
4. Catholic Mission Primary School.
5. D. B. Girls' Hindi Primary School.
6. D. B. Girls' Urdu Primary School.

The numbers of children receiving instruction in each standard in these schools are as follows:

Standard	Boys	Girls	Total
I	151	105	256
II	67	26	93
III	56	34	90
IV	58	22	80
V	78	15	93
VI	62	..	62
VII	28	..	28
VIII	27	..	27
Total	527	202	729

CUTTING OF WATER SUPPLY IN SHAHDARA, DELHI.

77. Mr. Kailash Bihari Lall: Will the Secretary for Education, Health and Lands please state the reason for cutting the water supply from consumers' connections at Shahdara, Delhi Province, from the 12th February, 1944, without any warning or notice? What action has been taken against the person responsible for the inconvenience caused to the public? If no action has been taken, why?

Mr. J. D. Tyson: In order to carry out certain urgent repairs to the overhead tank at Shahdara the water supply had to be cut off from 10 A.M. on the 12th February till noon on the 13th February. The public of Shahdara were informed by beat of drum on the 11th February of what was proposed to be done.

THE RAILWAY BUDGET—DEMANDS FOR GRANTS—*contd.*SECOND STAGE—*contd.*DEMAND NO. 1—RAILWAY BOARD—*contd.*

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The House will now proceed with the discussion of the demands for grants for Railways.

Mr. N. M. Joshi (Nominated Non-Official): May I rise to a point of order?

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): With reference to what?

Mr. N. M. Joshi: To the answer to question No. 226. Question No. 226 was addressed to the Honourable the Leader of the House and was replied to by the Honourable the Food Member without any word of explanation or apology. In this connection. . . .

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): This is not a point of order. The European Group will now move their cut motions.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra (Presidency Division: Non-Muhammadan Rural): What about our Party's time?

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): It was subject to questions being finished by 11-30.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra: But we rose yesterday ten minutes to five. If the Assembly had continued we would have moved our token motion. Ten minutes were lost.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): That makes no difference.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra: Why not?

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): It does not.

Dr. P. N. Banerjee (Calcutta Suburbs: Non-Muhammadan Urban): May I point out that the time which was allotted to us has not been exhausted. We were allowed two hours time and we have not taken up that time.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra: What is the meaning of this agreement then?

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The Party was allotted time from 3-45 P.M. to 5 P.M. yesterday, and from 11-30 to 11-45, today, subject to questions being finished by 11-30.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra: Yesterday we could have moved a cut in those ten minutes and we could have drawn the attention of the Government to our points.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): I think it was five minutes before 5.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra: It was ten minutes. Still, I could have moved a cut in five minutes' time.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The Honourable Member could have got up and tried to move a motion.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra: As a matter of fact I stood up, and you said no purpose would be served and you adjourned the House. You can easily understand that in this way we have lost an opportunity.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The Honourable Member could still have moved, but he did not do it.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra: The question hour is over.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The European Group—Sir Frederick James.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra: We have been greatly prejudiced.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): I have given my ruling.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra: I am not going to challenge the ruling of the Chair for a moment. I do not want to challenge the ruling of the Chair, but what I am placing before the Chair is my grievance . . .

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The Honourable Member has placed his grievance before the Chair and I have given my ruling.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra: The Honourable Member feels that his grievance has not been attended to.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): I rule that it is now the turn for the European Group to move their cut motions.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra: It is extremely unfair.

Financial Position of Railways with special reference to Post-War Developments.

Sir F. E. James (Madras European): Sir, I beg to move:

"That the demand under the head 'Railway Board', be reduced by Rs. 100."

The purpose of this cut motion is to discuss the general financial position of the Railways with special reference to post-war developments.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra: Every time our Party has been prejudicially affected by the rulings of the Chair.

Sir F. E. James: Last year we moved our cut in order to discuss four points relating to the reconstruction and rehabilitation of railways after the war. Two of those points dealt with reconstruction and betterment of railways and a comprehensive housing programme for labour. The Honourable the Railway Member has indicated in his speech that some progress has been made departmentally in planning for betterment developments, but he also referred to the very heavy cost of rehabilitation or renewals alone without taking into consideration expenditure upon additional betterments. It is our intention in this debate to take stock of the position, as far as possible unaffected by the controversy over the proposal to increase fares which was the centre of our discussions yesterday.

I want to ask three questions. First of all, what will be the position after the war confronting the railways; secondly, what will be, as far as we can judge, the resources in the hands of the railways, and thirdly, will those resources be enough to meet the demands which will be placed upon the railways? As far as one can foresee the position after the war, the following elements will greatly affect it. First of all, the probable dwindling income as a result of the cessation or reduction of military movements of traffic, and yet high working expenses as a result of additional staff, dearness allowance, the cost of coal, and other items, reduction in which cannot be effected immediately. Secondly, the high cost of materials, even for renewals. My Honourable friend, Sir Cowasjee Jehangir, in a communication which he addressed to the Convention Committee, suggested that in any case it would be most unlikely that post-war prices will be less than 30 per cent. above pre-war even on the most optimistic basis. Thirdly, after the war, there will be a drive on the part of the administration in the direction of betterment conditions which is bound to have its effect upon the working expenses of the railways. Fourthly, during the war there have been new inventions, some of which are of a very important nature, providing new uses for light metals which, if the Indian railways are in any way to be modernised, will make a great deal of difference to the cost of replacement and also to lives of the assets which may be purchased. Fifthly, after the war railways will be faced with the need for the renewal of workshop plant, rolling stock and track on a very large scale. They will be faced with the need for expenditure on amenities for lower class travel, and we hope that there will be a programme not only for the improvement of open lines but also for the development of new lines in undeveloped areas. I observe that the authors of what is called the Bombay Plan have suggested a development programme

[Sir F. E. James.]

of 21,000 miles costing Rs. 434 crores. These are some of the factors in the situation which will confront the railways after the war.

What are likely to be the railway resources? Assuming a war of two years from the year now under review, I have estimated the following. The depreciation fund will probably total something in the neighbourhood of 70 crores. Honourable Members will have noticed that there is a reduction in the amount estimated as available in the depreciation fund at the end of 1944-45 for the simple reason that large programmes of renewals will necessitate larger withdrawals from that fund, and my estimate is that a larger programme will land us in two or three years' time with a balance of only 70 crores in the depreciation fund. Secondly, in our general reserve fund, there will probably be 50 crores of rupees; and, thirdly, assuming that the recommendation of the Legislature yesterday is not taken at its face value . . .

Nawabzada Muhammad Liaquat Ali Khan (Rohilkund and Kumaun Divisions: Muhammadan Rural): It never is.

Sir F. E. James: . . . there may be a special amenities fund of 30 crores of rupees. Therefore in all, to deal with reserves, expenditure on amenities and renewals, there will be a total of 150 crores of rupees.

Now, Sir, I do not think for a moment that even the Honourable the Finance Member would say that that is enough. In the first place, the provision of the depreciation fund is in any case inadequate, even assuming that that fund is wholly utilised for renewals. The House must realise the extent and magnitude of the Railways, with a capital value of 800 crores of rupees. Secondly, the House will also realise that no provision for depreciation was made until 1924 and that therefore there were at that time large arrears which have never been made good. It may interest the House to know that there were 270 crores of rupees worth assets in existence before 1924, falling due for renewal in the near future which have never been provided for. Thirdly, there is increased wear and tear of existing assets as a result of the strain of the war. Fourthly, there are the increased costs of replacement which I have already referred to. Rails alone are today 95 per cent. above their pre-war price. This realisation of the inadequacy of the depreciation fund was emphasized by the Convention Committee, and I am glad that the emphasis was accepted by Government, as a result of which they increased the allocation to the depreciation fund for the current year, and made provision for increased allocation for the coming year. I maintain also that the reserve fund of 50 crores of rupees, covering less than two years' interest charges, is wholly inadequate for a railway system of the magnitude of the Indian Railway system. And who can claim for one single moment that 30 crores of rupees in an amenities fund will go very far towards meeting the great demands upon the railways by the travelling public after the war.

My conclusion, therefore, is this—that railway finances are today in a thoroughly unsound position. It is true that the Honourable the Railway Member has said that the profits are illusory. But I am definitely disturbed, as the end of the war approaches, by the present situation. The Convention of 1924 with its one per cent contribution to General Revenues is a contributory cause of the unsatisfactory position. The present allocation of the surplus as 75 per cent. General Revenues and 25 per cent. Reserves is not really helpful to Railways on a long term view, though one appreciates the over-riding considerations of war time finance.

Railways after the war will need the assistance of general revenues to a far greater extent than they have received today. They have during the war contributed up to date, including the year which is now under review, no less than 116 crores of rupees to general revenues. The railway system is too important both for industrial and for military purposes to be allowed to collapse when conditions change. The inadequacy of railway funds to meet the situation which is likely to arise after the war is very largely due to our past policy, in which this Legislature has shared some responsibility of starving railway development and of building up railway reserves. Sir, on the whole the Railways

have done excellent service during this war under the most galling conditions.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra: What service?

Sir F. E. James: We have cursed them for delays but we owe them more than we at present know.

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra: If it is personal, it is a different matter.

Sir F. E. James: My Honourable friend has, like the cuckoo, the distressing habit of laying eggs

Pandit Lakshmi Kanta Maitra: Yours is a parrot cry.

Sir F. E. James: . . . in somebody else's nest. I would ask him to lay his intellectual eggs in his own nest and leave my nest to my own eggs.

After the war, the public will demand better, more efficient and more comfortable services. They will be right in doing so. But this will cost a great deal of money and the present financial position of the Railways *vis-a-vis* that demand is thoroughly unsatisfactory. Railway rehabilitation and reconstruction are an indispensable element in any programme for India's development, whether in agriculture or in industry. I suggest to my Honourable friend the Railway Member that it is not wise to postpone all investigations and enquiries into these matters until after the war. I would also suggest to him that although the efforts of his department in planning for the future are appreciated by this party, it is not a purely departmental matter. It affects the whole policy of the Government of India. This administration has the responsibility and duty to the legatees of the future to leave a national system of Railways with resources adequate for their maintenance and improvement and a policy which will give them a proper and more suitable place in the national economy of the country. Sir, I move.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Cut motion moved:

"That the demand under the head 'Railway Board' be reduced by Rs. 100."

Shrimati K. Radha Bai Subbarayan (Madura and Ramnad *cum* Tinnevely: Non-Muhammadian Rural): Mr. President, ever since I was elected to the Assembly, I have considered it a real farce when the non-official members of our alien ruling race asked questions or intervened in a debate and the official benches replied to them. Anybody with the slightest knowledge of the political conditions in India understands that it is the British commercial community that are our rulers and the so-called Government of India are only its paid employees. (An Honourable Member: "Shame, shame"). This farce becomes more real when they indulge in talks of planning reconstruction after the war amidst all the havoc that is happening around us today in this country. It becomes more cruel when people have been dying and still continue to die in lakhs due to starvation and preventable diseases. When a powerful aggressor is at our door, we are not only denied the help and guidance of our trusted national leaders but we have to bear the torture of seeing them slowly die due to the persecution of our rulers.

The optimism and complacency of the British are remarkably astounding. No matter what has happened in the recent past regarding the war and whatever may happen during the present, they hope to continue to dominate the great Empire, over which the sun is never supposed to set. In the guise of war effort or post-war reconstruction, they endeavour to continue the exploitation of their subject countries. The ex-Governor of Burma, sitting on the cool heights of Simla, is planning reconstruction in Burma when it is re-conquered with the help of gallant Indian, American and East African troops! The Britishers are so busy in planning about their exploitation now and in the future that the thought of the feelings of the people of their subject countries never enters into their minds. They do not care to consider whether the people of Burma want to shape the destinies of their own country without the assistance of any foreign ruler. They do not consider what the feelings of the Indian people are—whether they want to shape the future of their own country and whether they want the full freedom that is necessary for building up a healthy nation in their country, a nation which will be contented and happy at home and respected and honoured abroad.

Today the two vital problems before the Indian people are—how to live and how to secure their political freedom, a freedom which will give them every

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power to look after their own affairs and to save themselves from starvation and untimely death. The spokesman of the British commercial community, my Honourable friend, Sir Frederick James, asked certain questions, but we are not interested in those questions just now. They pale into insignificance before these two vital problems, how to live and how to secure the freedom to shape our own destiny and to make our country peaceful and happy. It is these two problems that we would like our rulers to pay attention to and defer talk of increasing taxation for reserve funds, for post-war reconstruction and glorious amenities for the third class passengers in the dim and distant future especially when we cannot yet be sure who will then be guiding the destinies of this country. Our whole time and thought have to be directed towards these two immediate problems. And it is because of this great task we are not prepared to discuss now post-war reconstruction in our country. We do want reconstruction in our country but not in the manner in which our present rulers would like to plan and would like to carry out. It is because these two problems are of vital importance that I felt impelled to attend this Session of the Legislative Assembly and to raise my voice here after a silence of nearly four years.

Sir, before I sit down I would like to refer to the remark that fell from my Honourable friend, the Transport Member, yesterday just before the division took place on the question of the increase of railway fares. He remarked about the severity of the language of my Honourable colleagues on these benches. May I point out to him that perhaps he is not aware of the torturing anxiety of a subject people whose fate is hanging in the balance? It is the intense anguish of our hearts and minds that finds some relief if we try to impress it on the Government in as strong terms as possible on the floor of this House. It is not because we want to be rude or unkind or cruel. It is simply to give relief to our own suppressed feelings of pain at the conditions that exist in our country today and to endeavour to improve them. Yesterday our minds and hearts were particularly heavy with sorrow at the loss of a cherished friend and patriot, the symbol of all that is pure and best in womanhood. Our hearts and minds were full of deep sympathy for her husband, our great national leader, in his bereavement. It may be that that sad event may not mean anything to the Members of Government except that there is one less person to bother about; but it means a great deal to us. It was for this reason that I refrained from speaking yesterday. I felt that no language would be strong enough to express our pain and sorrow and the resentment that we feel at the Government, due to whose persecution this sad occurrence took place so soon. Even today I find it difficult to speak with restraint and moderation.

My Honourable friend, the Transport Member, also said yesterday that perhaps the severity of language showed that our case was weak. But what did the House show? Did not the House emphatically and clearly prove that our case was strong and was well supported by the country? My Honourable friends on the Opposite Benches will forgive me if I point out that we, on this side, felt that there was a guilty look on our compatriots when they meekly followed their rulers into the lobby. It looked as if they had a guilty conscience that they had let down their country.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Yesterday's motion has been disposed of and I do not want that further discussion should be revived on it.

Shrimati K. Radha Bai Sabbarayan: I accept your ruling, Sir, but this is the earliest occasion when we can reply to that remark as it was made only last evening.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): That motion is over and there should be no more discussion on it.

Shrimati K. Radha Bai Subbarayan: May I ask, Sir, that when the British Government refer to the atrocities of Hitler and use strong language, do they do so because their case is weak? Hitler is a Frankenstein of their own creation. How much more strongly should we feel when alien rulers are responsible for

the sad condition that prevails in our country today, including on the railways as my Honourable friend here reminds me.

In obedience to your Ruling, Sir, I shall not refer any further to the debate of yesterday. May I on the subject of railways make a few suggestions to the Honourable Member with regard to railway administration? The Honourable Member said yesterday that the Opposition had not made constructive criticisms. I would respectfully state that it was an erroneous remark. I would supplement the suggestions that were made yesterday with a few more just now.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The Honourable Member should make those remarks relevant to the motion now before the House.

Shrimati K. Radha Bai Subbarayan: These, Sir, will help reconstruction now. In the existing passenger traffic only a portion is available for civilian needs. The whole strain is borne by third class passengers, while the upper-class passengers can have almost the pre-war level of comfort if they are lucky to reserve accommodation.

An Honourable Member: No, no.

Shrimati K. Radha Bai Subbarayan: I speak from personal experience. In the third class compartments, where it is intended to accommodate 74 passengers, between 200 and 250 are huddled together. If some modification could be made in the provision of berths in the upper class carriages, the numbers of those carriages could be decreased and more third class carriages could be attached.

The use of free passes by railway gazetted officers and families should be severely restricted and absolutely forbidden for pleasure trips.

The use of saloons should be completely stopped. Similarly the running of air-conditioned and restaurant coaches for upper classes should be stopped.

The Railway administration should seek the co-operation of railway workers to economise coal consumption, to make the necessary improvements in railway carriages and wagons and to decrease the cost of repair and production.

Sir, I have discussed this subject with several railway workers and their general complaint is that the administration do not realise that the workers have not only hands but also heads with brains and if their co-operation could be appreciated by the administration much improvement could be introduced in the railway traffic and a good deal of economy could also be effected.

Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad (United Provinces Southern Divisions: Muhammadan Rural): Sir, before I develop my argument, I should like the Honourable Member to tell me whether in the figures he has supplied to us he has included the 25 per cent. increase in railway fares?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall (Member for Railways and War-Transport): In Budget figures they are included.

Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad: There are three points on which I don't entirely agree with Sir Frederick James. In the first place, he will agree with me that all this post-war reconstruction in every Department will be met by loan, but in the case of railways, we have made a differentiation and we are going to collect funds by fresh taxation. Have we imposed fresh taxation for post-war reconstruction in any other Department? Then why make a distinction in the case of railways? I do not believe that we should collect any fund by fresh taxation for post-war reconstruction. The second point is this. I wish I may be wrong and my Honourable friend may be right. He said that the war will conclude within two years. My calculation is that it will take five years more from now for decisive end of the war. Therefore my figures are based on the supposition of five years. The third point is this. I have been pressing the Railway Board to admit that their theory of depreciation fund is financially wrong. They must adopt a simple formula that every expenditure which yields revenue should be debited to the capital fund and every expenditure which does not bring in revenue should come from revenue fund. The simple theory is that all expenditure which yields no revenue should come out of revenue, and expenditure which brings in revenue should be met by fresh loan. On this point my Honourable friend did not agree with me, and in the arguments which he advanced he practically supported that the depreciation fund may be spent away without definite requirements. Most of the expenditure which is now being

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incurred under depreciation fund according to the established theory of the Railway Board could not have been debited to depreciation fund. A greater portion of it ought to have been transferred to the capital fund and some of it should be charged to revenue. The expenditure under the depreciation fund is of the nature of the expenditure which I incurred on one occasion, I invested £1,000 in marks in 1921. When I went to Germany, my friend who was the Director of a Bank in Germany advised me to convert the marks in the shape of goods, or I lose the entire amount. Acting on his advice, I purchased goods indiscriminately right and left, no matter whether I required them or not. The Railway Board appears to have been adopting a similar policy. They would like to squander the entire amount put down under depreciation fund.

Now, I want to examine the figures which Sir Frederick James has given. According to his estimate 150 crores from reserve will be available. I put down 270 crores. I will tell him where he and I differ. The Honourable Member estimates that 25 per cent. increase in railway fares will bring ten crores. I believe it will yield 15 crores. If you look into the figures on page 26 supplied to us in this Explanatory memorandum, you will find expansion of traffic from 1940 to 1945. In 1939-40, just before the war, the income from passenger traffic was 27.78 crores, in 1941-42, it rose to 36 crores, in 1942-43, to 44 crores, this year it will be 58 crores. Keeping this expansion in mind, it is reasonable to suppose that there will be an income of over 58 crores. Had there been no increase in railway fares 60 crores will be the minimum income under passengers traffic in 1944-45. I am positive in my mind that the figure 68.14 you have put down for 1944-45 will rise to 75 crores. The income under your Reserve C will be 15 crores. Then in six years your total income will be 90 crores allowing the normal rate of expansion. I believe the savings under this reserve C, allowing interest on Reserve, to be 100 crores. The second thing is that I do not calculate for three years but for six years.

Now, coming to reserve B, the same argument applies here also. Unless the Railway Member and the Finance Member agree that they will give a larger share to the general revenues in order to avoid fresh taxation,—and I entirely agree with this view,—I doubt very much whether the Finance Member will have the courage to say 'No' to the Railway Member in spite of the fact that he is cheating him right and left by not paying income-tax, super-tax and all the other taxes which a business concern has to pay. If he is following the same principle I think my Honourable friend's reserve fund will be not 50 crores, but it will be 123 crores if we follow the existing principle. Unless the principles are changed and you give a larger share to the general revenues than hitherto the position will be different. But following the normal practice which is being followed in connection with the reserve fund, and calculating for six years, the reserve B will be 123 crores. The same thing applies to the depreciation Reserve fund. Therefore the figures of my Honourable friend, which will be available for expansion will be much greater and will be in the neighbourhood of 250 crores. I do not grudge this accumulation, but one principle should be followed in all the departments. In other departments no accumulation is being made for future expansion by taxing the present generation, but why should you in this department tax the present generation in order to build up a big reserve to be utilised for reconstruction work.

You could not do any renewals because on account of war conditions you could not get materials. I have been pressing time after time that this amount which you should have spent but could not spend because the materials were not available should be set apart in a special fund and used immediately after the war for the renewal of those things which could not be renewed during war-time. That has nothing to do with the depreciation fund or reserve fund or C fund, whatever you may call it. This requires very serious consideration and it cannot be discussed in 15 minutes. The Railway Member has given us these figures but they require very close scrutiny. Therefore all these things clearly show that we are not very much in need of building up a big reserve during war-time. As I said yesterday, if you keep a big reserve for the railways the

other two competitors will always demand that either a portion of that reserve should be given to road and rail or they should be provided with funds from the general revenues. And this will be very difficult to meet. Therefore I think it is not wise to build up a big reserve and I request Sir Frederick James to follow the principle which he himself enunciated some time ago that the correct amount of reserve should be 10 per cent. of the capital at charge. Now I give him 15 per cent. of the capital at charge. Now 800 crores is the capital at charge and 15 per cent. of that is 120 crores and anything above that should go to the general revenues for the relief of the taxpayer. That is a point which I emphasised yesterday and I emphasise it today.

The other thing is that we should have some kind of programme for post-war reconstruction. We have got a programme for every other department, where some require 2 units and some 5 units, etc., a unit being 1000 crores. But we have no programme for the railways; and we should know the plans for their development after the war. We should have programme of additional track, workshops, and other requirements. We can then say how much should be paid out of loans and how much out of the revenues of the railways. Failing this programme we should not talk in a general way about amenities for third class passengers. I know they will not come. It is only an excuse for fresh taxation and it does not impress us. Therefore, I say that we should have a definite programme as to what Government intend to do after the war, specially when there is a proposal for fresh taxation. There is no indication whether this extra income will also be spent for improving the conditions of service of the lower paid staff. They are very hard hit and should be helped at the present time, but they have not been given relief properly. The grain shops, for instance, are not working satisfactorily; we want their salaries and dearness allowance to be increased. My friends from Bombay will probably bear me out when I say that in Ahmedabad a worker getting Rs. 12 or 14 a month is given about 70 as dearness allowance.

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

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta (Bombay Central Division: Non-Muhammedan Rural): Sir, I rise to support the cut motion of my Honourable friend, Sir Frederick James but for quite different reasons; his reasons and my reasons are not the same. In fact it is strange that in the name of rehabilitation of railway finance and in the interests of its soundness propositions have been made by my Honourable friend which will have a result in the contrary direction. Railway finances are today both sound and also unsound. They are entirely sound in the sense that railways pay their own way. My thesis is that the railways can pay their own way even with smaller fares. By the back door the railways are made to pay for interests which are not railway interests. The first thing that rehabilitation of sound finance in railways requires is that this back door must be closed. Many cousins and nephews and nieces of the white race are receiving jam from the back-door of the Railways to which they are not entitled. Railways are today serving the interests which are non-railways to a very substantial extent. After twenty years of the Railway Convention there are still nearly 2,000 foreigners controlling our Railways—to be exact about 1800 and odd. All of them need not stay in this country as railway officers. (Interruption.) Why should they not go?

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: On a point of fact, the officers are about 600.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: Your annual Report shows that the number of Europeans is not less than 1800.

The Honourable Sir Edward Benthall: Not all officers.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: You tell me their average wage bill. It was admitted by more than one predecessor of the present Financial Commissioner for Railways that the average rate of salary for a European in the Railways works out to an average of a thousand rupees per month. You may deny it, if you like. It does not matter whether you call them officers or not—in fact, you call them temporary officers, and you give them all sorts of names—but

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the fact remains that there are 1800 Europeans in the Railways. If you are right in what you say, give me the wage bills of these 1800 employees, and then if necessary I will be willing to consider a modification of my statement. Therefore, I maintain that the Railways have to pay for the colour of their employees, not for their services. Is this sound finance? Is there any soundness of finance of a commercial organisation where remuneration is based not on merits but on the colour of the skin of its employees? That is the most unsound feature in the Railway Administration.

An Honourable Member: Repugnant.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: And although I naturally sympathize with my Honourable friend, Mr. Frank Anthony—I was almost going to say Mark Anthony, because he sometimes justly rebukes the Honourable the War Transport Member; although I have great sympathy for what my Honourable friend stands for, he knows that in this country by Parliamentary Statute 8 per cent. of certain jobs in Railways are reserved also for another kind of colour. Is this sound finance? The Anglo-Indian is by Statute entitled to 8 per cent. of certain railway jobs. I don't grudge it. When the European gets 1800 jobs without reference to merit—only on the ground of colour—, 8 per cent. for the Anglo-Indian is not too much. But it is not sound finance, that is my point.

Then, Sir, the strategic railways have taken crores upon crores from the earnings of the Railways which should have been debited to the military. Is this sound finance to take by the backdoor every year—although once or twice they have not taken—a crore or crore and a half out of the Railways' earnings? Is it sound finance to pay interest on construction of new lines during construction out of revenues? The Finance Member was shocked—now he is not shocked because he has got *quid pro quo*—when he learnt for the first time, a few months ago, in the Convention Committee that interest on new construction during construction stage, instead of being charged to the capital and thereby giving the correct cost of the construction of that railway was being paid from revenue.

The Depreciation Fund, on which my Honourable friend, Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmed, lays so much stress is another wrong done to railway revenues. I can give other instances where the same principle is at work, namely that non-railway requirements are met out of railway funds to the extent of many crores per year. This is the fundamental unsoundness of the railway finance and unless my European friends come forward to combat it, their proposition about soundness can only result in paying less to the wage-earner and charging more to the traveller. In a nutshell the whole theory of the Government Benches and the European Benches about soundness of railway finance is this: Pay less to the worker, charge more to the traveller, show big surpluses and call it sound finance. I think, if the railway finance were sound in this country and if it were left under my control, I can assure you, Sir, that the third class passenger will travel two miles for every pie. That is really the economic cost of transport in this country, that for one pie—one-third of a pice—a man should be able to travel two miles. If economic costs were charged, if the actual genuine and honest cost of transport was charged to the traveller, the real cost would be one pie per two miles. (Interruption.) I shall pay the lower paid staff more than you pay; the worker will get the minimum decent wage. They will get compulsory provident fund. Their working hours will be reduced and they will get free passes for their families.

An Honourable Member: It is Utopia.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: It is Utopia because you have other interests in the country to serve and I have only to watch the interests of the traveller and the worker. That is the fact of the matter. The proposal of my Honourable friend, Sir Frederick James, came to this: That for rehabilitation, impose more taxation, go on imposing more tax and asking more for depreciation fund and taking more from the earnings of railways, asking for this, that and

Mr. N. M. Joshi: 14 years.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: Say, 14 years. This modest demand of the humble railway worker for being allowed to contribute to the Provident Fund benefits has been more than 12 years old. Year after year in our six-monthly meetings with the Railway Board we used to press that this modicum privilege might kindly be given to them. It was only in 1941 that it was first done. The argument against it was that if the railway worker was allowed to contribute to the provident fund, the actual expenditure will be 72 lakhs of rupees, and they used to frighten themselves and frighten us by that huge sum, although as early as 1927 they did not mind giving to a few superior railway servants Lee concessions which between a few hundred people cost them 37 lakhs of rupees a year. They gave Lee concessions in a minute. Sir, I was in this House. It was a part of what was called 'the Lee loot'. But for the poor railwayman, whose condition has been so vividly described by my Honourable friend, it took them 14 years more before they first granted the right. What they granted was that men who had 16 years service should be given the option—not the compulsion to contribute. The higher paid people are all compelled to contribute. The lower paid people for the first time were given only an option and so far as I remember the provision which they made was 7 lakhs of rupees a year. That shows how slow they are moving. The total cost, according to them, is 72 lakhs of rupees if every railway worker is compulsorily required to contribute to the provident fund. So they have begun only three years ago by giving a limited option. When they revised it last year, they brought down the number of years of service to ten. Therefore, all those who are still not ten years old in railway service are outside the benefits of the provident fund. Then, as Mr. Joshi has pointed out, the limit of salary is Rs. 15. Everybody who has read the railway Budget knows that all the Chaprasis, who are attached to the Railway department, getting Rs. 14 p.m. cannot, therefore, get the privilege. The humblest people who need something when they go out after thirty years of devoted service they have nothing to fall back upon, with a heavy load of debt, because the Royal Commission on Labour found that nearly 66 per cent. of the railwaymen were indebted.

Col. H. W. Wagstaff: They are given gratuity.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: If you will require you will find that nothing reaches their wives and children. That is the long and short of it. They have not enough even for their funeral. Therefore, this amendment is so modest and so reasonable, that at least on this occasion the War Transport Member and ourselves can come to an agreement. We ask for a morsel of food for the wives and children of seven lakhs railwaymen when they retire, something on which they can at least remember their railway service with some kind of attachment instead of curses with which they leave their service as they are literally thrown into the street. I do not wish to argue that point more, but I do hope the Government will make these benefits compulsory and for all employees of the Railways.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai (Sind: Non-Muhammadan Rural): Sir, on a point of order. I do not think there should be any difference between one Member of this Honourable House and another. Sir, it is very clear that when I rose in my seat, I caught the eye of the Chair and my name was called out. But immediately afterwards the Chair called out the name of Mr. Jamnadas Mehta. If Mr. Mehta wished to speak first I would have had no objection, but when I first caught the eye of the Chair and I was actually called out, I cannot understand why that change was made.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): Because I had not noticed that Mr. Jamnadas Mehta had risen in his seat and it is entirely in the discretion of the Chair to call any Member.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: Sir, I am only raising this objection because I was called out.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): I made a mistake because I had not then seen Mr. Jamnadas Mehta rise in his seat.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: I was also standing.

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: If you had asked me, I would have resumed my seat. Sir, I am one of the senior Members of this House

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

Mr. Lalchand Navalrai: Under the circumstances, I do not want to speak on this cut motion.

Sardar Mangal Singh (East Punjab: Sikh): Sir, I wholeheartedly support the motion so ably moved by my Honourable friend, Mr. Joshi. He has made out a very strong case for this small mercy for the low-paid railway employees. It is no political controversy. It is simply a human question, and this time at least I hope that the Railway Member, or as he is anxious to call himself, the War Transport Member

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: He is not anxious; the Viceroy is anxious.

Sardar Mangal Singh: he will at least get up this evening and say that he accepts Mr. Joshi's amendment.

Sir, the position is that all railway employees who are paid Rs. 20 or more get the benefit of the provident fund. But the railway employees who get Rs. 15 to Rs. 20 only get the option to contribute to the railway provident fund. and that again if they have put in 10 years previous service. Those employees who are paid less than Rs. 15 do not even get the benefit of this optional contribution to the provident fund. Sir, as my Honourable friend, Mr. Joshi, has rightly pointed out, if any protection is needed it is needed for the low paid employees and not for highly paid officers who get thousands and thousands every month. It is necessary for these poor people to get a few rupees a month so that they can feed and clothe their wives and children. I, therefore, support the motion. At this stage I want to say a few words about my Honourable friend, Mr. Joshi, how very ably and efficiently he is representing his constituency in this House. I invite the attention of other Nominated Members to his conduct in this House, how he represents his interest, while other Nominated Members who are brought to this House particularly to represent certain interests, they sit here with their mouth shut, they do not even open their eyes, but they walk blindfold to the official lobby.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): I do not think the Honourable Member should make such reflections.

Sardar Mangal Singh: All right, Sir. I hope, that this motion which does not raise any political controversy will get the support of all sections of the House. If the Honourable the Railway Member does not see his way to accept the motion, I hope the House will pass it by a large majority. Sir, I support the motion.

Col. H. W. Wagstaff: Sir, in the first instance, I should like to make it quite clear that the Railway Board regards this liberalisation of the provident fund with very great sympathy and have always done so.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: What is the use of sympathy? Action is necessary.

Col. H. W. Wagstaff: It is not only sympathy; as I will show later on, they have shown practical sympathy as well. It is a very generous provident fund, it is a contributory provident fund and the bonus is 100 per cent. The worker puts in so much and the Government pays an equal amount and the interest which accrues also goes to the worker at the end of his service. The original rules as they stood in 1941—roughly speaking—made it compulsory for subordinates and optional for workshop staff after three years service; while inferior servants were not allowed to join the fund, although they had a gratuity. Now, my Honourable friend, Mr. Mehta, is quite right in saying that the Railwaymen's Federation have, from time to time, discussed this matter with the Railway Board and when liberalisation was decided upon after discussion with organised labour, it was decided that that liberalisation should take the form other than what was then provided for in the rules, that is, it was decided that all workers with a certain number of years of service should be given the option of joining the

fund. At that time, the question of compulsion had arisen and, of course, my Honourable friend, Mr. Joshi, sees the difficulty in regard to making it compulsory for all inferior servants and, therefore, changes his suggestion into a suggestion for an increase in pay, not of making the provident fund compulsory.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: I said both.

Col. H. W. Wagstaff: We are discussing subscriptions to the provident fund. To make it compulsory for all those railway servants who did not then have the option, it would cost 72 lakhs. Now, Sir, I readily admit that in these days when my Honourable friend, Dr. Sir Zia Uddin Ahmad, is thinking in thousands of crores as he was the other day, a sum of 72 lakhs may appear a very small sum. But when it was worked out some years ago, it did not seem a small sum, and I am sure, Sir, that a time will come again when 72 lakhs will not appear to be a very small sum. This is a permanent liability. It is not a question of giving a war allowance or anything like that, it is a permanent liability which will always be a debit against railway revenues.

Sir F. E. James: Make it voluntary for all.

Col. H. W. Wagstaff: Therefore, as I say, at the time when the question was being discussed with the All-India Railwaymen's Federation, although the Federation did press for compulsory subscription the Government was not able to accept that particular facet of the scheme, but in 1941, they issued orders that all railway servants with over 16 years service, who were not under the old rules forced to subscribe or already had the option, should be given the option. That gave 63,000 men the option of joining the fund.

Sir F. E. James: Only after 16 years of service.

Col. H. W. Wagstaff: Yes, all those who had at least 16 years of service. Now, Sir, the matter was again discussed with the Federation only one year after that, in 1942 and again the Railway Board was able to make an advance. They made an advance in the same direction of using the years of service as the yard-stick and they reduced the years of service which gave the worker the option of joining the fund. They reduced the number of years to ten years. That brought in another 186,000 men.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: How many actually joined?

Col. H. W. Wagstaff: In the first nine months after the first advance was made, we know that 22,000 men joined out of 63,000. But you must remember that those 63,000 men always have the option. They can join at any future date. It is not surprising that just at the present time no great number of workers will exercise that option, but it does not say that they will not exercise the option in the future when they are in a better position to do so.

Sir Cawasjee Jehangir: The later they join, the less advantage they derive. Is it not so? You make them join after 16 years of service. The benefit has already lapsed for ten years. There is not much advantage in joining after 10 or 16 years. The advantage comes in immediately on joining.

Col. H. W. Wagstaff: I think, not, Sir, because when a man has short service, he is drawing small pay and the percentage he pays to the provident fund will be small. As a matter of fact a man reaps the greatest benefit from the provident fund during the last years of his service. If he is drawing small pay, very little accrues in the provident fund. That, Sir, is the position. As far as action has been taken, there have been these two liberalisations of this fund so that whatever the category of worker, if he has got more than ten years of service, he has the option of joining this very generous provident fund.

Now a short time ago the question was further discussed again with the All-India Railwaymen's Federation. The first liberalisation was in 1941, the second in 1942, and it was last year, in 1943, that this question was again discussed with the Federation. I am authorised to say that Government feel that they can make a further advance. First it was 16 years, then it was brought down to 10 and now another advance will be made. I cannot at present say exactly what that advance will be, but having regard to the history of this question in the last three or four years I do not think it can be said that

[Col. H. W. Wagstaff.]

the Railway Board and Government have not listened to the representations of organised labour and considered this question in a sympathetic manner.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: Too slow.

Col. H. W. Wagstaff: My Honourable friend may think it is too slow but in the last two years we have made an enormous advance and somewhat over 2,00,000 men have been given the option. I do not think it can be said that Government's attitude has been unsympathetic.

Sir Cowasjee Jehangir: Will my Honourable friend explain what gratuity they get?

Col. H. W. Wagstaff: The gratuity depends on their pay at the time they leave service; it is half a months pay for each year of service.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: Others get that gratuity also.

Col. H. W. Wagstaff: Yes. I hope in the circumstances Mr. Joshi will agree to withdraw his motion.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: No, Sir; I consider this reply to be entirely unsatisfactory and I should like the House to declare it unsatisfactory.

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

"That the demand under the head 'Railway Board', be reduced by Rs. 100."

The Assembly divided:

AYES—43.

Abdul Ghani, Maulvi Muhammad.
Abdul Qaiyum, Mr.
Abdullah, Mr. H. M.
Anthony, Mr. Frank R.
Azhar Ali, Mr. Muhammad.
Bajoria, Babu Baijnath.
Choudhury, Mr. Abdur Rasheed.
Choudhury, Mr. Muhammad Hussain.
Dam, Mr. Ananga Mohan.
Das, Mr. B.
Deshmukh, Mr. Govind V.
Essak-Sait, Mr. H. A. Sathar H.
Gupta, Mr. K. S.
Habibar Rahman, Dr.
Hegde, Sri K. B. Jinaraaja.
Hosmani, Mr. S. K.
Ismail Khan, Hajee Chowdhury Muhammad.
Joshi, Mr. N. M.
Kailash Bihari Lall, Mr.
Krishnamachari, Mr. T. T.
Lahiri Chaudhury, Mr. D. K.

Lalchand Navalrai, Mr.
Lalljee, Mr. Hooseinbhooy A.
Liaquat Ali Khan, Nawabzada Muhammad.
Mangal Singh, Sardar.
Mehta, Mr. Jamnadas M.
Misra, Pandit Shambhudayal.
Naidu, Mr. G. Rangiah.
Nairang, Syed Ghulam Bhik.
Nauman, Mr. Muhammad.
Neogy, Mr. K. C.
Pande, Mr. Badri Dutt.
Piare Lall Kureel, Mr.
Raza Ali, Sir Syed.
Sham Lal, Lala.
Siddique Ali Khan, Nawab.
Siva Raj, Rao Bahadur N.
Srivastava, Mr. Hari Sharan Prasad.
Subbarayan, Shrimati K. Radha Bai.
Umar Aly Shah, Mr.
Yamin Khan, Sir Muhammad.
Yusuf Abdoola Haroon, Seth.
Zafar Ali Khan, Maulana.

NOES—42.

Ahmad Nawaz Khan, Major Nawab Sir.
Ambedkar, The Honourable Dr. B. R.
Benthall, The Honourable Sir Edward.
Bewoor, Sir Gurunath.
Bhagchand Soni, Rai Bahadur Seth.
Caroe, Sir Olaf.
Chapman-Mortimer, Mr. T.
Chatterji, Mr. S. C.
Daga, Seth Sunder Lall.
Dalal, Dr. Sir Ratanji Dinshaw.
Dalpat Singh, Sardar Bahadur Captain.
Gwilt, Mr. E. L. C.
Habibur-Rahman, Khan Bahadur Sheikh.
Haidar, Khan Bahadur Shamsuddin.
Imam, Mr. Saiyid Haidar.
Inskip, Mr. A. C.
Ismail Ali Khan, Kunwer Hajee.
James, Sir F. E.
Jawahar Singh, Sardar Bahadur Sardar Sir.
Jehangir, Sir Cowasjee.
Khare, The Honourable Dr. N. B.
Krishnamoorthy, Mr. E. S. A.

The motion was adopted.

Kushal Pal Singh, Raja Bahadur.
Lawson, Mr. C. P.
Maxwell, The Honourable Sir Reginald.
Miller, Mr. C. C.
Muazzam Sahib Bahadur, Mr. Muhammad.
Mudaliar, The Honourable Dewan Bahadur Sir A. Ramaswami.
Ogilvie, Sir Charles.
Raisman, The Honourable Sir Jeremy.
Richardson, Sir Henry.
Roy, The Honourable Sir Asoka.
Shahban, Khan Bahadur Mian Ghulam Kadir Muhammad.
Spence, Sir George.
Srivastava, The Honourable Sir Jwala Prasad.
Stokes, Mr. H. G.
Thakur Singh, Capt.
Trivedi, Mr. C. M.
Tyson, Mr. J. D.
Wagstaff, Col. H. W.
Zahid Hussain, Mr.
Zaman, Mr. S. R.

Meagre Dearness Allowance to Railway Workers.

Mr. Jamnadas M. Mehta: Sir, I beg to move:

"That the demand under the head 'Railway Board' be reduced by Rs. 100."

I am making a plea to the Railway Board for a substantial increment in the payment of the dearness allowance to the railway workers. We have left the big controversies behind and now I call upon the humanity, justice and the fairness of the Railway Board to look after the workers who have loyally served them during the last 4½ years of war and many more. Sir, if you will go through the speeches of the Honourable the War Transport Member in this House and the speeches made in the Council of State by Sir Leonard Wilson, you will find that these speeches are punctuated off and on with a generous tribute to the work of railwaymen. In closing his speech in the Council of State, Sir Leonard Wilson said:

"I trust that Honourable Members of this House will agree with the way in which railwaymen have stuck to their work and the way in which most of their unions have encouraged them to do so are commendable."

This is coming from the Chief Commissioner of Railways. The Honourable the Railway and War Transport Member goes even further and he has given us compliments after compliments and has looked to us for further effort in the years to come. We have responded with alacrity. During the last 4½ years the railway workers have worked hard for several hours a day. But I am sorry to say that whenever the question of giving them something which will meet the necessities of life for the railwaymen, their wives and children has been brought forward, the recognition given to their claims has been very tardy. It is now 4½ years. Everybody knows that the cost of living has increased somewhere between 300 to 400 per cent. I will take the moderate figure of 300 per cent. Supposing a humble railway worker was getting Rs. 50 in the year 1939 and was able to carry on with a very poor standard of life on Rs. 50 a month in that year. At today's prices for living that low standard, he will require at least Rs. 150. I say this because in the budget of the railway worker none of these consumption goods, about which we have heard so much, enter into consideration. Nearly 60 per cent. of his family budget consists of food and the rest consists of a house, clothing and a few miscellaneous articles. Therefore, the standard of the railway worker does not include any of the consumption goods about which we heard so much. The standard is so low that all that he really gets, even in better times, is the barest necessities of life. Therefore, when prices rise, his cost automatically rises. It is not that he wants goods which are not to be had. He wants goods which are available. There is nothing in the budget of the poor railway worker which requires any costly imported goods. The Railway Board has made a list of 18 articles, every one of which is very necessary, very meagre and a very poor item of expenditure. Every one of those items is obtainable in India. It is a mere question of cost and not a question of shipping difficulties or import difficulties. Nothing of the kind. He wants salt, he wants chillies, he wants vegetables, he wants milk, he wants soap, he wants sugar, he wants cloth, he wants kerosene, he wants fuel and he wants food. There is no item of luxury there. It is the difficulty of having no money in his pocket that prevents him buying these articles. Therefore, the Railways themselves undertook that they will supply these 18 articles at cheap rates. This was promised more than 12 months ago, and we know to our cost that except 6 or 7 articles, in spite of the shops having gone up to 500, the major portion of the barest necessities of life are not supplied. They are to be purchased in the black market or at the market rate in the city of Delhi, Bombay, Madras or any other place.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Abdur Rahim): The Honourable Member can continue his speech tomorrow.

The Assembly then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Saturday, the 26th February, 1944.