

- (d) G.S.R. 273 published in Gazette of India dated the 10th February, 1968.
- (e) G.S.R. 277 published in Gazette of India dated the 6th February, 1968. [Placed in Library, see No. LT-112/68.]

Post Office Savings Certificates Rules

SHRI K. C. PANT: On behalf of Shri Jagannath Pahadia, I beg to lay on the Table a copy of the Post Office Savings Certificates (First Amendment) Rules, 1968, published in Notification No. G.S.R. 137 in Gazette of India dated the 20th January, 1968, under sub-section (3) of section 12 of the Government Savings Certificates Act, 1959. [Placed in Library, see No. LT-113/68.]

12.12 hrs

RAILWAY BUDGET, 1968-69

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI C. M. POONACHA): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise to present the Railway Budget for 1968-69.

Beginning with the last completed year, I am glad to report that when the accounts for 1966-67 were closed the deficit was reduced to Rs. 18.27 crores from the earlier estimate of Rs. 24 crores as there was a saving of Rs. 5.75 crores in Ordinary Working Expenses. The saving was mainly because less staff were appointed, less ballast purchased and less repairs to buildings and structures carried out in the closing weeks of the year.

I wish I had a better account to give of the current year. Hon'ble Members will recollect that in deference to the views expressed in the House I had moderated my proposal for increase in the Ordinary Third Class passenger fares and exempted foodgrains from the 3 per cent increase in the supplementary charges on goods. These two changes had the effect of converting the nominal surplus of Rs. 1.28 crores in the Budget presented by me to a small de-

ficit of about Rs. 2 crores. The estimate of earnings from goods traffic in the current year had been worked out on the expectation of an addition of revenue earning traffic of 8½ million tonnes. But the trend of goods traffic this year has been very disappointing, due, no doubt, to the current recession in the economy. Revenue traffic remained almost at the level of last year up to the end of August, but in September there was a sudden drop of nearly one and a half million tonnes, and a further drop of another half-million tonnes in October, leaving us with a shortfall of about two and a quarter million tonnes at the end of October as compared to last year. Traffic in November and December was a little better than last year reducing the shortfall to 1.7 million tonnes by the end of December. On the subsequent trend of traffic it is very likely that we will end the current year with about one million tonnes less of revenue earning traffic than the 164.2 million tonnes achieved last year. Accordingly, in the Revised Estimate I have reduced the earnings from goods traffic by Rs. 17 crores from the Budget figure of Rs. 526 crores.

I may mention in passing that, though this year has been very difficult for railway operation in many respects, the failure to achieve the estimated increase in goods traffic has in no way been due to any failures on the part of the railways. The pattern of traffic flows changed with the heavy import of foodgrains which severely strained port capacity at Bombay, Visakhapatnam and Calcutta so that the Railways were obliged to move supplies to the drought-stricken areas of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar from distant ports like Madras and Kandla, which often involved the movement of empty wagons overlong distances. Despite these difficulties and handicaps the Railways were able to move between April and November 1967 two million tonnes of foodgrains to the scarcity areas from these ports and were able to meet fully and promptly all demands for the movement of foodgrains. In fact, since July