

[Shri Narayanankutty Menon]

amendment, namely, any offence committed under this Act shall be made a cognizable offence.

One of the Members of the Joint Committee has suggested, even anticipating a criticism, that the party shall not be thrown open to harassment by petty police officials and in a Minute of Dissent has pointed out that provision may be made to the effect that only an officer above the rank of District Superintendent of Police shall take cognizance of this offence and shall file a complaint.

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** Is the hon. Member likely to finish within two or three minutes?

**Shri Narayanankutty Menon:** About five to seven minutes.

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** There are a large number of Members who want to speak.

**Shri Harish Chandra Mathur (Pali):** Why not tomorrow?

15 hrs.

**Shri Narayanankutty Menon:** I will take five minutes tomorrow.

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** Within 5 minutes he will have to condense his remarks tomorrow.

**Shri Narayanankutty Menon:** Yes, Sir; I will take only 5 minutes.

15-01 hrs.

#### MOTION RE: SETTING UP OF P. & T. BOARD

**Shri V. P. Nayar (Quilon):** I want to raise a point of order.

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** There is no motion before the House now.

**Shri V. P. Nayar:** If the point of order is held in my favour, the motion need not be moved.

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** Unless the House is in possession of the motion, there is no point of order.

**Shri Harish Chandra Mathur (Pali):** I beg to move:

"That this House takes note of the statement regarding the setting up of P. & T. Board made by the Minister of Transport and Communications in the House on the 11th September, 1959".

**Shri V. P. Nayar:** Can I raise the point of order now? The motion has been formally made.

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** That will be accompanied by a speech and the motion will be placed before the House. Then he can raise his point of order.

**Shri Harish Chandra Mathur:** Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I hope you and the Members of the House are aware that there has been a persistent demand both on the floor of this House as well as outside for a complete re-organisation of the administrative machinery of the P. & T. Department. For a long time—for almost thirty years—this point has been agitated. In fact, two points have been made out. One was for the formation of an autonomous board for various reasons. Another point, which has always been raised, is about the separation of the posts from the telegraphs. At long last, it fell to the lot of my hon. friend to come to this House and lay a statement declaring the formation of this autonomous board, or what he calls an autonomous board.

**The Minister of Transport and Communications (Dr. P. Subbarayan):** If I may interrupt the hon. Member, I never called it an autonomous board. To make the working of the system easy, this Board has been constituted.

**Shri Harish Chandra Mathur:** I said "so-called autonomous board" because it is neither an autonomous

board nor anything else, to which we can give any recognition. As a matter of fact, the board was already there.

Shri V. P. Nayar: If he has not called it so, you cannot call it "so-called".

Shri Harish Chandra Mathur: What has happened is, there was already a board functioning and certain more powers are supposed to be delegated to that board, so that it may be more effective and possibly deliver the goods.

As we all know, the functioning of this Ministry has come in for very severe criticism, because the developmental needs and the growth of the Ministry are such that it requires a much more effective machinery. It has been recognised, accepted and considered also by the Ministry that the present set-up is not adequate to meet the demands placed on this Ministry. We must also realise that it is only this Ministry which comes directly in contact with the people, more than any other Ministry including the railways. We travel sometimes, but every day we write and receive letters, make trunk calls and send telegrams every day. So, it comes very much in contact with the people and there has been a persistent complaint about the deterioration in the standards in the working of this department.

Ever since the second war, the performance of this Ministry has gone down and it had almost touched the lowest ebb. To make the administrative apparatus more effective and in response to the demand which has been made all the time, the hon. Minister laid a statement on the Table of the House indicating how he is going to make it more effective. What is the arrangement? They are just giving certain powers to the board which is already existing. But let us not forget that the Ministry not only exists as it is, but even the general secretariat continues to function as it is today. It is entirely different in the

Railway Board, which example has been quoted.

As a matter of fact, both the predecessors to the hon. Minister, who have spoken on this subject, have all the time stressed that they wanted to do something on the lines of the Railway Board. I do not suggest for a moment that they should have a separate budget. But as you know, in the Railway Board, there is no separate secretariat in the Ministry. But here something entirely different is being done. The Secretary, the Joint Secretary and the entire paraphernalia is going to continue and stand between the Minister and the newly-constituted board. I have not been able to understand the justification now for the secretariat to sit like a dead-weight over this newly-formed board. Why do they want to stand between the Minister and the board? I have absolutely not been able to understand how is it that the Chairman of the newly-formed board could not also function almost as the Secretary of the Ministry as is being done in the Railway Board. The entire paraphernalia is to continue.

I am stressing this point not only for the sake of economy. Of course, we cannot afford to be extravagant with the poor tax-payer's money, as we propose to do in this matter. But apart from that, the point involved is the effectiveness. The board will not have that free air; the crippling effect of the Secretary would be there. All that the board does will have to pass through the Secretary. I have not been able to see any justification whatsoever for the retention of the entire secretariat as it is. I wish that this P. & T. Board, as it is newly constituted, should form part and parcel of the Ministry itself, as in the case of the Railway Board.

I repeat I do not want the budget to be separate. That is an entirely separate question. This newly-constituted board should form part and parcel of the Ministry. No one should stand between the Minister and the board; they should come in direct con-

[Shri Harish Chandra Mathur.]

tact and confluence and try to make this board as effective as it possibly could be. I hope the Minister will not stand on false prestige. It is only to help him and to make the organisation more effective that I suggest this, more than for the sake of economy, though of course, we will be saving a considerable amount also. That is the first point I wish to stress, viz., the newly-constituted board should form part and parcel of the Ministry and nobody should stand between this board and the Minister.

My next point is this. Everyone wants decentralisation, but only up to his own level and not below him. He does not want to part with his own power, but he wants the man at the top to hand over the power. Here the Secretary wants that the powers of the Minister should be decentralised and given to him, but he does not want to part with the power. As a result, the P. & T. Board will be as ineffective as it has been till now. Down below, I further suggest that the powers of the Director General of Posts & Telegraphs should also be decentralised.

I have suggested as part (1) that at stage 1, there should be no Secretary. We should do away with the Secretary, Joint Secretary, Deputy Secretary and the entire paraphernalia of Under Secretaries and Section Officers. It will mean a tremendous lot of saving. I wish that we could utilize the amount so saved on our field staff, on our other programmes which will be much more helpful. Otherwise, these people will only sit between the Minister and the Board, creating more work for themselves and raising objections as they want to justify their existence. Unless we do something about it, I think the Board will not be effective.

Then, at stage No. 2, Posts should be entirely separated from Telegraphs and Telephones. There should be two independent boards—there is the least doubt about it—and they should come into being immediately. This demand

has been there for a long time, and there are various reasons for this. The telephones and telegraphs were together, because at the earlier stages, we had much lesser work. Now, if we look at the figures we will find it has grown in a colossal manner. The telephone system is entirely different. I do not know what is the relationship between the telephone system and the postal system. There is no reason why they should be under one man. I stress this more particularly because we are making rapid technological advance all over, and if our systems of telegraphs and telephones are to keep pace with the technological advance, a separate board must exist.

There is another unfortunate tendency, I must say. The administrative officers always want to sit over the technical staff. They would not permit the technical staff to have that freedom and to have that joy of functioning in a free manner and going ahead with their technological advances. If the telephone and telegraph side is separated from the postal side, it would be the technological people, an engineer, who would be the Chairman of that Board. The Chairman of the other Board could be a member of this Board for the sake of co-ordination; I do not mind that; though I would say that the hon. Minister himself should be the real co-ordinating authority. But I would not object to the Chairman of another Board being a member here, just as we have got in the air side. We have got the Air India International and the Air Lines Corporation. They are entirely separate; though there was much greater reason for having one single board, as they are doing absolutely the same type of work. Here the work is of an entirely different nature; still we have got one combined Board. This is a most unfortunate tendency, which is almost a hang over from the colonial system, where they wanted the administrative staff to sit over the engineering staff, to sit over the technological staff, not to let them

have freedom to make progress and go step in step with the technological advances which are being made in the country. It will definitely have a crippling effect, and so I do wish that separate Board would be formed so that our telephone system and our telecommunication system make rapid progress.

Apart from these reasons, there are other reasons why there should be two separate Boards. The postal zones which we have framed have got very different ingredients for their constitution. The telephone or telecommunication zone will be entirely different. A. present, because they are just under one man, and for various other reasons, they want to keep the same zone for both the systems. Calcutta itself might be a zone for the telecommunication system. But it is entirely different for the postal system.

There is yet another thing. One branch takes advantage of the weaker side; in other words, one branch's weakness are covered by the strength of the other side, and the other side is being pulled back. Some branch is making greater progress, and that is covered by the weakness of the other side. Postal side is not making the same progress, as it is not working on a commercial basis. But the income made from the other group is just shown as the sum total and a very erroneous picture is presented to the House.

Having said this, I wish to draw your particular attention to very serious implications which have possibly promoted the hon. Minister to come forward with this arrangement. Why is it that the Department and the Ministry, at present constituted, cannot be very effective? What has happened? What are the inhibitory factors? The inhibitory factors, I understand, are two—the Home Ministry on the one hand, and the Finance Ministry on the other. What they want to do now is only, as a matter of fact, try to avoid references to the Home Ministry, and references to

the Finance Ministry, so that people sitting round the table could go into the matters and take their decisions without these cross references. Otherwise, the files are kept going for a long time, they are pending with the Home Ministry, where certain objections are raised, or they are pending with the Finance Ministry, where also some other objections are raised, and nothing is put through. This influence of the Home Ministry and the Finance Ministry had its own value and support in a different regime. But now almost all the departments are doing development work, and every developmental work is being obsessed with these handicaps. They want to run away from those inhibitory factors, and that is one of the reasons why they want this sort of thing. I wish only my hon. friend but the entire Cabinet take note of these inhibitory factors and revise their procedures and systems so that these things do not compel the Ministries to run away from them.

Another very sad thing is that the Housing Ministry is very much in contact with all the Ministries and so their construction programmes are considerably delayed. I think my friend also made a reference—a very uncharitable remark, though it was true—against the working of the Housing Ministry, regarding the construction programme of his own Ministry. I think those remarks and observations were very uncharitable, but they were fully justified, unfortunately. Because, I find this Ministry has been surrendering more than 50 per cent. of its budget provisions on the construction programme because it could not utilize them. Therefore, I would like to be assured whether this Board will have their own construction branch or not. It is a very sad commentary on the Housing Ministry, and something should be done about it. I know the other Ministries have also the same complaint. I know that a particular Ministry—I would not hesitate to name it; the Commerce and Industry Ministry—which could not fulfil its programme of construction of industrial estates,

[Shri Harish Chandra Mathur.]

simply because of the great bottleneck created by the Works and Housing Ministry. They wanted to have about 100 industrial estates in this country. But it is again the Works and Housing Ministry which is responsible for this great bottleneck. The Ministry of my hon. friend has also suffered from those bottlenecks. But these are grave issues which confront the entire country and the entire Cabinet should take action on them. It is not a solution if a particular department, which has the semblance of a commercial-cum-utility department, just runs away from these two Ministries. As a matter of fact, they have done nothing beyond that. That is my complaint. They have done absolutely nothing beyond running away from these three Ministries. This is the sum and total of the constitution of the Board. My friend will say that he has delegated more powers to this Board. I think that is an absolutely ineffective argument. I know in various States now, the departmental heads have been delegated much wider powers. I know particularly in my State of Rajasthan. The departmental heads who had their powers limited up to an expenditure of Rs. 25,000 or 50,000 now have powers delegated to them—to a single individual—right up to the budget limit. I do not think my hon. friend has done anything more. He cannot delegate more powers to spend, more than the budget limit. The Budget is sanctioned by Parliament. This Board, even sitting together, cannot spend more than the Budget limit. Therefore, delegation of a little more power from the Ministry to the Board is absolutely meaningless. Without the constitution of the Board, without doing anything, powers can be delegated. Powers have been delegated, as a matter of fact, to individual heads of departments. The constitution of this Board has done nothing beyond that. That is what I am submitting.

Another point that I wish to make out is, this document which was laid on the Table of the House....

Mr. Deputy-Speaker I am sure the hon. Member would be able to finish by twenty-five minutes past three.

Shri Harish Chandra Mathur: Yes, Sir. I will finish in five or seven minutes, at any rate before 3-30.

As soon as this document was laid on the Table of the House on 11th September—as it was being read—it struck me, I have never seen such a sort of phraseology as has appeared in this valuable document. As I have already stated, I have not been able to appreciate how and why the Secretary should sit in judgment over the collective wisdom of the Board. Here, in this particular statement laid on the Table of the House by my friend, the Secretary has been projected twice. This Parliament does not recognise the Secretary. Parliament recognises only the Minister. This document has twice made mention of the Secretary. Anything that is coming from the Board will pass through the Secretary. I think my hon. friend....

Dr. P. Subbarayan: If I may interrupt, there is nothing wrong in mentioning the Secretary because through the Secretary the Minister works, because he is an adviser, if I may say so.

Shri Harish Chandra Mathur: It is understood. Why is it necessary to mention it here? It is for the Minister to make whatever arrangement he likes. Do I understand that the Secretary enjoys any statutory right to being mentioned in the document? Am I to understand that the hon. Minister has got to see through the eyes of the Secretary? Do I understand that the hon. Minister has got to talk to the Board only through the Secretary? Do I understand that the hon. Minister....

Dr. P. Subbarayan: I am afraid my hon. friend is assuming too much.

Shri Harish Chandra Mathur: This is a colossal thing....

**Shri V. P. Nayyar:** Is there any statute about mentioning the Secretary?

**Shri Harish Chandra Mathur:** This is a colossal thing. This phraseology indicates nothing but the working behind the entire system. Then, again, I repeat, it is because of the unnecessary importance which the Secretary wants to assume to himself that this entire scheme has been sabotaged. That is my contention.

**Dr. P. Subbarayan:** I would like to tell my hon. friend that if any attack is to be made, let it be on me. The Secretary is not before Parliament to answer for himself.

**Shri Harish Chandra Mathur:** I hope the hon. Minister understands that the attack is on him.

**Some Hon. Members:** On him?

**Shri Harish Chandra Mathur:** It is entirely on him, because he has produced this document and he has not seen it.

**Dr. P. Subbarayan:** I have certainly seen it.

**Shri Harish Chandra Mathur:** He has not been able to appreciate that he has walked into the trap which had been set for him. Why do my hon. friends want that I go directly for a fling at him?

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** I would not allow that. He cannot go directly on him.

**Shri Harish Chandra Mathur:** He is such a nice amiable person. I cannot attack the Minister more than I have done already.

**Shri D. C. Sharma:** Do I understand that when he mentioned the Secretary, he meant the Minister?

**Shri Harish Chandra Mathur:** That is the unfortunate naked truth. If the document, as it stands, is to be effective, I say, the hon. Minister will

not have a chance even of meeting the Board directly. Why can't he, I do not know. I think this document does not make mention of that. It mentions that everything coming from below will pass through the Secretary. May I know also if it is true that everything passing from the Minister to the Board will also pass through the Secretary? I do not know whether our Ministers initiate any policy or not or whether there is anything that passes from the Minister or not.

**Shri Braj Raj Singh (Firozabad):** Nothing.

**Shri Harish Chandra Mathur:** Ministers are supposed to initiate things. Ministers are supposed to make their own decisions. I know the very valuable role which a Secretary has to play. I do not denounce that. I do not say anything about it. I do not say anything about the work of the Secretary in various other matters where there is a department functioning. I understand the importance of the Secretary. I have been myself in a very small way a Secretary for about ten years, or 12 years. I know what a Secretary is. When the Secretary is there, the departmental head is absolutely a second fiddle. If there is a strong Secretary, he has absolutely to go according to the dictations from the Secretary. At least, I have played that role.

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** That is the difficulty.

**Shri Harish Chandra Mathur:** My hon. friends do not realise that. I know what a Secretary is. That is why I am giving information to the Minister what a Secretary is.

**Shri Hem Barua (Gauhati):** If all Secretaries are like him, there will be a lot of trouble. Everybody becomes a fiddle.

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** That is because he has been the Secretary. Therefore, he does not like any Secretary to function.

**Shri Harish Chandra Mathur:** Knowing what a Secretary is, I want him to be in the proper place. I want him to have an important place in other matters.

What I want is this. Whatever steps my hon. friend takes, he should make the Board effective. He has not got any appreciation of the deterioration which has taken place in this department. I, therefore, suggest that a strong Committee should be appointed to go into the working of this department, find out what is the state of affairs today and report it to the Minister and the Parliament. As a matter of fact, I wrote a similar letter much earlier to my hon. friend's predecessor to which I have not received any answer. I think it is very necessary that the entire matter should be gone into and this House given an assurance as to how they are going to improve this state of affairs. I know that this Board may be able to build houses or do this and that. But, the public is much more concerned, and we are concerned with the welfare of the staff and their effective working otherwise. We are much more concerned about the complaints which the general public have against the working of this department. I would like to know whether the hon. Minister has full appreciation as to what he is going to do about it.

Last one word and I have finished. My hon. friend in this statement on page 3 has told us that this Board is to be constituted before Parliament meets or at least during the course of the session. Where do we stand today? The second point that I would like to know is, what are the agreements to which he has arrived at with the Home Ministry as well as the Finance Ministry and what authority and power is being delegated to this Board by these two Ministries, so that we could know the second part of it, whether the Board would be half as effective as has been made in this document. I hope the hon. Minister will throw some light on that.

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** Motion moved:

"That this House takes note of the statement regarding the setting up of P. & T. Board made by the Minister of Transport and Communications in the House on the 11th September, 1959."

**Shri V. P. Nayar:** I wanted to raise a point that this motion according to me, although admitted, was not proper and should have been considered to be out of order. Because, a motion, to be admitted under rule 189, presupposes that it must be qualified for admission under rule 186. The first condition is that it shall raise substantially one definite issue. As the motion stands, I could not find any issue, although after hearing the speech of the hon. Member, I could see there were some intangible issues. Then, it must be related to a matter of recent occurrence. This occurred three or four months ago, and I would not place it as recent. So, I thought of raising it, but now that a speech has been made, I do not insist on it.

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** I think he realises and is conscious of his own weakness, and so he does not insist on it.

**Shri V. P. Nayar:** There is no purpose now. I tried to have the point raised, but ...

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** The statement was made recently by the Minister. It is of recent occurrence. It is the statement that has to be discussed. That is clear under rule 184, and then it is just the same as the discussion we had under rule 342; because there is no voting, we have now adopted this method now, saying "takes note of". We have taken up that form. otherwise it is the same. Rule 342 reads:

"A motion that the policy or situation or statement or any other matter be taken into consideration shall not be put to the vote of the House ..."

So, a statement also can be taken into consideration. We can take note of that, and we have taken it already. The motion in regard to the accident on the hoist chamber of Bhakra-Nangal was exactly in the same form: "That this House takes note of the statement made by the Minister of Irrigation and Power".

**Shri V. P. Nayar:** There the accident had happened, here the Board is to be appointed.

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** Does not matter. I see no force in that. Now we might proceed further.

The hon. Mover has taken half an hour. He will require five minutes in the end as well. Perhaps that much has to be given to the Minister also. How much time would the hon. Minister require?

**Dr. P. Subbarayan:** I would require at least 20 minutes.

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** That means we have one hour with us. I have got ten names, and perhaps some others also might stand up.

**Shri Narayanankutty Menon:** (Mukandapuram): We have not given any names.

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** But I have put down his name also without getting his chit.

**Shri S. M. Banerjee** (Kanpur): I only want five minutes.

**An Hon. Member:** Five minutes each.

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** If the hon. Members agree, that would be all right. Then I can accommodate all of them. **Shri Hem Barua.**

**Shri Hem Barua:** There was a persistent demand made on the floor of the House as also by the National

Federation of Posts & Telegraph Workers for a separate P & T Board. There exists a P & T Board with limited powers and the new Board is supposed to get more or enhanced powers. So, the difference between the old and the new Boards is only this much. But when the demand was made on the floor of the House that was because of certain administrative experiences and administrative reasons, because whenever even a pot of ink had to be purchased, it had to be referred to higher authorities, and because of red-tape it took a lot of time.

The P & T and the Railways are the two departments under the Government that are known as commercial-cum-public utility services. At the same time the administrative defects or difficulties that are to be found in these two departments are mountainous, if I may say so. This is my experience because I am connected with some of the unions of the Railways and the P & T as well. The demand for the Board was therefore made to make a solution of problems easier and quicker.

The Board that they visualised was an autonomous Board, not the Board that emerges out of this statement. Somehow or other it is a very pale-faced Board in spite of the fact that the new Minister pays a compliment to his predecessor, **Shri S. K. Patil** who is supposed to have imparted his usual vigour, clarity and dynamism to him. Dynamism is missing in this P & T Board that has been proposed in spite of the fact that **Shri Patil** is supposed to have injected his dynamism into it, and his vigour too.

The demand was to separate the Budget of the P & T Department, but there is no such separation. Therefore this does not occupy the same position as that of the Railway Board. The demand was for a Board occupying the same position as the Railway Board, and that can be possible only by the separation of the Budget, but



[Shri Hem Barua.]

for reasons better known to the Minister, that has not been possible and he has said so.

This is not decentralisation of power. This is simply trying to gear up the administrative machinery to a different tune, and for that the Director of P & T is made the Chairman of the Board, and there are six other members, most of them Secretaries of different departments. At the same time, there is one big hurdle. The collective wisdom of this Board can be overruled by the Secretary of the Finance Ministry who has been kept there as a checkpost. If he does not agree with the collective decision of the Board, he can take the matter directly to the Government. Here lies the rub. What is the purpose of having a Board like this, a sort of lily-livered Board over which not the Director of P & T presides, but the Secretary of the Finance Ministry presides?

**Shri Harish Chandra Mathur:** Not Secretary, Joint Secretary.

**Shri Hem Barua:** Joint Secretary.

The Board is empowered to evolve policies and that would lessen the function or the responsibility of the Ministry as a whole. That is welcome, but when they evolve a policy if there is some disagreement, then the policy matter has to be referred to the Secretary of the Ministry and it must have the approval of the Ministry. In that sense it does not enjoy any power. It becomes only a rubber-stamp and a post office, and the decisions of this Board are also conveyed to the Ministry through the Secretary for approval. Unless and until the approval comes, it does not operate in the right spirit, or it does not operate at all.

In financial matters also, it can spend money according to the Budget provisions. That the Ministry has been doing. Whenever it goes beyond

that, it has to approach the Ministry and through this Ministry the Finance Ministry. If the purpose of this Board is to curtail the powers so far enjoyed by the Home Ministry and the Finance Ministry on the Ministry of Communications, then that very purpose is being defeated because of these unwholesome provisions. On the other hand, had it been an autonomous body, with a separate Budget of course, it would have done away with the secretariat set-up, but here that set-up continues, it is not done away with. That is why I say this Board, however welcome it might be, does not enjoy real power, real autonomy. It only becomes a rubber-stamp or a post office which we can very well avoid and allow the responsibilities to be exercised by the Ministry as they were being exercised before rather than have a Board of this sort.

**Shri Narayanankutty Menon:** I think that no useful purpose will be served by this discussion because in the original statement made by the Minister not even an iota of indication was given as to the powers of this Board, and after making that statement the constitution of the Board has not taken place, and even now we are not sure what the real powers to be enjoyed by this Board in the whole administrative set-up of the P & T Department will be.

If the hon. Minister had made a statement about the progress and also the powers to be conferred upon this Board, and given us an outline or a framework of the new set-up of the administration of the P & T Department and the implications of the formation of this Board it would have been far better, and the Government could have got the suggestions from the hon. Members of this House and be benefited by them. But in the kind of discussion that we are having, even if certain suggestions are made, we cannot know where exactly they can be fitted in, whether after all

they can be accommodated or incorporation in the functions of the Board. Therefore, there is a little bit of difficulty in having a full-fledged discussion on the formation of the P & T Board. But, still, with the experience of the working of this department in its various ramifications, stretching its tentacles to almost every part of the country, I really feel that there is something seriously wrong, and that a sort of cancerous disease has caught hold of this department almost down to a post office and a postal employee. We are not sure whether that disease is due to the lack of co-operation or co-ordination between the different Ministries, because we do not quite know. If that disease is due to want of co-ordination and co-operation between the various Ministries, and if that co-operation and co-ordination could be obtained by the formation of this board, certainly, we shall have to welcome this, and we shall be the first to welcome this.

We should like to know from the hon. Minister the exact role that will be played by this P & T Board in the whole administrative set-up now, and how, according to his own vision of the future administrative machinery, this board will function. Unless we get a clear-cut idea about the functions of this board and the extent of co-ordination and co-operation that it will have from the different Ministries, certainly, it will not be possible for this House to express its opinion about the future of this board. But, anyway, the decision has been taken to form this board. If this really means that a new set-up will arise in the P & T Department, then it will find at least a partial remedy to the evils that are existing today, and to that extent, the formation of this board is to be welcomed.

The P & T Department, just like the railways, is one of the biggest employer Ministries in this country. I am saying this because, apart from the various administrative burdens

such as the maintenance of the lines of transportation and communication in this country, it has got the added burden of looking after about a quarter million employees under it. I am specifically pointing to the fact that the neglect of the whole department is due to the neglect of that particular branch; whether it be lack of co-ordination between the different levels of administrative set-up or anything else, it ultimately boils down to this fact that there is a disgruntled staff throughout.

For instance, because of the lack of decentralisation, because of the existence of bureaucracy at every level, any communication that it addressed to the Director-General of Posts and Telegraphs regarding the service conditions of an employee or regarding the disciplinary action taken against an employee, goes from one particular place and returns back after years and years, after having passed through the hands of a hundred individuals who exercise their own whims and fancies on that communication. I am submitting this because I have got my own experience in this regard. The result is that whatever policy might be thought of by the Minister, that policy is not put into effect ultimately, and the poor employee suffers.

I may point out for the benefit of the hon. Minister how this bureaucratic set-up has been functioning right from the beginning to the end, and how people are affected by it. There are about half a dozen women working in the telephone exchange in my State. They were temporary in the beginning. Even though they were temporary, under the rules, after working for a week, they were given a day off; ultimately, after six months, they were told that they did not have any continuous service, because one day had been given as off to them, and, therefore, they were going to be discharged from service. The interpretation given by the department was that under the rules fram-

[Shri Narayanankutty Menon.]

ed by Government one day had to be given as off to these girls after they had worked for one week, compulsorily; and because of the obligation of the department to give one day off to them, they were told that they were not in continuous service. Ultimately, the matter had to be taken up with the authorities, and only after a year's correspondence could something be done in their case.

Let me give another example now, and that is with regard to the need for building quarters for the P & T employees. I know myself that so far as the Kerala State is concerned, many years before, decisions were taken to build quarters for the P & T employees. Every time the P & T officers come and assure the employees that next week or next month the work would start, but for the last ten years, these quarters have not been coming up. No positive explanation has been given by anybody so far as to why these quarters have not been coming up. The only positive explanation is that there is lack of co-ordination between this directorate and the works, Housing and Supply Ministry.

These are some of the examples which show that because of the ramification of this department and because of the existence of bureaucracy, nothing could be done properly. If the hon. Minister would realise these implications of the existence of this bureaucratic set-up, and would think it fit to vest this board with suitable powers whereby the entire chain could be broken at least at one level, so that things could be done easily, then it would be a welcome feature.

At this juncture, we only hope that this P. & T. Board with undefined powers at present may not be another elusive freak in the galaxy of bureaucracy that is existing in this country, and that really this P. & T. Board will contribute in some measure to the amelioration of the defects existing today in the P. & T. administration.

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** Shri Bhakt Darshan.

**Shri Braj Raj Singh:** Before Shri Bhakt Darshan begins, may I know from the hon. Minister whether this Board has been constituted yet or not, because it was promised in the statement that it would be considered?

**Dr. P. Subbarayan:** For the information of the House, I would like to say that the board is not yet constituted; it will come into being about the 14th or 15th of December, 1959.

**Shri Hem Barua:** It is in embryo now.

**Shri Harish Chandra Mathur:** The hon. Member may express his views now, so that the hon. Minister may take into account those views also.

श्री भक्त दर्शन (गढ़वाल) : उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, दो वर्ष से भी अधिक का समय हुआ जब कि माननीय लाल बहादुर शास्त्री ने इस सम्बन्ध में घोषणा की थी और आज हम उस पर विचार कर रहे हैं।

**Dr. P. Subbarayan:** I would like to request the hon. Member to talk in English, because I do not understand Hindi, and the hon. Member does know English.

**Shri Bhakt Darshan:** I shall deliver my speech in Hindi, and then give the important points in English.

**Mr. Deputy-Speaker:** But I may not give double time to the hon. Member.

**Shri Bhakt Darshan:** I do not want double the time. I shall finish within the time allotted to me.

**Shri Narayanankutty Menon:** The hon. Member may speak in Hindi and give the points in English.

**Shri Bhakt Darshan:** Let me be bilingual today.

माननीय शास्त्री जी ने दो साल पहले जो घोषणा की थी, उस के बारे में जो हमारी आशाएँ थीं, उन के अनुकूल यह बोर्ड नहीं बन रहा है। मैं यहाँ पर उस झगड़े में नहीं पड़ना चाहता हूँ, जिस के बारे में हमारे मित्र श्री माथुर ने अभी यह प्रश्न उठाया था कि इस सम्बन्ध में सैक्रेटरी या सचिव की क्या पोजीशन रहेगी। इस के बारे में मैं यह निवेदन करना चाहता हूँ कि या तो डायरेक्टर जनरल को, जो कि इस बोर्ड के चेयरमैन होंगे, सैक्रेटरी को पार्वज दे दी जायें और रेलवे बोर्ड के चेयरमैन की तरह वह विभाग के एक्स-ग्रॉफिशियो सैक्रेटरी हों, या इस डिपार्टमेंट के सैक्रेटरी को इस बोर्ड का चेयरमैन बना दिया जाये। यदि इस सम्बन्ध में इस तरह की व्यवस्था की जाये, तो बड़ी सहूलियत होगी।

My submission is that either the Director-General, Posts and Telegraphs should be given the powers of a full-fledged Secretary, or the Secretary to the Ministry of Communications should be the *ex-officio* chairman of this Board. That will solve the problem.

इस बोर्ड के एक तो चेयरमैन होंगे और छः सदस्य होंगे। जैसा कि श्री माथुर ने सुझाया है, प्रति-वर्ष करोड़ों रुपए भवनों के निर्माण के लिए रख दिए जाते हैं, लेकिन वे लैप्स हो जाते हैं। इस सम्बन्ध में दो ही रास्ते हो सकते हैं। या तो पी० एण्ड टी० डिपार्टमेंट का एक सैपरेट इंजीनियरिंग डिपार्टमेंट हो और उस का हेड इस बोर्ड का एक एक्स-ग्रॉफिशियो मेम्बर हो। दूसरा साल्यूशन यह है कि जिस तरह इस बोर्ड का एक फाइनेंस मेम्बर रखा जा रहा है, जो कि एडमिनिस्ट्रेशन कंट्रोल के लिये तो फ़िनांस मिनिस्ट्री के अन्तर्गत होगा, लेकिन इस बोर्ड का मेम्बर भी होगा, उसी तरह सी०पी० डब्ल्यू०डी० से एडीशनल चीफ इंजीनियर के पद का एक व्यक्ति ले कर इस बोर्ड का मेम्बर बनाया जाय, ताकि सब समस्याएँ आमने-सामने बैठ कर हल की जा सकें।

My suggestion is that either the P. & T. Department should have a separate engineering department of its own, and its head should be an *ex-officio* member of this Board, or, failing that, the C.P.W.D. should be asked to nominate a member of the rank not less than that of an Additional Chief Engineer, so that all these matters may be thrashed out inside the Board itself, and the construction work may be expedited.

माथुर साहब ने यह भी कहा कि डाक विभाग के लिए एक अलग बोर्ड बना दिया जाये और तार और टेलीफोन विभागों के लिए अलग-अलग बोर्ड बना दिए जायें। मैं इस सुझाव का विरोध करता हूँ। मैं समझता हूँ कि जब पूरे डाक-तार विभाग के लिए ही बोर्ड नहीं बन पाया है, तो इस विभाग की दो शाखाओं के लिए अलग-अलग बोर्ड बनाना कैसे सम्भव है। फिर ये जो विभाग हैं, हालांकि उन में काफी अन्तर पड़ चुका है और काफी तरक्की हो चुकी है, लेकिन फिर भी उनका एक दूसरे के साथ चोली-दामन का साथ है। जो एक्सप्रेस डिलीवरी लेंटर्ज आते हैं, उन को तार के हरकारों के द्वारा बांटा जाता है; इसी प्रकार मनीआर्डर भी कभी-कभी तार के द्वारा भेजे जाते हैं। फिर समझ में नहीं आता कि उन का विभाजन किस प्रकार से किया जायेगा। अगर उन के अलग स्वतंत्र बोर्ड बना भी दिए जाते हैं, तो उन में ऐसी एनार्की फैल जायेगी कि इन्तजाम करना मुश्किल हो जायेगा।

What I mean to say is that I am opposed to the suggestion made by Shri Harish Chandra Mathur that there should be two separate Boards, one for the postal side and another for telephones and tele-communications, because the relationship between these two wings is so integrated that they cannot be separated.

अन्त में मैं यह कहना चाहता हूँ कि एक वर्ष पहले मैंने यह सुझाव रखा था कि पी० एण्ड टी० बोर्ड बनने वाला है, तब इस किय

[श्री भक्त दास]

में नए सिरे से विचार किया जाय कि हैड-क्वार्टर्स में तो डायरेक्टर जनरल आफ पोस्ट्स एण्ड टेलीग्राफ्स का पद है, लेकिन सर्कल के हैड पोस्ट-मास्टर-जनरल कहलाते हैं। देखने में इस का मतलब यह निकलता है कि वे पोस्टल माइड को ही देखते हैं, जब कि तथ्य यह है कि वे तार, टेलीफोन और वायरलेस जैसे विषयों को भी देखते हैं। मैं कई बार पहले भी सुझाव देता रहा हूँ पोस्ट-मास्टर जनरल का पद बदल दिया जाय। जब कि हैडक्वार्टर्स में डायरेक्टर-जनरल आफ पोस्ट्स एण्ड टेलीग्राफ्स होता है, तो सर्कल में डायरेक्टर आफ पोस्ट्स एण्ड टेलीग्राफ्स हों और पोस्टल माइड में टेलीग्राफ्स आदि शाखाओं का काम करने वाले ग्राजिम्स को डिप्टी डायरेक्टर, पोस्ट्स और डिप्टी डायरेक्टर टेलीग्राफ्स बना दिया जाये।

In England, the post of the Postmaster General is a Cabinet post. We have inherited that tradition from the British rulers. But now it is an anachronism. At the head at the Centre, we have the Director General of Posts and Telegraphs; but in the Circles, we have got Postmasters General. Why not have the same nomenclature? At the Centre, we have got the Director General; so we should have Directors of Posts and Telegraphs in the Circles. They may have deputies to look after the different sides.

मैं इतना ही कहना चाहता हूँ और मैं आशा करता हूँ कि माननीय मंत्री जी इस बारे में विचार करेंगे।

Shri D. C. Sharma (Gurdaspur): I welcome the formation of this Board.

Shri Braj Raj Singh: It has not yet been formed.

An Hon. Member: He welcomes the idea.

Shri D. C. Sharma: I hope that this Board will fulfil all the expectations that we cherish of it.

The speeches that have been made on the floor of this House today make me think that we are crying before the milk has been spilt, and I do not see any point in that. I think we should first of all see how this Board functions and then we can pass judgment upon it. But I think it is a definite improvement on what has been happening before.

The P & T Directorate may have been there, but it had very limited powers. Now I find that the powers have been enhanced—on the administrative side, on the developmental side, on the financial side and so on. I think this is something that is going to do good to the Ministry of Communications and the Posts and Telegraphs and Telephone Departments.

It has been said that the performance of this department is not as good as before. It may be true; it may not be true. But I must say that this Board, which is going to be a kind of arms and brains trust of this Ministry, will try to see that the performance is better than before.

A point was made that the postal side should be separated from the telegraph and telephone side. The hon. Member who made the point argued on the score of economy. He said that we must economise. Then he said that there should be two Boards. I think the Posts, Telegraphs and Telephones constitute one organic body and there is organic connection between the three. I do not see why they should be separated from each other. I think there should only be one Board to deal with them.

Now how does democracy function? People speak against bureaucracy. But has the world found any substitute for it, in any part of the world, in any country under any form of government? No, bureaucracy must be there. You may call it by any other name, but it must be there.

I think that this Board is going to have a kind of cross-section of the administration of this Ministry. That cross-section is going to look to the overall needs of this Ministry. Therefore, I think that this is going to be the advantage of all of us.

Now, a point has been made that this Board should have an engineer to look after the building and other kinds of things. There is a member for tele-communication, planning, development and workshops in it. I hope the developmental side is also included in planning. So that point is also met.

I feel that this Board should have been a statutory Board. But then the finances should have been separated from the general finance. That could not be done. It could have been a kind of directorate, but a directorate does not give as good a performance as a Board can. Therefore, this Board, which is the result of the deliberations of three Ministers. Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri, Shri S. K. Patil and Dr. P. Subbarayan, which has received the stamp of approval of these three Ministers, should be given a hearty blessing so that it can do what we expect it to do.

Another point I want to make, and it is this. This Board should present a report to Parliament every year. I do not know whether it is permissible under the statute or not. But I believe that a separate report of the working of this Board should be presented to Parliament every year so that Parliament can know what work it has done and what advance it has made so far as all these things go.

Now, people have been speaking about the relative position of the Secretary and the Minister. I think this is not a very material point, because it has been said in the statement that the policy-making will be done by the Minister. As long as policy matters remain in the hands of the Minister, I think this Parlia-

ment should feel satisfied. Of course, so far as the implementation of policies is concerned, it is going to be a new kind of experiment. I hope that this new kind of experiment will succeed.

I therefore think that when a new baby is born, we should all assemble to bless it and not assemble to predict anything evil about it. So far as this new baby is concerned, it may not be as good a baby as people wanted, but all the same, we should wish it well so that it is able to satisfy all those demands which we have made upon it.

**Shri S. C. Samanta (Tamluk):** Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, at last in the form of a reconstituted Board, Government have heard and reacted to the grievances put forward since 1924. I welcome the Board. At the same time, I would place before the Minister, the grievances that we put forward since 1924 and recently, in 1953-54-55 at least in the form of a Private Member's Resolution moved by me. While that Resolution was being discussed, the Minister, Shri Raj Bahadur told us that they would not be able to separate the budget in line with the railways; there were difficulties in the way. But he assured us that they had a depreciation reserved fund as the railways had and they would try to have a development fund also.

I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether he is going to form a development fund for this department and also whether a revenue reserve fund is going to be formed in line with that on the Railways. We would have been glad if it had been an autonomous body with the Minister as Chairman just like the Railways.

**An Hon. Member:** The Minister is not the Chairman. He has only the overall control.

**Shri S. C. Samanta:** Within the short time at my disposal I would

[Shri S. C. Samanta.]

like to remind the new Minister about the accommodation problem which we were speaking so much. I would like to know whether it would be solved by the constitution of this Board. We were given to understand that there was some sort of arrangement with the C.P.W.D. May I know whether any progress has been made from 1955 till now? If no progress has been made, the Ministry should move the Government that the entire building work should be taken in hand by this Board so that the staff who are congested in offices will not die of T.B. and for want of accommodation there will not be grievances amongst them.

Another thing I would suggest is this. Railways have established schools and hostels for the children of their employees. I would request the hon. Minister to see that at least some hostels for the children of the employees are established in b towns so that the employees remaining undisturbed about the education of their children can go on with the work of the department.

I do not know what powers will be given to this Board. I think the hon. Minister will try to give them such powers that they will be able to fulfil some of the wishes which we have.

With these words I welcome the constitution of the Board.

Shri N. R. Muniswamy (Vellore): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I must congratulate at the outset Shri Mathur for having initiated this debate with a view to pin-point some of the aspects to which we may draw the attention of the Minister at the time of the constitution of the Board. This Board is long awaited and it is coming very shortly. I propose to make certain observations for him to take into consideration and to implement.

Many of the points which have been raised by the previous speakers have been based on certain conjectures

and probable contingencies that might arise at the time of the functioning of the Board. I may add something more to what has already been mentioned.

I would like to know whether the policy control and administration will be by one and the same Board or whether policy will be separated from technical control. I mean to suggest that the Board should have such members that one section will deal with policy and administration and another section will with technical matters and control. If at the time of the constitution of this Board there are no specific duties assigned to the members it is just possible that the importance of the technical aspects may be lost.

As regards finance and accounting organisation it should also be separated. We know that the Railway Board is functioning in a different way. We may not be able to have the P. & T. Board just like the Railway Board. It will be have a separate existence of its own; nor could we apply the same methods that are being adopted by the Railway Board for various reasons. One of the reasons assigned by the Ministry was that they did not have a separate budget. If that was so, it was said that it would be of a different type altogether.

It would be better if accounting is separated from audit. Audit and accounting must be separated; otherwise it will create confusion. We may have a financial adviser or we may call him a financial commissioner. He is one of the members of such boards normally. He must have certain autonomy and power. His advice on financial matters must be given greater weight than the advice of others on the board. The Comptroller and Auditor-General has been insisting upon the separation of accounts and audit. If both are in one and the same organisation, there will be another Auditor-General. So,

it is better to have two different organisations.

You will have to see if extra expenditure is incurred by the constitution of this Board. If so what is the corresponding economy or efficiency that may possibly be achieved by this? We are not having any data to know the extra expenditure that might be involved. But I take it for granted that the present board as it is constituted at present will be given a different nomenclature and that there may possibly be no extra expenditure. All the same I would ask for an assurance from the hon. Minister that it involves no extra expenditure and that it would function in a proper and efficient way. Therefore, I would suggest that while constituting the Board we must have an eye on the efficiency and corresponding economy also. Efficiency must be given the first place. If the cost increased, it must be commensurate with the efficiency that we attempt to achieve by the constitution of this Board.

I do not know whether it will have a category of its own, just as the Railway Board does not come under the Central Secretariat Service. I want to know from the hon. Minister whether it will be brought under the Central Secretariat or it is a category by itself. On this occasion, I would request the Minister to reply to my points about the policy and administration, separation of audit and accounts and also whether the efficiency will at least be commensurate with the expenditure.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Shri Braj Raj Singh.

श्री ब्रजराज, सिंह उपाध्यक्ष महादेव, मैं दो तीन बातें...

Dr. P. Subbarayan: May I request my hon. friend to follow the same principle as my hon. friend Shri Bhakt Darghan?

Shri Braj Raj Singh: I am sorry, Sir, I will not be able to comply with the wishes of Dr. Subbarayan not for the reason that I would not be able to explain things to him in the language in which he is conversant but for the reason that he being a Minister of the Cabinet rank should at least try to understand the language which is supposed to be the national language.... (Interruptions.)

Shri N. R. Muniswamy: Official language.

Shri Braj Raj Singh: ....official language of India. If not, he will at least keep by his side someone who will be able to explain matters to him.... (Interruptions.)

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: After he has spoken for five minutes, he will go to the Minister and explain to him what he has said.

Shri Thanu Pillai (Tirunelveli): Sir, I would like to point out that an hon. Member giving this sort of direction to the Minister is not very desirable.

Shri Braj Raj Singh: I am not giving any direction.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Every hon. Member can express his desire.

Shri Braj Raj Singh: I am only expressing my desire.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: The hon. Member should not waste his time on this now.

पंडित ब्रज नारायण ब्रजेश (बिबपुरी) :  
भाप ने इस को डाइरेक्टिव बना दिया, यह  
डाइरेक्टिव तो नहीं है।

Shri Braj Raj Singh: If some of my hon. friends take it ill, Sir, I only want to say two or three things to the hon. Minister in the language in



[Shri Braj Raj Singh]

which he is conversant. When the hon. Minister knew that the Board was not constituted, he could have at least requested the Speaker not to have this discussion today and the discussion could have been held after the Board was constituted. There is no purpose in having this discussion when the Board itself has not been constituted. He has given the information that the Board is going to be constituted on the 14th or 15th of December. That, perhaps, may or may not materialise. His previous statement was: "I am hoping that probably before but in any case during the time of the next session of Parliament the Board shall have started to function". I hope that this statement of the hon. Minister will not meet with the same fate as the one which was made by him on the 11th September.

Sir, I am not enamoured of the pattern of the Railway Board. I have often called the Railway Board the "white elephant", in the sense that by creating separate statutory autonomous boards we are simply going to increase the expenditure on the public exchequer. Therefore, the main thing should be that the expenditure should not increase. I would request the hon. Minister to see that by the constitution of this Board the expenditure is not increased.

The main thing should be to see that service to the people is given satisfactorily. One complaint about this department has been that although before the coming in of independence this department was quite efficient after independence it has just become rotten like other departments. The complaint sometimes is that corruption or rottenness in this department is much more than even in other departments.

Sir, there is nothing special to be discussed in this. I would like the hon. Minister to specifically say whether the Board is now going to be establish-

ed on the 14th or 15th of December. Also, when the Board is constituted, I would like him to see that the expenditure does not increase and service to the people is given in the manner in which they hope from this department.

**Shri Aurobindo Ghosal (Uluberia):** Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, though it is very premature to say anything on the working of the P. & T. Board as it is still in its embryonic stage, still, as it has been raised by my hon. friend, Shri Mathur, I would like to say something about it.

We have known so far that the Board will be formed with seven members, with the D.G., P. & T., as its Chairman and six other members in charge of six subjects. It has also been stated that the D.G., P. & T., will be empowered, will be given more powers from the Ministry of Transport and Communications and from the Home Ministry and Finance Member more powers from the Finance Ministry. It has also been announced by the hon. Minister that it will not be an autonomous body like the Railway Board with a separate budget.

I am not ready to give my blessings nor can I condemn a baby which is yet to be born. Still, Sir, we shall hope that the members of the P. & T. Board, who will be working there not as members with inherent powers of the Board but with the powers borrowed or taken from different ministries will not work as check-post of the different ministries but will work with one purpose of developing and running the P. & T. Department efficiently.

In this connection I would like to offer one suggestion. The Government have already accepted the principle of workers' participation in management. If that principle is accepted and if the workers are allowed to go into the committee of

management, why cannot an employee of the P. & T. Department be taken on the Board? The employees of the department are organisationally and educationally more efficient and intelligent. Therefore, I would request the hon. Member to seriously consider this aspect. The P. & T. Board has not yet been formed, and so, I would request him to consider this suggestion seriously. The Board is going to be a very important Board for the developmental work and also it will have to maintain good relations with the employees. So, I would request the hon. Minister to consider this aspect, namely, of taking one representative from among the employees from the department into the Board.

**Shri A. C. Guha:** (Barasat): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I am yet to be convinced about the utility of the formation of this Board. There is no parallel between this Board which is to be created and the Railway Board. The Railway Board has got its own finances. This Board will have no finance of its own and it will have to depend on general finances. So, the difficulty,—which they are feeling now—about the allocation and sanction will more or less continue. But particularly now, when the system of having an internal financial adviser has been introduced, there should not be much necessity in the matter of inter-departmental sanction between this Ministry and the Finance Ministry. Any how the Board is not likely to improve the position.

Mention has been made about the delay in the construction programme. I think that is not a malady which is special to this department. That has been the position in all the departments. Near about half the money allotted every year for construction purposes is being refunded and not utilised because the C.P.W.D. cannot cope with the work entrusted to them. Even now I think it is the intention of Government that the construction side will be left to the

C.P.W.D. So, there would not be any improvement in this respect unless the Board decides to have its own construction side with engineers and other staff all over the country. Other departments may have their construction programme limited only to cities, but this department will have its construction programme spread all over the country down to the remotest villages.

While referring to the construction side, I would request the Minister to go to Calcutta and visit the post offices there. I am not quite sure about my figures, but I think about 25 per cent of the total revenue of the Posts and Telegraph Department is derived from West Bengal Circle. Yet, the working conditions in the post offices in Calcutta particularly are awfully bad. I would humbly request the hon. Minister to go and see the conditions in which postal officials are working in Calcutta.

I am not referring to the residential accommodation of the staff to which my hon. friend Shri S. C. Samanta has referred, but I think that is also a matter to which the department should give serious attention. Unless they can provide tolerable living accommodation to the officers and staff employed in the department, it would be rather futile for the department to expect that the employees would give a proper output on their part.

It has been stated that in regard to matters covered by internal finance the decision of the Ministry of Communication will be final, but in regard to other matters, if the Financial Adviser so desires, a reference would be made to the Ministry of Finance. This is also the procedure in the Railway Board, but the difference between the two is, whereas the Railway Board has got its own finances, here the finances would be derived from the Finance Ministry. So, here the interference of the Finance Ministry is likely to be more fre-

[Shri A. C. Guha]

quent than in the case of the Railway Board and the Financial Adviser may refer to the Finance Ministry much more matters than the Member (Finance) in the Railway Board does. There is hardly a case in a year where the Member (Finance) refers to the Finance Ministry, but the number of such cases may be more here.

Then, as Shri Mathur said, I cannot understand the purpose of maintaining a separate secretariat. The Minister has not given us any idea as to the increase in the total expenditure of the Communications Department, particularly the P. & T. section, on account of the formation of this board. I think the House should be given some idea about the increase in the expenditure due to the formation of this board.

It has been stated that the formation of the board would help sitting round and coming to decisions without sending the file from one table to another. Even now there is the Director-General and the members of the Directorate can sit round and decide things promptly. So, simply the formation of the board will not improve matters, unless the whole department is re-orientated, with the spirit of services to the people and the Minister takes keener interest in the proper allocation and utilisation of money and proper discharge of work by the different members, either of the board or the directorate.

Finally, I would request the Minister to consider whether there would be any necessity at all to continue the entire paraphernalia of the secretariat—the Secretary, the Joint Secretary, etc.—even after the formation of the P. & T. Board.

**Shri Thanu Pillai:** In this debate, we are dealing with something which is not yet formed and observations are made. We are not discussing something which has been done by

the board, but hon. Members offer remarks on something to be done by the board. It is not a new department which is being created; it is only re-aligning, renaming or recasting some of the functions of the officials and co-ordinating them. My interest in participating in this debate is to make use of this opportunity to bring home to the new board that is coming up the very many hopes and wishes of the public and our bitter experiences with the department as it functions today.

This department is an empire by itself, next only to the railways, employing a large number of people, engaged in the service of the people. People come more in contact with this service than the railway service. Not all people travel, but more people receive and post letters. There was a time when I used to say that if a worker's statue should be erected, a postman's statue will be the right type of statue, because he is a very humble man, who cannot commit mistakes and who cannot be corrupt, because there is not much power in him. But even that man has become corrupt. Hon. Members might have heard that many letters are torn and for currency notes sent by mothers to the students studying in other places. The money order goes from the father, but the currency notes go from the mother, without the father knowing it. It is a mistake that these people commit in sending currency notes, but by this mistake, not only do they violate the rules, but they also spoil the good postman into something bad. That apart, there is a feeling that the P. & T. Department is earning. Their employees say "We are earning so much. Why not give us more? We will be satisfied". But if we look into the accounts of the Postal Department, they are running at a loss. Perhaps, it is with that motive that the telephones and telegraphs people say that there must be two boards. One section feels that it is the ear-

ing section and the other section feels that it is the consuming section. But, to us, all sections put together are a utility service.

Now, coming to the telephone department, as a subscriber, I have got bitter experience. Hon. Ministers will not know it, because their Private Secretaries would book their calls, and they would get priority. When I tried to book a call from 2 o'clock to 6 o'clock in the night there was no proper response. Even when we dial 991 and ask "What happened to the call?" there is no response. And the answers are very impertinent and in-different.

**An Hon. Member:** Everywhere?

**Shri Thanu Pillai:** Yes, in Delhi and everywhere. In my home town that question brings the answer "The linesmen that are appointed are not trained men and I am not responsible". The Supervisor says "What I can do, Mr.? The linesman is promoted, not for his efficiency, but for his influence. What can I do?" What can I do? I can only bang the telephone and keep quiet. In the papers they say that here in Delhi the position has considerably improved, it is very good and all right. If you dial a number, to get an answer from the operator it takes a long time. The D.G.P. & T. told me that it will be done in half a minute. Today for five minutes, for full five minutes, I did not get an answer. I again dialled the number and after some time they gave some other reference. If I ask for Tirunelveli, they ask "Trichinopoly?" If I ask them to book a call to Colombo, they ask me "Where is Colombo?" This is the type of operators that we have.

If they want the public to give support to their cause, there should be response from that side also. The hon. Member, Shri Samanta, was speaking about the construction of

houses and other things. Well, the response should come from the other side also. The Government should be a model employer, but the Government servants should also be model employees. But that is not so. Unfortunately, co-operation is lacking from the other side. Also, they are often misled. The P. & T. staff, not in Delhi but in village side are much better paid than people who are doing more arduous work there. Still, they have got the grievance that they are not given adequate pay. A strike threat in 1957 brought them Rs. 5 and another Rs. 5 now. At the same time, the State Government servants are living in the same old condition.

There is going to be a great trouble in this country because of our handling of the pay structure and all that. Of course, there will be other occasions for me to speak on that, not now.

I would only say to the new board that is constituted that we expect from them some superior services. The members of the Board and the Minister should be the guardians of the members of the staff, no doubt. They should be their guardians, and these people should not be left at the hands of the agitators. But, at the same time, they should be our guardians also; we who pay them the price for the services should be treated with cordiality, with respect and regard by the members of the staff. They are onerous duties, but they are nothing new.

We expect that the new Board will have a new impact and it will have the courage to say that its staff must be paid well and that they must be given facilities and all that. At the same time, it must also say "No" where "No" is required. They should not be shivering in their sleeves for fear of agitations. Now, there is one bang at the table on the opposite side and there comes the shivering on this side. It is not to my liking very much.

[Shri Thanu Pillai]

(Interruptions). We are not weaklings here. If the challenge comes, we hope to meet the challenge and we will acquit ourselves very well. I would only request to the hon. Minister to take courage and maintain it.

**Shri S. M. Banerjee:** Mr. Deputy-Speaker, I personally feel that this discussion would have been more fruitful had the hon. Minister made a statement on the floor of the House giving details of the P. & T. Board. However, since the discussion is taking place, I have something to say about this Board.

**Shri Braj Raj Singh:** The Board has not yet been constituted.

**Shri S. M. Banerjee:** The Board is going to be constituted on the 15th. It would be better if we discuss certain things which the hon. Minister could keep in his mind and see that this Board functions efficiently.

As far as I know this Board is being formed to have efficient functioning of the P. & T. department. Let me say only one thing that the Ministry will have to consider this matter also very seriously that with efficiency, it should also function economically. Because, my fear is only this that this Board may not be used only as a plank for further promotions. Because, that is the history of many Boards and many corporations and other places. That is the slogan raised by some of the members of the private sector outside this House. They always feel that anything that is nationalised, any Board which is formed, any Corporation which is formed gives birth to scandalous things. My fear is only this. I would request the hon. Minister to kindly see and keep in his mind some of the bitter experiences of the Railway Board also,

before he decides finally and firmly about this particular Board.

Some of the points raised by my hon. friend Shri Harish Chandra Matnur are worth considering. I also felt, when I read the statement which was laid on the Table of the House, why the Secretary should always come in the picture. The Secretary is the pivot of a Ministry. I understand that and appreciate his work. But, should he interfere with the day to day work of the Board? In that case, the members of the Board will be in a difficult position and they may not be able to give their best and it will also result in some grouchy utterances which might result in something bad for the Board.

The second point is this. I do not share the views of my hon. friend who preceded me. I do not know why he is so allergic towards the employees.

**Shri Thanu Pillai:** Personal experience.

**Shri S. M. Banerjee:** It may be his experience was sad. But, it is not so sad in the case of other Members. It may be that he did not get any connection for 36 hours or 48 hours. My bills can be checked here in the Lok Sabha. At least I have paid Rs. 234 in a particular month. Even this month I have paid Rs. 36 for trunk calls. I do not know how I get a trunk call so swiftly. I do not mention my name or express my sympathy towards the employees on the telephone. But, still I get. The whole thing is this. This department may have its failings. It has its deficiencies. But, I might mention for the information of the House that my experience and my association for the last so many years with the P. & T. employees has only revealed one thing to me that this is a department where right from the peon to the top

man, is working efficiently and honestly.

**Dr. P. Subbarayan:** Thank you.

**Shri S. M. Banerjee:** Supposing I become a peon, if I am a dishonest man, who cares for a letter? I may put the entire bundle in a well. It is not registered; it is not bearing. I have seen postmen, old, ailing postmen, on a salary of Rs. 30 or 35, moving throughout the whole place, walking and delivering letters and going to a thousand places. Here, in North Avenue, I have seen, some telegrams are sent, S. M. Banerjee, M.P., New Delhi, or Mr. So and so M.P. He can ask for the correct address. People have no business to send telegrams like this. After all, Members of Parliament are not the only privileged people in this country. They could have asked for the correct address. The postman comes to the Lok Sabha, he goes to the Enquiry Office, gets the address and delivers it. Let us not condemn those employees only because they want more pay. That is not correct. In that case we will be discouraging these persons who will be working with better efficiency when the Board is formed.

This National Federation of P. & T. Employees was formed by the merger of nine all-India unions. Shri Jagjivan Ram who was the Minister of Transport and Communications at that time realigned it and this particular Federation was formed. So, there is no fear in the mind of the hon. Minister or any official of the Ministry that the representatives of this Federation will not work in the interests of the Government. I say this because their constitution was approved by Government, the Federation has been recognised by Government, and they have come out with an open declaration that they solidly stand by the hon. Minister or the Ministry or the P. & T. Board, they have welcomed it. So it is high time that a representative of theirs is included in the Board, so that if there is any feeling that the workers are not working efficiently

and that is giving a bad name to the Board, the Board can pull up that Member representing the workers. As one representing the workers, it will be his moral responsibility to see that the persons whom he represents do not get a bad name for him, or for the Federation or for others.

Shri Guha has mentioned about Calcutta. I come from Kanpur. A decision has been taken to have a new post office in Kanpur. The entire building is cracking. I wrote a letter to Shri S. K. Patil when he was the Minister of Communications. Any day this building may fall down. I would request the hon. Minister to see the condition of this building and start the work soon. A new building must be given in Kanpur because the life of this old building is almost finished.

With these words I welcome this P. & T. Board, but I would again impress on the hon. Minister to see that this does not become a plank for further promotion. This should be really a Board which works efficiently in the interests of the people and the Government. I assure him on behalf of the employees whom I have the privilege to represent that they will give their best for this country and also for this Board. I assure the hon. Minister of their efficient working. If they have failed in any way till now, they will not fail in future, but they should be given proper representation. I hope the hon. Minister will kindly consider this.

**Dr. P. Subbarayan:** I am very glad that Shri Harish Chandra Mathur has raised this debate because this has made clear some of the points which have been working in the minds of persons like him. Let me first set his mind at rest that the P. & T. Board is going to have a great amount of autonomy. If the Secretary was mentioned, it is merely for the reason of stating that in matters of policy the P. & T. Board's decision will go through the Secretary to the Minister. That is the only way the Secretary

[Dr. P. Subbarayan]

functions, because as long as there is a Secretary in the Ministry of Communications, he ought to know what the policy is and what decision the Government have come to, and unless he is aware of it, he will not be able to advise the Minister. It is for the Minister to accept the advice or not, but at the same time I do not think hon. Members can discount the position of a Secretary to the Government of India as long as the Secretary exists.

The Railway Board functions in a different way altogether. The Chairman of the Railway Board is also the Secretary of the Ministry of Railways. That is not the case here, because, as I explained at the time I made the announcement, we cannot have a separate budget as the Railways have, and we cannot separate the P. & T. budget from the general budget. And as long as there is this financial control, we shall have to go up to the Finance Ministry in matters where the Finance Ministry thinks that the powers that have been given to the board have been exceeded.

**Shri Hem Barua:** What are the impediments that stand in the way?

**Shri Harish Chandra Mathur:** My submission was this. Why can the chairman of this board not be the Secretary to the Ministry itself? I do not want that there should be a separate budget. But why this paraphernalia? My point was entirely different.

**Dr. P. Subbarayan:** At present, there are so many matters connected with the Ministry of Communications, and not merely posts and telegraphs. I think that for the present at least my hon. friend should allow the secretary to function as he does now. If, in the course of the working of the new P. & T. Board, we find that it may be possible to do without a secretary, that might be considered. I do not give any promise. Let not my

hon. friend take it as a promise and then trot it out the next day and say 'You said so, but you have not done it'. Therefore, I am not giving any promise whatever.

**Shri Harish Chandra Mathur:** We want to know the reasons for it.

**Dr. P. Subbarayan:** The reason for retaining is that the work is new, and we want the present system to continue till we can get the experience of the working of the new P. & T. Board.

**Shri Hem Barua:** What are the difficulties that stand in the way of the separation of the budget?

**Dr. P. Subbarayan:** The separation of the budget is not entirely my business. My hon. friend will understand that Government works as a whole, and it is for the Government to come to a decision; and for the present at least, there is to be no separate budget for the P. & T. Department.

**Shri A. C. Guha:** That is understood that there cannot be a separate budget.

**Shri Harish Chandra Mathur:** I quite understand that there cannot be a separate budget.

**Dr. P. Subbarayan:** Hon. Members on this side, I am glad to see, agree to the proposition as I have put it.

Some hon. Members were mentioning that the Posts were losing as against the Telegraphs and Telecommunications. But the figures as I have them are as follows: the Posts have made a profit of Rs. 130 lakhs last year; the Telephones no doubt made a very big profit of Rs. 523 lakhs; the Telegraphs, on the other hand, lost Rs. 6 lakhs, and the Radio Rs. 5.5 lakhs. So, altogether, last year, the profit to Government through the working of the department was Rs. 642 lakhs. It may not be as much this year; it may be something nearer Rs. 5 crores than Rs. 642

lakhs. Therefore, I do not think the hon. Member was correct when he said that the Posts were working at a loss.

**Shri Harish Chandra Mathur:** I never mentioned anything of that kind.

**Dr. P. Subbarayan:** My hon. friend said that a division should be made. But it was some other Member who said that the Posts were working at a loss; it may not be Shri Harish Chandra Mathur; I am sorry if I had said that it was Shri Harish Chandra Mathur who said that.

You will see how the autonomy of the new P. & T. Board will work from the fact that up to Rs. 50 lakhs, they are allowed to sanction works etc. under the new rules, of course, subject to the proviso.....

**Shri A. C. Guha:** How much can the Director-General, Posts and Telegraphs, spend now?

**Dr. P. Subbarayan:** The Director-General cannot spend at all beyond Rs. 5 lakhs; up to Rs. 5 lakhs. he can spend; he has to go up to Government for amounts beyond that. Now, the board is vested with the power of spending upto Rs. 50 lakhs, with the proviso, of course, that if the Financial Commissioner differs that this expenditure is not justified, then it will be put up through the secretary, because it will become a policy matter; it will be out up through the Secretary to the Ministry of Communications to the Minister of Communications whose decision should be final, it is said, but if the Financial Commissioner thinks it ought to go up to the Minister of Finance for his concurrence, it will be done. That is how it will work.

So, to a certain extent, autonomy is being placed in the hands of the new board.

**Shri Harish Chandra Mathur:** I may mention that this is merely a delegation of power. I had anticipated this argument. I said that this kind of

delegation of power has been made even to departmental heads to go right up to the budget limit. Where is the autonomy of the board? This is sheer delegation of power. I said that in Rajasthan the departmental heads who did not have half the power have been delegated all the powers. But where is the autonomy? What are we doing about it?

**Dr. P. Subbarayan:** No doubt, my hon. friend may think that it is sheer delegation of power, but when so much financial power is placed in the hands of the board, it is a real delegation of power and not an imaginary delegation of power as my hon. friend seems to take for granted.

16.45 hrs.

[SHRI C. R. PATTABHI RAMAN in the Chair]

**Shri Hem Barua:** If the Member, Finance, disagree with the collective wisdom of the Board, the autonomy of the Board evaporates.

**Dr. P. Subbarayan:** It does in that sense, because the Member, Finance, is supposed to be the eyes and ears of the Finance Ministry in order to check wasteful expenditure; otherwise, there need not be a Finance Ministry at all. Everybody can function by himself. That is the reason why this control is given to the Finance Ministry. It does not exercise it unreasonably at all. As the hon. Member would realise, if it were unreasonable, then the whole gamut of Government could not function. I think the Finance Ministry has really been the watch-dog; at the same time, the people there are reasonable beings and they want the Government to function in a proper manner and they do not want to interfere when interference is not necessary.

**Shri Hem Barua:** Hoping too much.

**Dr. P. Subbarayan:** What does he mean by 'too much'? I am only explaining the working of Government;



[Dr. P. Subbarayan]

if my hon. friend were here in my place, perhaps he would not think that it is too much.

As I said, the Director-General of Posts and Telegraphs would operate directly to the Minister in some cases; he would not come through the Secretary, and the Minister's order would be final. I can assure hon. Members that if the Minister feels that the decision of the P. & T. Board is correct, he is not going to interfere in the everyday work of the Board. If he did that, I am sure the position of any Minister would become impossible. But at the same time, hon. Members should realise that I am the only person responsible to Parliament as far as the working of this department is concerned. So unless I am in touch with what is happening day to day in the Board, I will not be able to tell hon. Members what is really happening.

**Shri Harish Chandra Mathur:** We do not want to cut him out; we want to cut out the Secretary. We want him to be in touch with the Board.

**Dr. P. Subbarayan:** As I said, in some matters, there would be direct contact between the DG and the Minister concerned. But I do feel that in policy matters, as long as the Secretary exists, he should come through the Secretary, Communications, to the Minister concerned. It does not mean that the Secretary, Communications, is going to interfere with the day to day administration of the Board. The Secretary himself knows his job and will not do anything of the kind.

**Mr. Chairman:** Is the Director-General also of the status of a Secretary to the Ministry?

**Dr. P. Subbarayan:** He has not the status of a Secretary at present.

**Shri A. C. Guha:** He has the status of a Joint Secretary.

**Dr. P. Subbarayan:** Yes. My hon. friend is partly right. He has the status of an Additional Secretary. The Secretary, Communications, is still the Secretary of the department concerned.

**Shri Harish Chandra Mathur:** That is the difficulty.

**Shri Hem Barua:** I want a clarification. Has the Board the power to evolve policies?

**Mr. Chairman:** That is what I asked him—how he could go straight to the Minister.

**Dr. P. Subbarayan:** The Board can evolve policies subject to their being approved by the Minister. Therefore, it is only the Minister who comes between the Board and its policies and not anybody else. However, the method by which the DG can approach the Minister is different in one case as against the other. That is the only difference.

**Shri Hem Barua:** After the Board evolves policies, are these to be referred to the Minister for approval?

**Dr. P. Subbarayan:** Certainly. Otherwise, where is my responsibility to the hon. Member?

**Shri Hem Barua:** They want it to be a rubber-stamp affair.

**Dr. P. Subbarayan:** I am grateful to Shri Braj Raj Singh because when I asked him to speak in a language I understand, he obliged me. I am also grateful to my hon. friend, Shri Bhakt Darshan, who was kind enough to summarise what he had said at the end of every point he made in a language I could understand. I could understand their wanting to talk in their own language. I would like to ask where they themselves would stand if I prefer to talk in Tamil, because I would like to use my own language, if possible. But I am

not going to do that because English still remains the official language of the Union and will remain so till 1965. Therefore, I am not in any danger in that matter.

**Shri Hem Barua:** There is no question of danger. (*Interruption*).

**Dr. P. Subbarayan:** My friend Shri Mathur reminds me that the Prime Minister has said that it will continue to be a subsidiary language for a long long time to come. I am very glad indeed because that should be the position; and I am glad the Prime Minister has assented to that proposition. But still I understand hon. Members wanting to talk in their own language.

**Shri Braj Raj Singh:** Not own language; that is not the position. We would like every national of India to talk in his own language and there was some agency by which it could be translated to others.

**Dr. P. Subbarayan:** I quite understand the position of Shri Braj Raj Singh with which I do not agree. Otherwise, I would not have written that dissenting note to the Report of the Language Commission.

**Shri Hem Barua:** Language has nothing to do with the Board.

**Dr. P. Subbarayan:** I am glad for the discussion that has taken place and for the question hon. Members have asked about the formation of this Board. I think it is only after the Board works for 5 or 6 months that we will know the effect of what is happening.

There are complaints about telephone operators not acting promptly. I myself have had that personal experience sometimes. (*Interruption*).

**Mr. Chairman:** I think that was before he became the Minister.

**Dr. P. Subbarayan:** Even after I became Minister because I do not want to impose myself as a Minister.

I only give the number. Then I know what happens. Of course, if I said I was the Minister I would have, perhaps, met with better treatment.

I have impressed upon the officers concerned to quicken up the procedures. I can assure you that the officers concerned are also trying their best to see that better services are rendered especially when we are making a profit on the telephones. I should think as a commercial concern we ought to keep those who use the telephones contented so that the revenue may increase from day to day. Therefore a little courtesy is called for on the part of the telephone operators and I am sure they will give it. The human element often falls. Sometimes perhaps when you are woken up at 2 o'clock in the morning one is not pleasant. One has got to do it because it is his duty; but he feels rather annoyed when he is woken up at such an early hour in the morning. Therefore, if he is a bit impatient we should also forgive that impatience and understand the limitations under which he works.

I hope, as I have said, with the functioning of the Board we shall see what happens. If there are any corrections to be made hon. Members like Shri Mathur are not going to keep quiet. They will come again with a resolution like this; and we will certainly try and correct the defect. I do hope that the Board will function in such a manner as to satisfy the public at large.

One word and that is about the representative of the worker on the Board. I do not think the time has come for a representative of the worker to be on the Board as yet. We shall see how it works. What help can the worker give to the Board because it is a technical matter which wants a certain amount of faculty which I think hon. Members who represent the workers themselves will admit the worker does not possess today. Therefore there is no question of the workers' representative.

**An Hon. Member:** If the Joint Secretary possesses it....

**Dr. P. Subbarayan:** I thank my friend Shri Sharma for the defence he made of the new P. & T. Board.

**Shri Bhakt Darshan:** The hon. Minister has not elucidated the point as to how this Board will be instrumental in accelerating the construction programme of the department.

**Dr. P. Subbarayan:** As I have said that is a matter which has got to be discussed and conclusions arrived at. I did not want to touch that subject because it is a matter which concerns the Works, Housing and Supply Ministry. If my hon. friend Shri Bhakt Darshan had given a warning about this matter I would have asked my colleague, the Works, Housing and Supply Minister, to be present. Therefore, I would not like to deal with it at the present time.

**Shri Harish Chandra Mathur:** The hon. Minister found only a lonely exception in this House in Shri D. C. Sharma to support him and to deserve his thanks.

**Dr. P. Subbarayan:** I do not want to make any exception. Although my friend Shri Guha supported me and also my friend Shri Mathur, I mentioned Shri Sharma specially because he welcomed the formation of the Board wholeheartedly. That is the only reason.

**Shri Harish Chandra Mathur:** If my friend takes Shri Guha's speech as a support, I think I will have very little to add. The most important point which I raised at the outset was about the superfluity of the Secretariat which was being maintained. My friend Shri Guha at least supported me in this very important respect which I placed before the House. The present set-up, I stated with all the emphasis at my command, will not be conducive to the effective working of the P. & T. Board which is in the offing. In spite of all that

has been said that this discussion is a little premature, I venture to submit that we had in this statement itself a broad outline of the proposed Board and my intention in raising this discussion was to enable the Minister to hear the views of the House about the broad features which he has stated, and to see whether he was proceeding on the correct lines. I thought that he would benefit from the views that were expressed in this House and revise his decision which, as I expressed at the outset, is not going to give results as we expect from this Board. I submit again that the continuance of the Secretariat would be the greatest road-block, a block on the road to progress. My friend has not been able to advance one single argument why he wanted to retain the Secretariat. It was only a sort of a fear complex. We should have a little more courage and insight. While talking of dynamism, he was terribly afraid as to what was going to happen. The Chairman of the P. & T. Board is neither here nor there. He continues to be the Director General. What is the Director General? He is a departmental head and he continues to be a departmental head. He continues to be the Chairman also. It is neither a horse nor an ass and I do not know what this Board is going to produce.... (Interruptions).

**Shri Hem Barua:** It will produce a mule.

**Shri Harish Chandra Mathur:** He should give second thought to this matter. Let him remove this obsession from his mind and these fetters from the working of this Board.

**Shri Bhakt Darshan:** Is this expression 'horse or an ass' parliamentary?

**Mr. Chairman:** I do not know if he used the word 'ass'. I heard him saying 'horse' and stop.

**Dr. P. Subbarayan:** I would like to remind Shri Mathur of the English

expression: 'fish, flesh nor good red herring'.

**Shri Harish Chandra Mathur:** With-out advancing any argument about the separation of the P. & T., he said that the funds or profits of one should not be utilised for the other. My argument was on entirely different grounds. It is just one of the smallest arguments. Why should not they be separated? He has not even touched it. I see there is great force in my argument. I value very much the views of Shri Bhakt Darshan who takes a lot of interest in the working of this department, and whom I credit with certain knowledge. He mentioned that it is one organic whole. May I remind my hon. friend that it is not at all an organic whole? It appears to us as an organic whole because they have been functioning together for some time under different conditions. The conditions are completely changed. I wish my hon. friend to understand how they are functioning all the world over. I think, except, possibly, the United Kingdom, they are absolutely separate. They ought to be separate, particularly if you want to make technological advance, if you want to give a sort of feeling to the engineer that he is being trusted, that he can have the joy of going ahead. I think that is very necessary. No argument has been advanced, as a matter of fact, and my point has not been met in the least.

Again, when I spoke about the secretariat, about this inherent defect at that time, in the heat of the moment, I just mentioned my own personal experience. I wish you to remember and recollect what happened in the L.I.C. affair. The Secretary had no position so far as the autonomous L.I.C. Board was concerned. But remember, Sir, what tremendous influence the Secretary had over the functioning of the Board, what tremendous influence the Secretary had over the Chairman and Managing Director. Now, here is a Secretary

who is directly dealing with the Board; everything goes through him. Do you think that this Board can have freedom in any sense of the term? Even where the Secretary had nothing to do with the Board, where the Board was autonomous, the Secretary exercised tremendous influence, and the example of the L.I.C. is before us.

Sir, we will be saving a considerable lot in economy. Apart from that economy, I said, this Board will be much more effective and important for the purpose. If you read the points which I had raised, what I wanted to discuss on the floor of the House, I had clearly mentioned how we could make this Board more effective. It is, as my hon. friend read it, I could say, as clear as anything to anybody who knows a little about the administration, that this Board will be crippled. I wish my hon. friend gives second thought to this matter.

He was absolutely new when he took up. He had no time to consider the whole matter and this whole thing was hustled through. I do not say that he was taken unawares; absolutely, he did not give thought or consideration. This matter must have gone to the Cabinet, as he himself mentioned. But I wanted to raise this point, particularly, before the Board was constituted, so that my hon. friend may give a second thought to the matter, take the matter to the Cabinet and rectify it in time.

My hon. friend further underlined this idea when he said that in the United Kingdom the Postmaster-General was a man of the Cabinet rank. Look here, what great importance is attached to it. All that I want is—the Postmaster-General may not be a man of the Cabinet rank—that he should be under direct communication with the Minister and nobody should stand in between him and the Minister.

**Dr. P. Subbarayan:** If I may interrupt the hon. Member for a minute,

## Board

[Dr. P. Subbarayan]

the Postmaster-General is not the Director-General of Posts and Telegraphs; he is a politician, a member of the Cabinet who deals with posts and telegraphs.

Shri Harish Chandra Mathur: That is the position of my hon. friend, the Minister. As a matter of fact, Sir, at this stage my hon. friend was feeling a little embarrassed. He has not been able to reply to any of the points raised. He has not been able to say what are the powers which are going to be conferred by the Home Ministry, what is his arrangement with the Finance Ministry, what are his arrangements with the other Ministry and so on. He has also not been able to say anything about the construction programme about which so much stress has been made by me and also others. He should have come prepared. He is not in a position to say

anything. Therefore, there is no use in my going into this.

Again, while concluding, I just want to emphasise the fundamental issues regarding the constitution of this Board and I hope my hon. friend will take good note of them.

Mr. Chairman: The question is:

"That this House takes note of the statement regarding the setting up of P. & T. Board made by the Minister of Transport and Communications in the House on the 11th September, 1959."

*The motion was adapted.*

*The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Friday, December 4, 1959/Agrahayana 13, 1881 (Saka).*

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