

know that the Soviet Government would agree to supply machinery and equipment as well as technical assistance for the setting up of a steel plant, and that, further, in this connection, they were willing to send at their own expense a team of experts to make a study of the conditions in India and to examine the relevant aspects in the matter of establishing a new steel plant. Subsequently, we had some discussions with the Soviet authorities and in the light of those discussions a decision has been taken to invite a team of specialists from the Soviet Union to visit India in the beginning of November this year for studying the technical and other aspects of the project in collaboration with our specialists. Pending the arrival of the Soviet experts, the Planning Commission and the Ministries concerned will examine the question of the increase of steel products to be produced to meet the requirements of the country and other allied matters.

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STATEMENT RE: RECONSTITUTION AND RE-ORGANISATION OF RAILWAY BOARD.

**The Minister of Railways and Transport (Shri L. B. Shastri):** Sir, on the 10th instant, I said in reply to a question by Shri A. M. Thomas that the reconstitution and reorganisation of the Railway Board was under consideration. With your permission, Sir, I wish to make a brief statement on the decisions I have since taken in this matter.

I have been for some time giving thought to the question of reorganisation of the present set-up of the Railway Board. I have also had the benefit of discussions with a number of officers and others who have an intimate knowledge of the subject, and I personally think that the basic idea behind the constitution of the present Board is quite sound, as a clear-cut demarcation between the technical and administrative wings of the railways

would not lead to better efficiency. I might as well mention that a similar view is held in many foreign countries, especially Britain.

I detail below the changes which I have considered necessary to make in the present set-up of the Board.

The present Board, as hon. Members know, consists of three functional Members and one Financial Commissioner. Of the Members, one is also functioning as Chairman. Recognising, however, the imperative need for scientific planning and for expediting the implementation of large schemes which the railways will be called upon to undertake in the coming years, I have thought it necessary to increase by one the present strength of the Board which will now consist of a Chairman, three Members and a Member for Finance. The Chairman will have the status of a Secretary to Government in the Ministry of Railways and all policy as well as other important matters would come up to the Minister through him. The Railway Board in the coming years will specially have to keep itself posted with trends in the country, its needs and requirements, and plan for the future with imagination and a wider perspective under the guidance and direction of the Minister.

These changes will take effect from the 1st of October, 1954.

I take this opportunity to offer my thanks to the outgoing members of the Railway Board for the valuable services rendered by them. Hon. Members might be interested to know the names of the Chairman and members of the new Railway Board. They are:

1. Shri G. Pande—Chairman.
  2. Shri P. C. Mukherji.
  3. Shri K. P. Mushran.
  4. Shri K. B. Mathur.
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