

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

DEBATES

SATURDAY, 10th MARCH, 1934

Vol. II—No. 15

OFFICIAL REPORT



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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Saturday, 10th March, 1934.

The Assembly met in the Assembly Chamber of the Council House at Eleven of the Clock, Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty) in the Chair.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

SURCHARGE ON INDIAN TEA IN NEW ZEALAND.

424. ***Mr. E. Studd:** (a) Are Government aware that there is in New Zealand a surtax of .67d. per pound on Indian tea entering the country, whereas there is no such surcharge in regard to Ceylon tea?

(b) Do Government propose to take early steps to make a representation to the New Zealand Government with a view to the abolition of this surcharge so that Indian tea may compete with Ceylon tea on equal terms in the New Zealand market?

The Honourable Sir Joseph Bhoré: (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The matter is receiving consideration in connection with the question of a trade agreement with New Zealand.

Mr. E. Studd: Are Government aware that there is a strong feeling in the tea circles in New Zealand that this matter is being held up by India and not by New Zealand?

The Honourable Sir Joseph Bhoré: I am not aware of what is in the mind of tea circles in New Zealand.

Mr. S. C. Mitra: Is not New Zealand one of the Empire countries which enjoys some preference under the Ottawa Pact?

The Honourable Sir Joseph Bhoré: New Zealand gets perhaps a slight preference.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): New Zealand gets no preference.

The Honourable Sir Joseph Bhoré: I think she gets no preference.

ELECTION OF SIR HUGH HANNAY TO SERVE ON THE COMMITTEE OF THE BENGAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, CALCUTTA.

425. ***Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh:** (a) Has the attention of Government been drawn to a report published in the *Statesman*, dated the 24th February, 1934, Calcutta town edition, in which it is stated that Sir Hugh Hannay has, among others, been elected to serve on the Committee of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, Calcutta, for 1934-35?

(b) Is not this gentleman Agent of the East Indian Railway and is it open to a Government official to serve as a member of a body like the Bengal Chamber of Commerce?

(c) Is it a fact that officials not only of the East Indian Railway, but also of the Eastern Bengal Railway and the Bengal Nagpur Railway administrations, and the Calcutta Port Trusts are members of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, and that no Government official is a member of the Indian Chamber of Commerce, and Bengal National Chamber of Commerce, Calcutta?

Mr. P. R. Rau: (a) and (b). Yes.

(c) I would invite my Honourable friend's attention to the reply given by Sir Alan Parsons to question No. 421 by Mr. Vidya Sagar Pandya on the 6th February 1929. In that reply it was stated that Government considered it desirable, both in the interests of Railways and trade generally that Agents of railways should be members of associations representing important interests in the commercial life of the country. The Agents of the three railways in Calcutta are members both of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce and of the Indian Chamber of Commerce by invitation. Similar invitations from other representative associations of importance will always receive the cordial consideration of the Railway Board.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: May I ask whether these gentlemen vote in their meetings?

Mr. P. R. Rau: I suppose so.

Mr. M. Maswood Ahmad: Is it open to a Government official to serve as a member on a body like this?

Mr. P. R. Rau: Obviously, Sir.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: Is it not a fact that the Committee of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce occasionally criticises the Government policy? If so, what position does an official of Government occupy on such occasions?

Mr. P. R. Rau: In that case I presume that a member, who is debarred because of his official position from criticising the actions of Government, will not take part in the discussion.

Mr. K. C. Neogy: Will the Honourable Member satisfy himself that that rule is followed invariably?

Mr. P. R. Rau: Has my Honourable friend any reason to believe that it is not followed?

Mr. K. C. Neogy: I have none, but I want my Honourable friend to satisfy himself that it is followed.

Mr. P. R. Rau: In the absence of anything to the contrary, I presume that it is followed.

Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh: Is it open to a Government official to become a member of an organisation which indulges in criticism of the Government?

Mr. P. R. Rau: I do not think that that Association is intended primarily to indulge in criticism of Government.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: May I ask, Sir, whether the Government Servants' Conduct Rules apply to these Agents?

Mr. P. R. Rau: They certainly apply to the Agents of State-managed Railways.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: In that case, can they really join an organisation which takes part in politics?

Mr. P. R. Rau: No, Sir. They are interested more in the commercial part of the work of the Chamber.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: I am not suggesting in what they are interested, but the Chambers of Commerce do not boycott politics. In fact, they take part in politics. I want to know whether Government servants can join such bodies?

Mr. P. R. Rau: I believe this question was discussed at some length in 1929 and it was more or less the opinion of this House also that it was desirable that the Agents of Railways should be members of Associations which are generally and primarily concerned with the commercial life of the country.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: May I ask, Sir, whether the Government propose to consult this House again on this question?

The Honourable Sir Joseph Bhoré: I do not think there is any necessity to do that.

Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh: Will Government kindly state how an expression of opinion of this House was sought approving the participation of a Government official in an Association which indulges in political criticism? Will the Honourable Member kindly read out the reference to which he has alluded?

Mr. P. R. Rau: I think perhaps I went a little too far when I said that it was the opinion of this House. What I meant to say was that it was in response to what was considered the opinion of some parts of the House that Government took the action.

Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh: Will the Honourable Member kindly refer even to that limited application of his statement?

Mr. P. R. Rau: I have already referred him to the reply given by Sir Alan Parsons to question No. 421 by Mr Vidya Sagar Pandya. That question referred to a question by Mr. Neogy on the 12th September, 1928. I would ask my Honourable friend to study those questions again.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: May I ask, Sir, whether Government pay some membership subscription to these Chambers of Commerce?

Mr. P. R. Rau: I should like to have notice of that question.

Mr. S. C. Mitra: Will Government consider the question whether it is necessary for a Government official to become a member of an Association like the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, which is not merely a commercial body, but is interested more in political matters? Of course, in special matters Government Members may be invited, as the Honourable the Commerce Member and other Members are invited, to some of the Conferences.

The Honourable Sir Joseph Bhore: Sir, I shall certainly go into this matter. I did not know that it was likely to arouse such interest, and I must confess that I have not applied my mind to it. But I shall certainly look into the matter.

†426*—430*.

INSTALLATION OF WATER METERS IN GOVERNMENT QUARTERS IN
NEW DELHI.

431. *Mr. D. K. Lahiri Chaudhury: (a) Is it a fact that the sanction of the Standing Finance Committee was obtained on the 3rd December, 1932, for a non-recurrent expenditure of Rs. 95,500 for the provision of water meters to be installed in the orthodox clerks' quarters in New Delhi and that they were purchased by Government through the Indian Store Department?

(b) Is it a fact that the tenants of those quarters are paying an extra rent for the water consumed at six annas per one thousand gallons over and above the ordinary water tax of Rs. 1-8-0 per month since the meters have been installed, excluding the water meter rent of rupee one?

(c) Is it a fact that it is laid down in the Supplementary Rules 329 and 335 that both electric and water meters are fixtures for which no rent is chargeable?

(d) Will Government be pleased to state why rent for water meter is charged?

(e) What has the municipality got to do with the meter business in respect of Government buildings in view of the rules referred to in part (c)? Do Government propose to ask the Municipality to discontinue charging the Government tenants of rent for water meters?

(f) What improvement in income, excluding the meter rent, has been made by installing water meters? What was the income during the year preceding the installation of meters and during a year after the installation?

Mr. G. S. Bajpai: (a) and (b). Yes.

(c) No.

(d) and (e). I would refer the Honourable Member to the reply given to Mr. Maswood Ahmad's starred question No. 1313 on the 7th December, 1933, and to connected supplementary questions.

(f) The installation of water meters has not increased the income of the Municipality. The rent charged for meters only covers depreciation, maintenance and interest charges, and was never intended to be a source of profit.

†These questions were withdrawn by the questioner.

BRITISH INDIAN DELEGATES OR SUBSTITUTE DELEGATES TO THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS.

432. *Sardar Sant Singh (on behalf of Sirdar Harbans Singh Brar):
(a) Will Government be pleased to state the number of British Indians sent as delegates or substitute delegates to the League of Nations or other organisations connected with the League since its inception, and to state how many of them were Hindus, Muslims, Europeans, Parsis, Christians and Sikhs?

(b) Is it a fact that no Sikh has ever been sent? If so, why?

(c) Have Government been unable to find an able and qualified Sikh to be included among the delegation?

(d) Do Government propose to include one Sikh in this year's delegation?

The Honourable Sir Brojendra Mitter: (a), (b) and (c). The information is being collected and will be laid on the table.

(d) As the Honourable Member is aware, the selection of the Indian Delegation rests with the Secretary of State in consultation with the Government of India and Government are not at present in a position to make any statement on the composition of the next Indian Delegation to the Assembly of the League of Nations.

INDIANS APPOINTED AS TRADE COMMISSIONERS OR DEPUTY TRADE COMMISSIONERS.

433. *Sardar Sant Singh (on behalf of Sirdar Harbans Singh Brar):
(a) Will Government be pleased to state the total number of Indians who have been appointed as Trade Commissioners or Deputy Trade Commissioners? How many of them were officials and how many non-officials?

(b) Were any appointments made during the years 1932 and 1933?

(c) Do Government propose to make any appointments this year? If so, how many?

The Honourable Sir Joseph Bhore: (a) The number of Indians appointed as Indian Trade Commissioner or Deputy Trade Commissioner is two, both of whom are officials.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Yes, to the post of Deputy Indian Trade Commissioner, London, when vacated by the present incumbent.

Mr. K. P. Thampan: May I know if there are any Sikhs among them?

The Honourable Sir Joseph Bhore: Yes, Sir. The present Deputy Indian Trade Commissioner in London is a Sikh gentleman.

ARRIVAL OF DOCTORS FROM GERMANY TO SET UP PRACTICE IN INDIA.

434. *Mr. Nabakumar Sing Dudhoria: Will Government be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that during the last few weeks quite a number of doctors from Germany have landed in Bombay with a view to set up practice in this country; if so, the approximate number that has so far arrived;

- (b) whether those doctors are mostly German Jews;
- (c) the reason or reasons which they have gathered so far for which those doctors have left their own country and have turned their attention towards this country with a view to establish themselves in practice here;
- (d) whether it is a fact that doctors with British qualifications are prevented by reason of long established conventions from advertising themselves;
- (e) whether it is also a fact that in Germany the medical practitioners do not labour under such restrictions;
- (f) whether British and Indian medical men are allowed to practise in Germany without restriction;
- (g) what steps they propose to take forthwith in order to check the competition to which our local medical men would be exposed through the unrestricted activities of the foreign arrivals; and
- (h) whether in view of the impending danger to our local medical profession they propose to call a meeting of the Indian Medical Council in Delhi in order to counteract the evil at the very outset?

Mr. G. S. Bajpai: (a) to (g). Certain information has been called for and answers will be given on its receipt.

(h) No. The matter does not primarily concern the Medical Council of India.

Mr. S. C. Mitra: Are the Government of India also aware that there is a substantial volume of public opinion in favour of inviting or welcoming distinguished scientists, or medical men to India from other countries of the world?

Mr. G. S. Bajpai: I am very glad to hear that.

EARTHQUAKES IN INDIA AND ESTABLISHMENT OF SEISMOLOGICAL STATIONS.

435 ***Mr. Nabakumar Sing Dudhoria:** Will Government be pleased to state:

- (a) whether they have kept a record of the earthquakes of small or great intensity that have occurred in India during the last 63 years;
- (b) if so, the names of places where they occurred and their dates;
- (c) whether there is any whole-time Seismologist attached to either their Geological Survey Department or their Meteorological Department;
- (d) whether there are Seismological stations in India;
- (e) if so, how many and in what places;
- (f) whether it is a fact that a smaller country like Germany has got more than half a dozen Seismological stations;
- (g) whether it is also a fact that Japan has not only got Seismological stations scattered all over the country but has also got Seismological institutes for the regular study and investigation of earthquake affections;

- (h) whether in view of the latest earthquake havoc they propose forthwith to consider the establishment of a well-equipped Seismological station with a whole-time officer somewhere near the epicentre of the last earthquake;
- (i) whether they will also set up such a Seismological station in the North-East of Assam close to the mountains?
- (j) whether they propose forthwith to undertake survey and investigations of the different likely parts of the country through the help of the Etvo's Torison Balance in order to find out what really lies below the alluvial soil in those regions;
- (k) whether there is already an Etvo's Torison Balance in the Punjab Research Laboratory at Lahore;
- (l) whether some men have already been trained to work that Balance; and
- (m) if so, whether some of those men are proposed to be employed to undertake the investigation of some spots with the help of that Balance?

The Honourable Sir Frank Noyce: Information is being collected and will be placed on the table of the House in due course.

UNSTARRED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

RETIREMENTS IN CERTAIN CADRES OF THE POSTS AND TELEGRAPHS DEPARTMENT.

161. **Mr. S. C. Mitra:** Will Government be pleased to state:

- (a) the total number of voluntary retirements; and
- (b) the total number of compulsory retirements of officials in the
 - (i) Post Office and Railway Mail Service traffic;
 - (ii) Offices of the Postmasters-General; and
 - (iii) Telegraph Department traffic;

during the period between April, 1932, and February, 1934?

Sir Thomas Ryan: Information has been called for and will be laid on the table in due course.

BRIDGE OVER THE RIVER NARBADA NEAR BROACH.

162. **Nawab Naharsingji Ishwarsingji:** Are Government aware that a new bridge over the river Narbada near Broach is under construction? If so, will Government be pleased to state when it is to be completed?

The Honourable Sir Frank Noyce: The Honourable Member presumably refers to the bridge being constructed by the Bombay Baroda and Central India Railway Company. It is expected that it will be completed in 1935-36.

AMOUNT PAID TO GOVERNMENT BY THE RAILWAY DEPARTMENT AS
CUSTOMS DUTY.

163. **Dr. Ziauddin Ahmad:** (a) Will Government be pleased to state the amount which the Railway Department paid to Government as customs duty in the year 1932-33?

(b) What amount has been provided for in the budget estimate for 1984-85?

(c) Under what demand was the sanction of the Legislative Assembly obtained?

Mr. P. R. Rau: (a) The amount of Customs duty on imported Railway Stores paid by the Railway Department in 1932-33 is about Rs. 13 lakhs.

(b) and (c). Customs duty is initially debited along with other items to Stores suspense, which is a sub-head under demand No. 12—Open Line Works. It is not estimated separately.

IMPORT DUTY ON EXPOSED CINEMATOGRAPH FILMS.

164. **Rao Bahadur M. G. Rajah:** Will Government please state:

- (a) what amount of money they have returned to the importers of exposed films in the shape of rebate on the drawback on the exposed films since 1922 up to date;
- (b) what amount of net revenue they have retained after deducting the rebate on the exposed cinema films since 1922 up to date;
- (c) what amount of money they have received in the shape of gross import duty on the exposed cinema films since 1922 up to date;
- (d) what amount of revenue they have received in the shape of import duty on raw cinema films since 1922 up to date;
- (e) what footage of raw films have been imported into the country from the United Kingdom and also from other foreign countries since the passing of the Ottawa Bill by the Central Legislature up to the end of 1933;
- (f) what amount of revenue they have received after the operation of the Ottawa Bill as import duty on the raw films imported from the United Kingdom and other foreign countries up to the end of 1933;
- (g) how they propose to distinguish between the Feature and the Topical Films with respect to the footage in order to calculate the import duty according to the proposed alteration of the valuation of the imported exposed films; and
- (h) what amount of revenue they have received in the shape of income tax from the importing firms of the foreign exposed films as well as from the Indian Film Producing Companies?

The Honourable Sir George Schuster: (a) to (d) A statement containing so much of the desired information as is available is laid on the table.

(e) and (f). A statement is laid on the table.

(g) The distinction between "Feature" and other films follows the practice of the trade.

(h) No information is available.

(a) to (d). Statement showing gross revenue, draw-back and net revenue on exposed cinema films and gross revenue on films, not exposed during the years 1931-32 and 1932-33 and ten months April to January of 1933-34.

| | 1931-32. | 1932-33. | 1933-34 (up to January). |
|--|----------|----------|--------------------------------|
| | Rs. | Rs. | Rs. |
| Gross Revenue on cinema films exposed | 5,29,165 | 6,76,192 | 7,66,143 |
| Amount of drawback paid | 94,891 | 1,13,767 | 54,647 |
| Net revenue | 4,34,274 | 5,62,425 | 7,11,496 |
| Gross revenue on cinema films not exposed. | 2,34,009 | 2,72,178 | 2,96,622 |

(e) and (f). Statement showing imports of raw films into British India during the Calendar year 1933.

| | Quantity. | Estimated duty. |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| | Length in feet. | Rs. |
| From United Kingdom | 6,762,980 | 38,330 |
| „ Germany | 15,767,437 | 1,81,828 |
| „ Belgium | 5,019,169 | 44,301 |
| „ United States of America | 4,925,348 | 57,690 |
| „ Other foreign countries | 589,872 | 3,496 |
| | 33,064,806 | 3,25,645 |

ASSISTANT STATION MASTERS SENT TO THE RAILWAY SCHOOL OF TRANSPORTATION, CHANDAUSI, FOR TRAINING, FROM THE DINAPUR DIVISION OF THE EAST INDIAN RAILWAY.

165. Mr. M. Maswood Ahmad: (a) Will Government please state the number of the Assistant Station Masters who have been sent to the Railway School of Transportation, Chandausi, for training, from the Dinapur Division of the East Indian Railway and how many of them are (i)

Bengalis, domiciled in Bihar and Orissa, (ii) Bengalis, not domiciled in Bihar and Orissa, and (iii) purely the residents of Bihar and Orissa?

(b) Do Government propose to see that the legitimate claims of Biharis are not overlooked when the Assistant Station Masters are sent for training to that School?

(c) Are they prepared to consider the desirability of fixing a percentage for Biharis? If not, why not?

Mr. P. R. Rau: (a) Government have no information.

(b) and (c). The question of selecting people for training is one within the competence of the railway administration. Government are not prepared to fix a percentage for inhabitants of any particular province.

**MEMORIAL FROM THE MEMBERS OF THE DELHI *EX*-ROYAL FAMILY
RESIDING IN LUCKNOW.**

166. **Mr. M. Maswood Ahmad:** (a) Is it a fact that the members of the Delhi *ex*-Royal family, residing in Lucknow, submitted a memorial to His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor General of India on the 25th November, 1933?

(b) Will Government please state whether it is a fact that they have not granted any stipend to these members of the Delhi *ex*-Royal family out of the interest of Rs. 38,000 invested for such purpose by the Viziers of Oudh in the shape of cash and landed property? If so, why?

(c) If the reply to part (a) above be in the affirmative, will Government please state what action has been taken on the memorial? If no action has yet been taken, when is it likely to be taken?

(d) Do Government propose to lay a copy of the memorial referred to in part (a) above on the table of the House? If not, why not?

Mr. H. A. F. Metcalfe: With your permission, Sir, I will answer questions Nos. 166—169 together. The information is being collected and will be laid on the table in due course.

**FACILITIES FOR THE EDUCATION OF THE CHILDREN OF THE MEMBERS OF
THE DELHI *EX*-ROYAL FAMILY RESIDING IN LUCKNOW.**

†167. **Mr. M. Maswood Ahmad:** Will Government be pleased to state:

- (i) whether they have provided any facilities for the education of the children of the members of the Delhi *ex*-Royal family, residing in Lucknow; if so, what;
- (ii) whether any scholarships are granted to these children for their education; if not, why not?

**REPRESENTATION IN THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY AND THE UNITED
PROVINCES LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL FOR THE MEMBERS OF THE DELHI
EX-ROYAL FAMILY RESIDING IN LUCKNOW.**

†168. **Mr. M. Maswood Ahmad:** (a) Will Government please state whether they have ever considered the question of giving representation in the Legislative Assembly and the United Provinces Legislative Council

†For answer to this question, see answer to question No. 166.

to the members of the Delhi *ex-Royal* family, residing in Lucknow? If so, with what result?

(b) If the answer to part (a) above be in the negative, do they now propose to consider this question with a view to bringing it to the notice of the Secretary of State for India and the Joint Select Committee of the Parliament? If not, why not?

EMPLOYMENT IN GOVERNMENT SERVICE OF THE MEMBERS OF THE
DELHI *EX-ROYAL* FAMILY RESIDING IN LUCKNOW.

†169. **Mr. M. Maswood Ahmad:** Will Government please state whether any facilities exist for the employment in Government service of the members of the Delhi *ex-Royal* family, residing in Lucknow? If so, what are those facilities?

PROMOTIONS IN THE CLERICAL ESTABLISHMENT OF THE GOVERNMENT OF
INDIA PRESS, NEW DELHI.

170. **Mr. M. Maswood Ahmad:** (a) Are Government aware that the gradation list is not followed in the Government of India Press, New Delhi, in making promotions in the clerical establishment?

(b) Is it a fact that whenever promotions in the clerical establishment are concerned, a so-called seniority list is prepared and are Government aware that this leads to favouritism and partisanship in the matter of promotions?

(c) Will Government please lay on the table of the House a copy of (i) the gradation list of the clerical establishment, (ii) seniority list of lower grade clerks and assistant computers, and (iii) seniority list of upper grade clerks and computers, as they stood on the 1st of April, 1933?

(d) Will Government please state whether the Controller of Printing and Stationery scrutinised the seniority lists sent to him by the Manager with his proposals for promotion and satisfied himself as to the correctness of the relative positions of the names therein, before issuing orders regarding promotions?

(e) If not, do Government propose to direct the Controller of Printing and Stationery to examine the seniority lists sent by the Manager, fix the seniority of the clerks and computers correctly, and give any men who have been overlooked, a trial in the higher grades, before confirming the men who have been promoted and who are now on probation? If not, why not?

The Honourable Sir Frank Noyce: (a), (b) and (c). No.

(d) Yes.

(e) Does not arise.

WITHDRAWAL OF THE RECOGNITION FROM THE GREAT INDIAN PENINSULA
RAILWAY WORKERS' UNION.

171. **Mr. S. G. Jog:** Are Government aware that the Great Indian Peninsula Railway administration have withdrawn the recognition accorded to the Great Indian Peninsula Railway Workers' Union? If so, what are the grounds for such withdrawal?

†For answer to this question, see answer to question No. 166.

Mr. P. R. Rau: Yes. Government understand that the Agent is of opinion that the spirit in which the operations of the Union executive are conceived render it unsuitable for him to accept the Union as representing the staff.

BAD SMELL COMING OUT OF THE SUGAR MILL IN BEGAMABAD IN THE MEERUT DISTRICT.

172. **Mr. S. G. Jog:** (a) Are Government aware that from the Modi Sugar Mill in Begamabad in the Meerut District a very nasty smell is given out, causing great inconvenience to the workers of the mill and even to the passengers travelling by the North Western Railway?

(b) What steps, if any, do Government propose to take to remove this long-felt nuisance?

(c) If Government have no information on the point, do they propose to make inquiry through the District Magistrate or the Factory Inspector?

The Honourable Sir Frank Noyce: (a) Government have no information.

(b) and (c). The Honourable Member is referred to section 9 (a) of the Indian Factories Act, 1911, and the rules made by the Government of the United Provinces which provide for the maintenance of factories in a clean and sanitary condition. The matter is one for which the provincial authorities are primarily responsible and the Government of India do not propose to interfere.

EXAMINATION FOR RECRUITMENT TO THE UPPER DIVISION HELD BY THE DEPUTY ACCOUNTANT GENERAL, POSTS AND TELEGRAPHS, DELHI.

173. **Mr. Jagan Nath Aggarwal:** (a) Is it a fact that a competitive examination for recruitment to the upper division was held by the Deputy Accountant General, Posts and Telegraphs, Delhi, in October, 1928?

(b) Is it a fact that none of the candidates, who were successful as a result of the said examination, have yet been substantively provided for?

(c) Is it a fact that a certain number of lower division clerks, who joined service after the said examination and qualified for upper division through the departmental examination as late as 1932, are going to be confirmed prior to those referred to in part (b)?

(d) Is it not a fact that lower division clerks, who joined service later and qualified for upper division through departmental examination later, will be confirmed earlier than those who passed a competitive examination before them and have longer service in the upper division? If so, what steps do Government propose to take to redress the grievances of the latter?

The Honourable Sir George Schuster: With your permission, Sir, I will deal with questions Nos 173 and 174 together.

Enquiry is being made and complete replies will be laid on the table in due course.

UPPER DIVISION SENIORITY IN THE OFFICE OF THE ACCOUNTANT
GENERAL, POSTS AND TELEGRAPHS.

174. **Mr. Jagan Nath Aggarwal:** (a) Is it a fact that Mr. Jagat Prasad, as Accountant General, Posts and Telegraphs, determined the upper division seniority among direct recruits according to the length of service (both in the upper and the lower divisions)?

(b) Is it a fact that in contravention of the provisions of Article 16 of the Audit Code, Mr. S. A. Vaneshwar, while officiating as Accountant General, Posts and Telegraphs, reversed Mr. Jagat Prasad's decision without referring it to the Auditor General? If so, do Government propose to cancel Mr. Vaneshwar's order and refix the upper division seniority, if necessary, according to the terms of the competitive examination contained in the prospectus, and the provisions of paragraph 90 of the Manual of Standing Orders?

MUSLIMS, EUROPEANS AND OTHER NON-MUSLIMS IN CERTAIN CADRES OF
THE NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY.

175. **Khan Bahadur Haji Wajihuddin:** (a) Will Government be pleased to state the number of Muslims, Europeans and other non-Muslims in the following cadres on the North Western Railway:

- (i) Traffic Inspectors.
- (ii) Station Masters in Grade II, III, IV, V, VI and VII,
- (iii) Assistant Station Masters in Grade II, III, IV and V, and
- (iv) Assistant Controllers?

(b) Will Government be pleased to state the number of vacancies that occurred in the cadres referred to in part (a) above during the years 1931, 1932 and 1933, and also state how many Muslims were recruited in each cadre in those vacancies?

(c) Will Government be pleased to state the number of Muslims at present on the waiting lists for appointment in the cadres referred to above?

(d) Is it a fact that the number of Muslims at present holding some of the above appointments is going shortly to be reduced? If so, why?

Mr. P. R. Rau: (a) The information available will be found in Volume III of Mr. Hassan's report on the representation of Muslims and other minority communities in the subordinate railway services, a copy of which is already in the Library of the House.

(b) to (d). Government have no information. The collection of the information required will involve a considerable amount of labour which Government do not consider likely to be justified by the results.

REDUCTION IN THE SCALES OF SUBORDINATES ON THE NORTH WESTERN
RAILWAY.

176 **Khan Bahadur Haji Wajihuddin:** (a) Is it a fact that the scales of the senior and junior subordinates on the North Western Railway have been reduced?

†For answer to this question, see answer to question No. 173.

(b) Is it a fact that the reduction in these scales was effected when a few Indians were admitted to these services?

Mr. P. R. Rau: I am not aware of what reductions my Honourable friend refers to. Revised scales of pay for new entrants to subordinate grades on the North Western Railway are still under preparation. The scales to be fixed will not be based on racial considerations.

TRAFFIC CONTROL IN KHARI BAOLI AND NAI SARAK IN DELHI.

177. **Bhagat Chandī Mai Gola:** (a) Are Government aware that one way traffic has been introduced in Khari Baoli and Nai Sarak at Delhi?

(b) Are Government aware that much inconvenience is caused to the public by this arrangement, and vehicular traffic is made to travel long distances?

(c) Has this scheme been introduced to avoid accidents?

(d) Will they kindly let this House know the number of accidents that occurred at those two places last year?

(e) Will Government kindly state what steps they propose to take for removing the inconvenience caused to public?

The Honourable Sir Harry Haig: I have made enquiries of the Delhi Administration and will lay a reply on the table in due course.

CLAIMS RECEIVED IN THE PENSION CONTROLLER'S OFFICE UNDER DIFFERENT RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE WAR PENSIONS COMMITTEE.

178. **Mr. S. G. Jog:** Will Government be pleased to lay a statement on the table showing:

(i) the number of claims received in the Pension Controller's Office under different Recommendations of the War Pensions Committee;

(ii) the number of claims sanctioned by the Pension Controller;

(iii) the number of claims rejected by him;

(iv) the number of claims referred to the Government of India, or to the Military Accountant General, and how many references have since been disposed of and in what way;

(v) how many references are still under consideration; and

(vi) how many references are made to the Secretary of State and under what Recommendations?

Mr. G. R. F. Tottenham: I am not able as yet to answer the Honourable Member but will lay a reply on the table in due course.

DISABILITY PENSION TO MILITARY EMPLOYEES INVALIDATED DURING THE GREAT WAR.

179. **Mr. S. G. Jog:** (a) With reference to their answer to unstarred question No 327, of the 14th December, 1933, laid on the table on the 30th January, 1934, upholding the view of the Deputy Controller of

Military Pensions, *vide* part (f) of their answer, will Government be pleased to state whether it is a fact that the Pension Controller, either on his own initiative, or under instructions issued from higher authorities, has been taking the discharge certificate, or such other evidence as exists on their record, to be unreliable for the purposes of discharging the onus accepted by them under the first part of Recommendation No. XII, stated in bracket (If there is any evidence on record to show that a man was discharged on medical grounds or that he was treated in a hospital during the War for a disability from which he is now suffering or from something that can be logically connected with that disability, the onus should lie on Government to show that he should not receive a pension)?

(b) In view of Government's answer to part (d) of the question stating "the fresh boards do not, however, question the findings and recommendations of the previous boards", is it under instructions from the Government of India, or is it on the initiative of the Pension Controller himself that they are taking an "adverse presumption" that the individuals of the category referred to in the question were not suffering from a pensionable disability, either under the "percentage method" of the 1922 rules or under the "degree method" of 1915 rules?

(c) In what way is Recommendation No. XIII—given here within brackets (No adverse presumption should be raised against an applicant owing to the loss or failure to produce records, which, according to the rule, should be permanently retained)—being given effect to by Government, or by the Pension Controller, when the claims or appeals are rejected for want of evidence, *vide* their answer to part (f)?

Mr. G. R. F. Tottenham: Questions Nos. 179, 180 and 181 are being examined and a reply will be laid on the table as soon as possible.

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DISABILITY PENSION TO MILITARY EMPLOYEES INVALIDED DURING THE
GREAT WAR.

†180. **Mr. S. G. Jog:** (a) Will Government be pleased to state whether claims to family pensions, in which the cause of death was certified by medical officers attending on the death in military hospitals as genuinely attributable to "military service" were referred to the Government of India and the Government of India disagreeing with the decision of the medical officer, disallowed family pension to the widows and mothers of the deceased individuals? If so, why?

(b) Do not such claims fall within the competence of the Deputy Controller of Military Pensions under Recommendation No. V read with Recommendations Nos. III and IV of the War Pensions Committee?

(c) What probable time will the decision of the Government of India on references made by the subordinate offices in such cases as mentioned in part (a) above take, in the light of the Recommendation of the War Pensions Committee?

(d) Will Government please state the date on which unstarred question No. 328 of the 14th December, 1933 has been replied to? If the reply is not laid on the table yet, will Government be pleased to state when the same should be expected?

†For answer to this question, see answer to question No. 179.

DISABILITY PENSION TO MILITARY EMPLOYEES INVALIDED DURING THE GREAT WAR.

181. **Mr. S. G. Jog:** (a) Will Government be pleased to state whether a disability pension, in the case of individuals who refused to undergo an operation was inadmissible under the 1915 rules? If so, will they please lay on the table a copy of the particular paragraph bearing on the point?

(b) Is it a fact that deaths, occurring in the course of operations, are, and have been regarded as "not attributable to military service" and consequently inadmissible for family pensions?

(c) Will Government be pleased to state to what extent they are prepared to act up to their orders on Recommendation No. X of the War Pensions Committee in allowing disability element of pension as against the spirit of the Memorandum of Instructions to Army Department letter No. A/49484-1(A.G.14), dated the 25th November, 1929, in which Government are said to have taken the view that they are not responsible to provide pension to the individuals of the category mentioned in part (a) above?

(d) Has the Memorandum mentioned in part (c) been given retrospective effect in the case of claims which arose during the War? If so, what is the authority for giving adverse retrospective effect?

(e) Is it a fact that the Deputy Controller of Military Pensions has held in his letter No. G/6885 the view that a disability, uncorroborated by any documentary evidence as to where it was contracted, cannot be presumed as having been contracted on field or foreign service? Is it in conformity with the Recommendations of the War Pensions Committee, Nos. XII and XIII, in the case of even those individuals whose discharge certificate shows that they were invalided from the field service and discharged by medical boards?

DISABILITY PENSION TO MILITARY EMPLOYEES INVALIDED DURING THE GREAT WAR.

182. **Mr. S. G. Jog:** (a) Will Government be pleased to state if they have recently decided that in the case of individuals of about 29 years of service, invalided from field, and discharged as "unfit", the unfitness being nomenclatured as "old age" by the invaliding board, a disability pension is inadmissible under Recommendation No. V of the War Pensions Committee?

(b) Are they aware that in the United Kingdom "debility" is a pensionable disease, and there are thousands of awards for it?

(c) Have not there been cases in which the same conditions, as in "old age" might appear on account of certain diseases, over-exertion, or on account of one's being exposed to hunger, privation, etc.?

Mr. G. R. F. Tottenham: (a) and (b). There has been no recent decision such as is referred to. "Old age" and "debility" are not recognised as diseases, and these terms may not be used by invaliding boards.

(c) Government are not aware of any such case. In assessing disabilities, however, medical boards invariably take into account the medical aspects of all conditions of service.

†For answer to this question, see answer to question No. 179.

FIXATION OF PAY AND ALLOWANCES IN THE POSTS AND TELEGRAPHS DEPARTMENT.

183. **Rai Bahadur Lala Brij Kishore:** Will Government please state who is responsible for the fixation of pay and allowances, and to see that they have been correctly fixed according to the Fundamental Rules in the Posts and Telegraphs Department?

Sir Thomas Ryan: Questions Nos. 183, 184 and 185 are dealt with together. Presumably these refer to the pay and allowances of individual Government servants.

The Honourable Member is referred to Articles 17 and 18 of the Civil Account Code, Volume I. The various officers of the Indian Posts and Telegraphs Department who are authorised to draw bills either on their own behalf or on that of the staff, are primarily responsible for the correctness of the pay and allowances claimed, with reference to the Fundamental Rules and other orders of competent authorities. The amounts claimed are checked in the audit offices to see that they are admissible and amounts found to be overcharged are disallowed. The duties of Postmasters-General in this respect are those of a countersigning or appellate authority.

FIXATION OF PAY AND ALLOWANCES IN THE POSTS AND TELEGRAPHS DEPARTMENT.

184. **Rai Bahadur Lala Brij Kishore:** Will Government be pleased to state the duties and responsibilities of Postmasters-General, and Audit Officers in respect of fixation of pay and allowances of the employees of the Posts and Telegraphs Department?

ENFORCEMENT OF THE FUNDAMENTAL AND SUPPLEMENTARY RULES, ETC. IN THE POSTS AND TELEGRAPHS DEPARTMENT.

185 **Rai Bahadur Lala Brij Kishore:** Will Government please state who is responsible for the enforcement of the Fundamental and Supplementary Rules and other orders of the Government of India in the Posts and Telegraphs Department?

THE GENERAL BUDGET—LIST OF DEMANDS—*contd.*

SECOND STAGE—*contd.*

DEMAND No. 23—INDIAN POSTS AND TELEGRAPHS DEPARTMENT (INCLUDING WORKING EXPENSES)—*contd.*

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The House will now resume consideration of the Demands for Grants.

Compensatory Allowance for Lower Division Clerks and Sorters.

Mr. S. C. Mitra (Chittagong and Rajshahi Divisions: Non-Muhammadan Rural): Sir, I beg to move:

“That the demand under the head ‘Indian Posts and Telegraphs Department (including Working Expenses)’ be reduced by Rs. 100.”

Compensatory allowance in some shape or other is paid to all classes of Postal and R. M. S. employees including clerks in the selection

†For answer to this question, see answer to question No. 183.

[Mr. S. C. Mitra.]

grade and ordinary time-scale, postmen, head postmen, overseers and menial staff employed in certain costly or unhealthy localities and non-family stations such as Karachi, Alipur-Duars, Assam, Frontier outposts, etc. In some of these localities, the local allowances sanctioned by Local Governments are on a much higher scale than those sanctioned for Postal and R. M. S. employees and I understand that the question of equalising the compensatory allowances for the Postal and R. M. S. staff with the local allowances sanctioned for the Local Government staff is still under consideration of the Director-General who is in correspondence with the Finance Department on the subject. I would request him to expedite the decision of this long-standing question. The point that I raise now, however, is to bring to the notice of the Government the hard lot of the lower division clerks who have been denied any compensatory allowance whatsoever in localities where all the other classes of employees are getting such allowance. The matter being referred to the Director-General by the All-India Postal and R. M. S. Union, the latter was informed as follows:

"Under the existing orders of the Government of India, the grant of compensatory allowance or special pay is permissible to officials on the ordinary clerical time-scales of pay in certain specified localities, but that those orders are not applicable in the case of lower division clerks who are being employed in those localities. The latter will not, therefore, be entitled to draw compensatory allowance or special pay unless specific orders of the Governor General in Council are issued in respect of any particular case or cases."

The Director-General, I understand, is not prepared to move the Government of India in the matter in view of the present financial stringency. The claim of the lower division clerks to compensatory allowance, however, is as strong and legitimate as possible and even the Director-General has not refuted it. I personally believe that if there is any case for a special allowance, it applies much more in the case of lower division clerks who are the poorest paid in the service than others who draw bigger allowances and who can afford to pay to a certain extent from their salary. The Government have decided to introduce 33 per cent. lower division clerks in the Postal and Railway Mail Service, who perform most important and responsible clerical duties,—there is hardly any difference whatsoever between them and the ordinary time-scale clerks in so far as duties and responsibilities and educational attainments are concerned. They even officiate in leave vacancies of the ordinary time-scale clerks. Some of them were originally recruited for the upper division clerical appointments, but have been compelled to accept these lower division appointments on a much lower scale of pay, out of necessity. There are many graduates and undergraduates among them. It has been their misfortune to lose the chance of upper division clerical appointments due to the present financial stringency, but the Government are getting from them more than the money's worth and it will be an act of sheer injustice to deny them the compensatory allowance which is drawn by all other classes of employees employed at the same station. I, therefore, appeal to the Government to take their case into their sympathetic consideration and to amend the existing orders so as to make them applicable to this hard pressed class of officials as soon as possible.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): Cut motion moved:

"That the demand under the head 'Indian Posts and Telegraphs Department (including Working Expenses)' be reduced by Rs. 100."

Sir Thomas Ryan (Government of India: Nominated Official): Sir, I find myself for once in some measure of sympathy with my Honourable friend, Mr. Mitra, because I think it is true that in some instances at least, perhaps in the most expensive stations or where the conditions of service for one reason or another are particularly arduous, there may be a case for doing something for the lower division clerks. But in dealing with all proposals for increase of expenditure in the Posts and Telegraphs Department, I must have regard to the financial position of the Department as a whole, and it is unfortunately necessary for that reason to go slower in some directions than I might otherwise like to do. It is the case, as Mr. Mitra has explained, that I had declined to make any general recommendation to Government on behalf of the lower division clerks mainly for that reason. A subsidiary reason is that you cannot in fact argue merely from the circumstance that certain allowances are given to the upper division clerks and say that a corresponding allowance even on a reduced scale, should be given to the lower division clerks, because the whole question of the necessity for the allowances even in the case of the higher paid clerks is at present under review. Moreover, even if there be a good case for giving some allowance to lower division clerks in certain circumstances, I am afraid this is not the only claim we shall have to consider. There are various things which we should very much like to do for our staff and I am not certain that this is the claim that would require first consideration.

Certain Honourable Members of this House have from time to time drawn attention of the Government by questions and otherwise to the unfortunate position as regards pensions of some of the lowest paid employeés of the Department. The scale of pensions for inferior servants is undoubtedly a very low one and Government have, I think, more than once recognised that the question of improving the pensions scale is one which must receive their consideration when circumstances permit. I am not at all certain that that case and other cases, which I need not now go into, may not deserve consideration before the question of improving the pay of the lower division clerks is taken up. I would mention that the lower division clerks are practically quite a recent introduction in the Posts and Telegraphs Department. It is a new class of employee and many of the present incumbents were promoted from the ranks of postmen and similar ranks and have obtained substantial improvement in their position and in their emoluments by being promoted to the lower division scale. I must also say that I differ a little from Mr. Mitra in describing the duties and the functions of the lower division clerks. He says, they are made to perform the most important and responsible duties. That, of course, is not quite accurate, they are expected to perform the least important and the least responsible clerical duties. Perhaps I might also mention that the question of the actual duties on which these men are employed and the reasonableness of employing men of that type on such duties is one of the matters which will undoubtedly engage the attention of the Postal Enquiry Committee which is shortly to be appointed, and I have no doubt that, in the course of that Committee's investigations, the question of the adequacy of the remuneration, whether it should be pay, or special pay, of these men will be fully gone into.

I think, Sir, I have said enough to show that our mind is not entirely closed on this question, but at the same time we cannot recognise that the time is ripe for admitting any general claim for improvement of their

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emoluments. There are, however, a few, as I have said, exceptional cases at least which do require particular attention and that attention these cases are already receiving in consultation with the Heads of Circles. I hope that in view of the certainty that this matter will be further reviewed, and that, as I say, our mind is not wholly closed in the matter will be of sufficient comfort to the Honourable Member and that he will not think it necessary in the circumstances to press this motion to a division.

Mr. S. O. Mitra: In view of the reply of the Honourable Member, I beg leave of the House to withdraw my motion.

The cut motion was, by leave of the Assembly, withdrawn.

Retrenchment policy adopted in the Posts and Telegraphs Department.

Mr. S. O. Mitra: Sir, I beg to move:

“That the demand under the head ‘Indian Posts and Telegraphs Department (including Working Expenses)’ be reduced by Rs. 100.”

Sir, I am quoting a table compiled on the basis of Budget figures of 1930-31 and 1934-35 which will show the extent to which the retrenchment has already been effected in the Post Office and the R. M. S. :

| | |
|---|-------|
| No. of post offices abolished | 497 |
| No. of R. M. S. Record offices abolished | 21 |
| No. of R. M. S. Sorting and Transit offices abolished | 9 |
| No. of R. M. S. Sections abolished | 33 |
| No. of R. M. S. Sorters retrenched | 468 |
| No. of Postmasters, clerks, etc.. retrenched | 1,898 |
| No. of Overseers and menials retrenched | 2,654 |
| No. of Postmen retrenched | 3,146 |
| No. of Inferior staff retrenched | 1,004 |
| | 9,170 |

I have a grievous complaint to make against the Department in pressing that the post office in my own district town Noakhali, which had enjoyed the status of a head office since my infancy, was not exempted from the effects of the deadly axing operation and has been degraded to the status of a mere sub-office.

Not only are post offices and R. M. S. sections and record offices being abolished, but departmental sub and branch offices are being rapidly converted into extra-departmental branch offices, and, as a result of all these, a large number of clerks and sorters have already been discharged while yet in the prime of their youth and compelled to retire much before attaining the superannuating age of service. The postmen are being rapidly replaced by extra-departmental delivery agents on a small fixed allowance, and, in order to speed up this process, the Postmaster-General, Bengal and Assam Circle, has, it is understood, issued instructions to Divisional Superintendents and First Class Postmasters on the following line:

“As the retrenchment concessions will cease from the 1st April 1934 it is absolutely necessary in the interest of the officials retrenched that they should demit their respective offices before 1st April 1934 so as to enable them to avail themselves of the retrenchment concessions. The Superintendent of Post Offices, R. M. S. and 1st class Postmasters are therefore requested that they should carry out the retrenchment of

personnel in all cadres (excepting the clerical cadre—Selection grade and Upper Division scales) directly on receipt of the appropriate orders from the Establishment Branch of my office regarding the abolition of posts or reduction of posts to a lower status, strictly in accordance with Government orders copies of which are furnished to them”.

And when Cæsar says “Do this” it is done. The effect of this order, will be apparent from the fact reported to me from Burdwan that the Divisional Superintendent has issued peremptory orders compelling ten postmen with services ranging from 15 to 29 years only to demit office from the 1st March, 1934, and it is strongly apprehended that 80 or 90 officials with services ranging between one and ten years will be similarly treated. Don’t think that the same drastic step is being taken every where only in my own Circle, but everywhere in India to throw out junior postmen out of their jobs on the alleged ground of “consistently unsatisfactory record of services”. Well, it is quite easy to give the dog a bad name before hanging it, as the adage goes, and considering that the “demotion” business is going on with lightning speed and no appeal is permitted up to the Director-General in such cases, the fate of these unfortunate postmen is sealed. The ordinance rule, it will appear, has been extended also to the Post Office.

As for the clerical cadre, the instructions issued in the same letter are as follows :

“As regards retrenchment in the clerical cadre (selection grades and upper division time scale) the Superintendent and first class Postmasters should, immediately on receipt of requisite orders from the Establishment Branch of my office regarding the abolition of posts or the reduction of posts to a lower status, report whether there are any vacancies in the upper division time scale for absorption of the surplus official and, in case, there are none, should make definite recommendations as regards retrenchment of personnel in this connection, treating all selection grade posts in the upper division scale as forming one cadre for the purpose of retrenchment”.

It will appear from the above instructions that the fate of the clerks will be hardly better. It must be noted that under the Director-General’s orders, the staff retrenched in one Division cannot be absorbed in vacancies in another, and, under this rule, the retrenched clerks will have no chance of being provided elsewhere.

I shall now bring to the notice of the Government the sad lot of the Dead Letter Office staff. At the time when Mr. G. V. Bewoor, I.C.S.; in collaboration with Mr. T. P. Mukherjee, enquired into the time test for the Dead Letter Office, they were required to deal with unclaimed and undeliverable articles of the letter mail, both with and without address of the senders outside, and the time allowance allowed for the average of both these kinds of articles in the revised time test recommended by him and accepted by Government was 2.5 minutes per article. However, under orders issued by the Director-General articles containing senders’ addresses outside have been taken out from the Dead Letter Offices and are being disposed of by Post Offices, and the Dead Letter Offices have to deal with articles which do not contain senders’ addresses outside. I quote the following passage from the Bewoor Time Test to show that, his considered opinion, the kind of articles now dealt with in the Dead Letter Offices *viz.*, those without senders’ addresses outside are more difficult and take considerably more time in disposal :

“Then there are articles which have to be returned to the senders and have the address of the senders noted outside. These do not take very long. It is articles

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which have to be opened in order to find the address of the sender, the articles which have to be redirected after consulting books of reference and vernacular articles which are badly written and addressed that take really long time".

Some of the articles of the latter description even take as much as 15 minutes according to Mr. Bewoor, and it is, therefore, as plain as daylight that the time allowance of 2.5 minutes allotted by him on the average for the simpler and more complex kind of articles is entirely inadequate for the more complex and difficult work that is now done by the Dead Letter Office staff. The All-India Postal and R. M. S. Union suggested that the time allowance should be increased to 3.5 minutes, while the Postmaster-General, Bengal and Assam Circle, wanted it to be increased to three minutes, but both these suggestions have been turned by the Direction with the result that heavy retrenchment of personnel in the Madras and Calcutta D. L. O.'s involving that of officials with even 25 or less years service has been ordered on the basis of this defective and inadequate time-test and in consequence of the segregation of the D. L. O.'s from the Postmaster-General's offices, of which they were until recently parts and parcel, and the Director-General's orders restricting the absorption of the retrenched staff in vacancies in other units, these unfortunate men cannot be provided in any place under the sun. The drastic and unjustified retrenchment is not only a source of extreme hardship to the D. L. O. staff, but this will also be detrimental to public interests as it will lower the efficiency of the D. L. O.'s in India which, as the following quotations from an expert article published in the *Statesman*, dated the 17th October, 1933, will show, are rendering most valuable service to the public with marvellous ingenuity and skill and honesty:

"A record for deciphering an almost meaningless address."

"In this way thousands of rupees are collected annually at the Dead Letter Office through the medium of which, however, most of the money is returned to the senders whose identity may be ascertained on opening the packets".

There is another point which I want to bring to the notice of the Government. Under the Director-General's orders all vacancies in the gazetted rank have been permanently filled up, but a ban has been imposed on the filling up of the non-gazetted appointments, including selection grades and ordinary clerical time-scales, with the result that the present incumbents in those posts, being only provisionally appointed, cannot avail of the privileges and concessions enjoyed by permanent officials even in case of dire necessity. There is absolutely no justification for this differential treatment, and, in the name of justice and fairplay, I strongly urge that the ban of non-gazetted appointments should be lifted at once and the present incumbents in such vacancies should be confirmed immediately. While the Department is showing an excess of zeal in carrying retrenchment in the subordinate ranks of the Post Office and R. M. S. they are not showing any inclination to curtail the extravagance in the Telegraph Engineering branch which is very much overstaffed with highly paid officers who have hardly been able to give a good account of themselves, as the huge waste of stock materials purchased by the Department involving loss of lakhs of the tax-payer's money clearly indicates. There has also been only a tinkering retrenchment in the higher appointments and very few of the higher posts carrying high salaries, whose number is legion in the Department, have been retrenched. What is

more objectionable, if not reprehensible, is that some of the higher appointments, previously retrenched, according to the recommendations of the Posts and Telegraphs Retrenchment Sub-Committee and under pressure from this House, are being revived, one after another, under different names. To cite an instance, one post of Deputy Director-General was abolished, as recommended by the Retrenchment Sub-Committee, but from last January it has been resurrected under the name of Deputy Director-General, Finance, on a salary of Rs. 1,750 a month. Well, there is already a Financial Adviser who draws a fat salary, and it is ludicrous to create another high post to assist him. His predecessor managed his work without the assistance of a Deputy Director-General, Finance, and he should also be able to do his work quite efficiently without any other highly paid assistant to lighten his work, if he does not mind exerting himself strenuously, specially in these hard days when every official is overworked. An additional post of Assistant Director-General has also been created in the Director-General's Office. One would wonder if the Government are desirous of compensating for the loss of efficiency caused by drastic retrenchment in the manipulative staff in the Post Office and R. M. S. by proportionately increasing the officers' staff. The cost incurred by the creation of these two posts would have saved exactly a hundred poor subordinates from retrenchment. I find another amusing and unintelligible feature in the Government's policy from the Budget figures for 1930-31 and 1933-34. While retrenchment is being effected with a vengeance in the Post Office and R. M. S., the staff in the Posts and Telegraphs Audit Offices, instead of any reduction, was increased by 81 as the following figures will show:

| 1930-31. | | 1933-34. | |
|-----------------------------|-------|-----------------------------|-------|
| No. of Officers | 17 | No. of Officers. | 17 |
| No. of subordinate officers | 82 | No. of subordinate officers | 89 |
| No. of clerks | 2,061 | No. of clerks | 2,233 |

It will thus appear that the staff in the Audit Offices was considerably increased by 179 additional hands. I wonder, what explanation the Government have to offer for this increase in expenditure in the Posts and Telegraphs Audit which is met from the revenues of the Department. Do they expect, that, by strengthening the officers' and audit staff, they will be able to restore the financial equilibrium and arrest inefficiency caused by heavy retrenchment in the manipulative staff? The idea is ridiculous. If the retrenchment measures are putting additional strain on the audit, they are all the more adding to the burden of the Accounts Branches in the Post Office, but no attention is being paid to their grievances.

I would request the Honourable Member in charge of Industries and Labour and the Director-General to explain all the points I have raised and also to set matters right with broadminded sympathy.

Sir, I move.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): Cut motion moved:

"That the demand under the head 'Indian Posts and Telegraphs Department (including Working Expenses)' be reduced by Rs. 100."

Mr. Muhammad Azhar Ali (Lucknow and Fyzabad Divisions: Muhammadan Rural): Sir, nothing can be more unjust than the manner in which, if accepted, retrenchment in the Telegraph Branch is or will

[Mr. Muhammad Azhar Ali.]

be carried out under the recommendations of the Telegraph Establishment Enquiry Committee, presided over by the Financial Adviser, Posts and Telegraphs. The recommendations are for the reduction of 757 telegraphists and 142 telegraph masters, which work out to a ratio of 45 per cent and 55 per cent to their respective cadres as a whole, whereas, only eight officers are recommended for retrenchment against an army of approximately 800, or one per cent of the entire strength. Imagine the justice and equity that must have been actuating the assessors on this Committee. Am I to understand that the mandate before the Committee was that they must restrict themselves entirely in their slaughter only of the subordinate element and hands off the officers? Abiding strictly by this mandate, they applied the guillotine only to that class of officer who is virtually the telegraph master, promoted to the grade of Deputy Superintendent, Superintendent, Deputy Postmaster General, Chief Superintendent and Assistant Deputy Director General, who are merely transformed into one or the other of these high-sounding designations, without anything substantial to recommend them for promotion, other than the *Ma-Bap* system—a sort of gift in reality vested with the Direction of the Posts and Telegraphs, which in the end is a source of misery to the tax-payer, who is penalised in the process foisted on him by paying for a body of well paid and well provided officers. I demand of the Government to state clearly how many officers are, or will be, retrenched from the gazetted ranks who entered service in that particular cadre when directly initiated into the service, as differentiated from this *Ma-Bap* creation referred to.

The reasons for retrenchment stressed by this learned Committee was falling off in traffic and that the number of telegrams had greatly depreciated nowadays; hence the reduction proportionately in personnel is recommended. Now, what is the plea not to retrench as many officers who are already in excess in the same proportions affecting the telegraphists and telegraph masters, where almost one half is considered surplus to the requirements on very considered figures and logic? What logic prevails with the officers to save their skin? Is this not fomenting class war-fare? If not, what is it?

Coming to amalgamation, what do you mean by amalgamation when you have a Director and a Postmaster General in a Circle stationed at headquarters? How are they amalgamated with one another? Is it not really the fact that one minds the business on the telegraph side, while the other on the postal side? Is it not right and proper to say, one is P.M.G., Post Offices, and the other is P.M.G., Telegraph Offices of the Circle? That the one cannot do without the other, as their training and outlook are entirely divergent from one another, that their vocational attributes, if any, entirely differ? One is an engineer, the other is anything but that; and when you merge one with the other or both together, you have flesh and fish to combine, and the mixture becomes, naturally, obnoxious, and failures, therefore, occur in the Circle administration, as Post Masters General cannot exceed their own sphere of enlightenment. It surpasses my intelligence and imagination, and I am sure it will surpass the intelligence of this House even, to comprehend how a telegraph officer can take over Post Master Generalship of a Circle who, till then, was either planting posts or assembling telegraph apparatus. How can he ever prove a success? Was it ever so before the amalgamation? I say, no. Why

so? This is where you fail and fundamentally initiate the theme for your losses. You cannot tell me or prove to this House that your such officials are supermen. He is no more than any one else. He cannot presume to do more than he knows, and in some cases, where P. M. G.'s are recruited from postal clerks, what will be the result you can attain with such a prototype?

Coming now to retrenchment, I ask, what have you done in regard to the 33 items set out at pages 125 and 126 of the Retrenchment Advisory Sub-Committee's report on retrenchment, presided over by Sir Cowasji Jehangir in 1931, who, in unambiguous terms, condemning one of such items as needless luxury, whereas the others, he suggests, ought to be investigated and material retrenchment effected as they offered ample scope for economy in various directions? What have you done in this respect? Have you first effected every possible saving under these 33 items before you had resorted to empanelling the so-called Retrenchment Committee? If not, why not?

Now, Sir, the Committee, known as the Varma Committee, recommends the creation of a Deputy Director-General of Inspections on Rs. 30,000 annually. This august body, by this one suggestion, goes against the principle of retrenchment. I suggest a non-official and official Committee to go into the question of retrenchment on a fair and equitable basis and not merely delve in class warfare as suggested in that report, that no special indulgence should be allowed for officers—general or subordinate—and do away thereby with the surplus, whereas, under the Varma scheme, you will be left with all the generals, after the fashion of the Mexican Army! Retrenchment, if it is to be retrenchment, should be carried out from top to bottom on a *pari passu* basis. I suggest, therefore, that the report is no report at all, although it has cost the Exchequer Rs. 33,126-2-0 to give the Committee the pleasure of a joy-ride; the results are not commensurate even with the expenditure incurred.

Sir, I will now discuss the British Post Office as compared with the Indian Post Office. How is it that, although identical conditions throughout prevail in both countries for the last five years—depression in both countries I mean,—still the results have been so different and so divergent? One succeeds in amassing profits, whilst India fails, and, in one case, to the tune of 1.51 lakhs. The profits in England have veered round ten million pounds annually for the last five years, and the last Budget produced over eleven million pounds. Sir, there is only one answer. We are burdened with highly paid officers compared with the officials of the British Post Office, and the sooner we draw inspiration from there, the better for this country. The whole structure in India wants reformation and purging out of its evils, and the sooner this is done, the better for the tax-payer. Only then you will be able to improve matters out here. Sir, the so-called relief mentioned in the current Budget is not satisfactory. Neither the inducements in the postal nor telegraph side, as devised, are real relief to the masses, and they shall suffer, particularly on the postal side, with regard to understampage due to not being able to differentiate between the weight of $\frac{1}{2}$ and one tola and pay the usual penalty; the post office readily exacts for understampage. With these remarks; I support the motion.

Mr. M. Maswood Ahmad (Patna and Chota Nagpur *cum* Orissa Muhammadan): Sir, in this connection I want to make a few observations.

[Mr. M. Maswood Ahmad.]

I find from the Report that in the year 1932 the number of departmental offices has been reduced, while the number of extra departmental post offices has been increased. This really causes a great trouble to the public. In the extra departmental post offices, the working hours are much less than those in the departmental postal offices, and invariably in these offices some school masters, station masters and such other people are employed, and naturally they do their duties in these extra departmental offices as additional duties after doing their own work elsewhere, and they get very little time to devote to these extra departmental offices. The result is that the public in the areas served by the extra departmental post offices suffer very considerably. Sometimes they require stamps and other things like money order forms, and so forth, and they cannot get their requirements easily, because the people in charge of these extra departmental offices are not whole-time servants like the post-masters in the departmental offices who work from, say, 10 to 4 every day except perhaps on Sundays and other specified holidays. Therefore, the public in the areas served by the extra departmental offices are put to very great inconvenience, and so I want to urge upon the Government that the number of extra departmental offices should not be multiplied needlessly in place of departmental offices. Only in areas where the receipts are getting smaller, there the number of departmental post offices can be reduced and in their place extra departmental offices substituted. I trust the Honourable Member in charge of the Department will give this matter his serious consideration.

With regard to the Dead Letter Office, the duties performed by this office are very important. They have to deal with letters on which addresses are not correctly written, they are required to open some of the letters and find out who the addressee is, who the sender is and what the contents are. We find that, in the year 1932, in the articles opened, cheques, currency notes, bills of exchange, coins and other valuable things were discovered aggregating to the nominal value of over 5-2/3 lakhs of rupees and, therefore, sufficient time should be given to the employees working in this branch, so that they may be able to discharge their duties more efficiently in the interest of the public, because, if they get more time, they will be able to read through the letters more carefully and see as to who is the sender, who is the addressee, and so on, and re-direct the letters to the proper person.

With regard to retrenchment, I want to point out to Government that people, who have been retrenched as a result of the economy campaign, should be provided for in the first instance, just as is done in the Railway and other Departments. These Departments have issued certain Circulars impressing upon heads of Departments the necessity of giving preference to retrenched men. Government should adopt that policy, and I trust my Honourable friend in charge of the Department will give his serious consideration to all the points I have made in this connection.

Mr N. M. Joshi (Nominated Non-official): Sir, I would like to say a few words on this subject. The first remark I wish to make is that I do not approve of the policy of retrenchment at all. I quite realise that we are passing through a period of depression, but I feel that we cannot get over this depression by retrenchment of the staff or by reducing certain number of the post offices. I find from the report during the year for which the latest report is presented, the number of rural post offices

has gone down by nearly 300. I feel that the policy, which the Government of India are following in reducing the number of post offices in rural areas, is a wrong policy. In the first place, the post office, I quite realise, is considered to be a business concern. It may be a business concern, but let the Government of India remember that if there is a loss in this business concern, everybody has to bear that loss. It is not only those people who live in cities that bear this loss, but this loss is made good by all people. I would, therefore, suggest that, on account of the losses which the Department makes, it is wrong to close down post offices in rural areas. On the other hand, I would advocate the policy of opening more and more post offices in rural areas

The Honourable Sir Frank Noyce (Member for Industries and Labour): And losing more and more money.

Mr. M. Maswood Ahmad: You are not losing money in rural post offices; you are losing money on the telegraph side.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: In the first place, it is not very easy to find out which offices lose more money; it is not very easy to go into the question of accounting. Moreover, even if some post offices show a loss today, we must consider which branch of the post office work is likely to be developed in the future. Let us all remember that India does not live in cities

Diwan Bahadur A. Ramaswami Mudaliar (Madras City: Non-Muhammadan Urban): Labour lives in cities.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: I say that India lives in villages. I, therefore, feel that, if there is to be a development of the work of post offices, there is greater opportunity for development in villages than in cities. I would, therefore, like the Government of India to follow the policy of developing and creating more postal facilities for rural areas instead of curtailing them. This is necessary, not only in the interests of business, but in the interests of the whole community. After all, the Postal Department is run by the Government as a public utility concern, and, if that is so, it is the business of Government, even though there may be losses for some time, to give these facilities to the whole population, and not merely to those who have the privilege of living in cities. In this matter I want to tell the Government of India that they generally follow a wrong policy. Their policy is to give more facilities to those people who have got enough money. Let them examine their policy as regards the post office and the telegraph offices. The post office is open to all people, rich and poor alike. But it is not the poor man who sends telegrams. What is, therefore, the result? The Government of India have been going on making losses on the Telegraph Department. I do not know whether there was any time when the Telegraph Department made good profit.

Lieut.-Colonel Sir Henry Gidney (Nominated Non-Official): It never has, especially since the amalgamation with the Postal Department.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: On the whole, if the Government of India will take the accounts of our Postal Department from the beginning, they will find that they have made more losses on the telegraph side and they continue

[Mr. N. M. Joshi.]

to make those losses. Even taking the account given in this report, you are making greater losses on the Telegraph Department. On the other hand, they are spending much more money on capital expenditure of the Telegraph Department. Let us see the figures. The capital expenditure on Post Office buildings and mail vans during 1932-33 was Rs. 4,25,000, while that on telegraph buildings, cables, lines and apparatus for the same year was Rs. 15,06,000.

The Honourable Sir Frank Noyce: May I remind my Honourable friend that that includes telephone lines as well, and that the telephone branch of the Department is a paying branch?

Mr. N. M. Joshi: Telegraph buildings, cables, lines and apparatus.— I do not know whether this includes telephones.

The Honourable Sir Frank Noyce: If my Honourable friend had read the report carefully, he would, I think, have found that it did.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: I am talking of telegraphs, I am not talking of telephones. If you think that the telephone is paying, let us have more development of telephones.

The Honourable Sir Frank Noyce: That is exactly what we are doing.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: I am talking of telegraphs.

Sir Thomas Ryan: I may say that practically the whole of our capital expenditure nowadays is on telephones.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: But that does not alter the fact that you are making a larger loss on the Telegraph Department. You cannot avoid that fact whatever may be the case as regards the capital expenditure figures given here. And still what do you do? You follow a policy of reducing rates for telegrams,—I am not against a policy of reducing rates, because I feel it is not by increasing the rates that any branch of the Postal Department will ever pay, but the Government of India should follow the same policy as regards the post offices also. The policy of reducing rates is the right policy, the policy of increasing facilities is the right policy. You follow that policy so far as regards facilities which are generally utilised by wealthier classes, you do not follow that policy, you follow the wrong policy so far as regards facilities which are generally availed of by the poorer people. I think the Government of India are making a great mistake in this matter.

There is one more point on which I wish to say a word and that is this. The Government of India are reducing the staff, and my Honourable friend, Mr. Azhar Ali, gave some figures which are very instructive and which show very clearly that Government have made large retrenchment in the subordinate staff, while retrenchment in the officer staff is very small indeed. Now, in this respect, I would like to tell the House one thing, and it is this that these proposals for retrenchment are made by officers. The Director-General said that a certain kind of work which the lower clerks do is not so very responsible. My own view is that the

duty which even the smallest officer performs must be regarded as equally responsible. Everybody is responsible for his work. As a matter of fact, if we go to the theory, neither the Director-General nor even the Honourable Member is responsible to anybody. My own view is that it is the lower staff which is really more responsible, because, if there are losses, the lower staff suffers by retrenchments, while the higher staff does not suffer by retrenchment to that extent. Whether there is a loss of Rs. five lakhs or Rs. 50 lakhs, the Honourable Member's position is safe, the post of the Director-General is safe. The responsibility of losses is brought home to the inferior staff, to the subordinate staff, it is never brought home to the higher staff. I would, therefore, like the Government of India to consider this question of retrenchment of the subordinate staff very carefully, and my proposal is this. If there is to be retrenchment of the subordinate staff, as a sort of safeguard against wrong retrenchment, let there be at least a proportionate retrenchment of the officers. If the officers know that, by retrenching their subordinate staff there will be a proportionate retrenchment in their own cadres, then, Sir, the retrenchment of the subordinate staff will be made more carefully. But if the Government follow the policy of retrenching more men, not proportionate to the officers, then, Sir, there is no safeguard for the subordinate staff. The only automatic safeguard against wrong retrenchment for the subordinate staff is that there should be retrenchment in the higher grades also, proportionately at least. Personally I would retrench higher officers much more, because, after all, the higher officers' work is easy work. They do not have to work as the subordinate staff has to. There is still more room for increasing the work of the officers. It is the subordinate staff whose work you cannot increase. They have got their fixed hours, and there are men over them to see whether they work or not, but over the heads of officers there is nobody to see how long they work. They may work or they may go home early. Therefore, there is room for increasing the work of your officers; there is hardly any room for increasing the work of your subordinate staff. Therefore, if you want to save money, in order to make economy, you should reduce the number of your officers much more than the number of your subordinate staff. On the other hand, Government follow a wrong policy of retrenching the subordinate staff in a much larger proportion than the officers. Thereby not only Government do not make a saving where they ought to save, but they remove the only safeguard which the subordinate staff have. I would, therefore, suggest to the Government of India that, whatever policy they may follow, whether they follow the policy which I suggest, namely, that in this time of depression they should develop the work of the Department instead of reducing it,—but even if they follow the wrong policy of reducing the number of people, I would suggest to Government not to take away from the subordinate staff the only safeguard against a wrong kind of retrenchment that they have, namely, that there should be a proportionate, if not greater, reduction in the number of officers. I hope the Government of India will adopt my suggestion in this matter.

Sir Cowasji Jehangir (Bombay City: Non-Muhammadan Urban): Unfortunately I was unable to hear the remarks made by my Honourable friend, Mr. Mitra, in moving this cut, and, therefore, I do not propose to say anything about any of the remarks he might have made. What made

[Sir Cowasji Jehangir.]

me rise is the speech which was delivered by my Honourable friend, the representative of Labour, in this House. We have been told constantly, and reminded very often in the past that the Department that we are at present criticising is a commercial department. If that is so and if it is intended that this Department should be run on the lines of a commercial department, perhaps it would be necessary to get a definition of the meaning of the words "commercial department". I understand a commercial department to mean one which pays its way or attempts to pay its way. If this is to be a public utility department and if this House is prepared to make up the deficit year in and year out that may be suffered by this Department in giving facilities and amenities to all classes of people regardless of the cost, then we should know exactly what the policy of the Government is and what it is that we desire should be the policy. Now, so far as I have been able to understand the position for the last number of years, this House has definitely expressed the opinion that this Department should be a commercial department.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: When did it do so? It is a public utility department.

Sir Cowasji Jehangir: When did it do so, asks the representative of Labour. I am not here to put my Honourable friend right, but
12 NOON. I do remember a Retrenchment Committee having been appointed. I do remember criticisms in this House of extravagance in this Department. I do remember speeches made from this side of the House, pointing out that this Department should pay its way. A Retrenchment Committee was appointed, and, so far as I can now recollect, that Committee did recommend that a certain number of post offices should be abolished. I am prepared to be contradicted if I am wrong. The abolition of these post offices was recommended, because the Committee saw no prospects whatever of such post offices ever being able to pay their way. They never suggested that post offices should not be opened in other parts of India which showed any prospect of success. Sir, if it is the intention of this House to give further facilities to the rural areas with regard to the posts and telegraphs, then let us lay it down as a policy. Let the Finance Member make provision year in and year out to pay for those facilities. Let us be prepared to be taxed for that purpose. It is question of policy.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: No harm.

Sir Cowasji Jehangir: Coming to the subordinate staff, personally I came to the conclusion, and I think that was recorded in the report, and again I speak subject to correction, that there was scope for economy. You do not want any Department of Government to be a charitable institution, whether it is a commercial department or whether it is not. It is a wrong principle. You cannot have a Department made for the purpose of employing people.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: Who asked you to do it?

Lieut.-Colonel Sir Henry Gidney: It should be for the service of the people. That is the case in England. It is not, and never has been a commercial or revenue undertaking.

Sir Cowasji Jehangir: By all means. If this House finds that there is any Department of Government which employs more men at the top or at the bottom, more than they require, it is the duty of this House to insist that there shall be economy. My complaint is that on this question we speak with two voices. We ask for economy. We ask for retrenchment. We do our duty by impressing upon Government that extravagance at a time like this is a crime. We do our best to force Government to cut down expenditure.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: Who are the "We"?

Sir Cowasji Jehangir: This side of the House, the Assembly.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: Not all.

Sir Cowasji Jehangir: My Honourable friend is the advocate of extravagance today, a Labour Member can afford to be extravagant. We cannot. We have to pay and you don't.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: I challenge you. You don't.

Sir Cowasji Jehangir: You are merely to ask. We are here to pay and we are not going to pay. That is the long and short of it.

Now, Mr. President, I believe that a certain amount of retrenchment has been effected in the Department. Whether the Retrenchment Committee was of any assistance to Government or not, I do not know.

The Honourable Sir Frank Noyce: I can assure the Honourable Member that his Committee gave the most valuable assistance to Government, I think I have acknowledged that assistance on the floor of this House more than once; but if not, I have the greatest pleasure in doing so now.

Sir Cowasji Jehangir: I never meant to imply that the Government were not grateful for whatever little work we put in. I do not know for certain whether the recommendations were on the right lines or not. I am not here to make out a case. All I say is that we were appointed by Government and this House to go into the question of the Posts and Telegraphs Department with the object of effecting economy

Lieut.-Colonel Sir Henry Gidney: Not by this House.

Sir Cowasji Jehangir: . . . and if we came to the conclusion that the Department was extravagant in any direction and if Government carried out retrenchment, I do not think it lies in the mouth of any of us to grumble and complain. My friend, Mr. Joshi, enunciated an extraordinary principle. He said that if you curtail your staff in one direction, you must curtail it also in other directions.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: Supervisory direction.

Sir Cowasji Jehangir: Now, so far as I remember, the Retrenchment Committee paid just as much attention to the top as it did to the bottom. Speaking from memory, we did recommend retrenchment at the top and I am not in a position to state just now offhand to what extent our recommendations have been carried out at the top.

Sir Thomas Ryan: I think we have carried out practically all the recommendations of the Retrenchment Committee.

Sir Cowasji Jehangir: I am given to understand by my friend, Mr. Mitra, that a post that was recommended to be retrenched at the top was retrenched and then reinstated.

Sir Thomas Ryan: I shall deal with that in due course.

Sir Cowasji Jehangir: I am talking of general principles. My friend, Mr. Amar Nath Dutt, was a member and we made every attempt to retrench at the top, but we came to the conclusion that there was more scope to retrench at the bottom than there was at the top. I am not here merely to say what will please Mr. Joshi. I am here to try and place before this House a statement of facts. Again, speaking from memory, I believe that the pay bill of the Posts and Telegraphs Department is in the neighbourhood of eight or nine crores. I think Sir Thomas Ryan will be able to enlighten us

Sir Thomas Ryan: About that.

Sir Cowasji Jehangir: and the pay bill of the higher staff out of this eight crores odd is something like 35 lakhs. Am I correct?

Sir Thomas Ryan: About 48 lakhs for the whole gazetted staff.

Sir Cowasji Jehangir: Now, Sir, you have eight crores 50 lakhs on one side, out of which 48 lakhs, or, say, 50 lakhs go to the higher staff. Retrench the salaries of the higher staff by, say, a hypothetical figure, of 20 per cent and the lower staff by 10 per cent. What do you get?

Mr. N. M. Joshi: Is that an argument why the higher people should not suffer?

Sir Cowasji Jehangir: I say, let them suffer double the amount, but even then, at the end, if you look at the figure of retrenchment, what have we got, what do we save?

Mr. N. M. Joshi: Is that a reason why they should not suffer—I again ask?

Sir Cowasji Jehangir: Does anybody ever contend that they should not suffer at the top? Do I contend that they should not suffer at the top? I contend that we should retrench at the top, we should retrench at the bottom, in every possible way, but I do want to point out to my Honourable friend that the pay bill of the lower staff is Rs. 8½ crores compared to Rs. 50 lakhs in the case of the higher staff, and, therefore, when you do retrench from the higher staff, you get a much smaller amount than you would if you retrenched from the lower staff. And, remember, the atmosphere in those days was such that this Assembly demanded retrenchment and demanded that they should know the figure by which we could cut down the expenses and save the general revenues. Has the atmosphere changed? And if it has, I can see no reason for the change. Today, I should have hoped that other Members would have got up on this side of

the House and demanded further retrenchment. Mr. President, I do not think anybody can accuse me of not having sympathy for the lower staff of Government servants.

An Honourable Member: Only lip sympathy.

Sir Cowasji Jehangir: Surely, their lot is hard, we all know it, but their lot is not so hard, perhaps, as the lot of the lower paid staff all over the country. I do think that *all* Government servants, in all Departments, have to thank their stars that in these days of depression, they are Government servants, and when their services are retrenched, they are retrenched after mature consideration. Remember the lower staffs outside Government service all over India, how ruthlessly they have been retrenched. They are in a pitiable condition today even in the City of Bombay, and compare their lot with the lot of Government servants, of all classes and of all grades. They have an Assembly to appeal to, they have friends like my friend, Mr. Mitra, and others to voice their grievances before a body like this Assembly, but those poor wretches who have lost their jobs all over the country and who are starving with their families, literally starving, they have no Mitras and Joshis to voice their grievances and to tell the country what a pitiable condition they are in. And because we in this Assembly urge Government to reduce the salaries of some of their Government servants and to retrench men that are not absolutely necessary for their work, we get Mr. Joshi coming here and telling us not to do so! Mr. President, I do earnestly trust that this House will insist upon retrenchment and that this House will not in any way encourage extravagance in any Department of Government, and especially in a Department that this House desires to be run on commercial lines. If there is any post office in India which is not paying its way, which is never likely to pay its way, I suggest it should be closed down immediately (*Voices:* "No, no.")—I said if it is *never* likely to pay its way. My friend, the Director-General of Posts and Telegraphs, will bear me out when I say that we never suggested that a post office should be closed down which was likely to pay its way within the next ten years.

An Honourable Member: How do you know that?

Sir Cowasji Jehangir: Well, we examined the case.

Mr. G. S. Ranga Iyer (Rohilkund and Kumaon Divisions: Non-Muhamadan Rural): When the Honourable Member said that the Government should close down a post office which is never likely to pay its way, the Honourable Member must remember that in the Himalayan hills, and in my constituency of Kumaon, there are a number of post offices which cannot pay their way, but people do live there, and letters from their relatives and others have got to be delivered. I hope the Honourable Member will not make such a wholesale remark as he has made.

Sir Cowasji Jehangir: I said that where there are post offices which are never likely to pay their way, which are always likely to be a great burden on the State and on the tax-payer, such offices should be closed down. Now, I will qualify that statement by making exceptions under peculiar and special circumstances, as in the case of hill tracts and other places. But, as a general principle, if you want this Department to be a

[Sir Cowasji Jehangir.]

commercial department, if that is the policy of this House, then I maintain that there can be no other principle that we should insist upon than that such amenities, as are offered by the Department, which are never likely to pay, must go, or else this House must change its policy once and for all and tell the Government that this Department is not a commercial department, that it is a Department that should be run in order to give facilities and amenities to all classes of people all over the country, at whatever loss the Department may have to suffer. If that is the policy, let it be so declared and let us then scrap the Retrenchment Committee's Report, let us scrap all efforts in the direction of retrenchment.

Mr. Gaya Prasad Singh (Muzaffarpur *cum* Champaran: Non-Muhamadan): But if the Telegraph Department does not pay its way?

Sir Cowasji Jehangir: I will come to that point.

Now, if that is the principle, let us know what it is, and then we shall know how to criticise Government and what to expect from Government.

Now, the other accusation that has been made is that the Telegraph Department suffers a great loss while the Postal Department does not, and, the accounts being mixed up, we do not know what the actual losses on the telegraph side are and what—shall I say taking an extreme case—the profit is to the Postal Department. I am not in a position to criticise or to absolutely contradict that statement; I have not the facts, I have not the figures. I believe another Committee was appointed after the one I was a member of, which went into the question of the Telegraph Department. Am I correct?

Sir Thomas Ryan: Perfectly.

Sir Cowasji Jehangir: There is not the slightest reason why the Telegraph Department should be the pet child of Government. There is not the slightest reason why any Department should be encouraged, because it employs a certain class of labour. That has nothing to do with us. I would treat both the branches of this great Department perfectly equally. If the Telegraph Department cannot pay its way, I would be just as ruthless with the pruning knife as in any other Department. I do expect that Government will apply the pruning knife to the Telegraph Department more ruthlessly than to the Postal Department, because the Telegraph Department after all caters for a better class of people and the Postal Department caters for the poorest. I would also enunciate another principle, and that is that, if there is any money to spare, it should be utilised for expanding the facilities of the Postal Department and not of the Telegraph Department. I have no objection to any capital expenditure on the Telegraph Department if it is going to bring in a handsome return. If the telephones can pay their way and if an expenditure on the telephones is going to be a paying proposition, why not allow that expenditure and give facilities to those who use telephones although they may be only the better classes in this country. There is no reason to deny them those facilities, because they pay for them with even chances of a profit.

These are general principles which, I think, this House ought to endorse. I would again appeal to my Honourable friends to remain the watch-dogs of the public purse and to continue to be the watch-dogs of the public

purse for years to come. If they fail to be the watch-dogs of the public purse, then we may not have any self-Government at all in this country. Our main duty here, sitting on this side of the House, is not to encourage—I will not say extravagance, because that is a truism—in these critical times even any expansion of Government activities. Our business just now in these difficult times is to tell Government to retrench. That alone must be our motto. I trust that the time may come when we may be able to change that motto, but that time has not come yet. When it is going to come, nobody can tell. But so long as the present depression remains, our motto should be “Retrench” and nothing else.

Mr. N. M. Joshi: I rise, Sir, on a point of personal explanation. I have made the statement that Government are spending on capital expenditure and telegraph buildings, lines and apparatus 15 lakhs of rupees. I had taken that figure from the report of the Department for the year 1932-33. The Honourable the Director-General of Posts and Telegraphs said that they included the telephone figures. If he will look at the report, he will find that the amount of eight lakhs of rupees spent on telephone buildings, lines and apparatus is mentioned separately.

Sir Thomas Ryan: What I meant to convey to the House was that the capital expenditure which we are now incurring is practically entirely on telephone improvements. I was not questioning the Honourable Member's figures as to what might have been spent under particular heads in the past. What I wished to say was that, as he was complaining about our heavy expenditure, my reply is that the capital expenditure is incurred, as the members of the Standing Finance Committee will know, because this question came up before them recently, for the purpose of making telephone improvements and possibly on one or two buildings. The expenditure proposed is expected to earn considerably more than the interest on the capital.

Lieut.-Colonel Sir Henry Gidney: Sir, I rise to take part in this debate as a strong opponent of this policy of retrenchment when, in the execution of that policy, efficiency is to be sacrificed on the altar of economy. Sir, the administration of Government, both Central and Provincial, in this country is suffering from an epidemic of retrenchment, and I wish I could discern more sympathy and more concern in the minds of the higher Government officials as to what this drastic retrenchment means to the homes and the happiness of their subordinate servants. If I could discern that, I should be more satisfied and happier in my own mind in the belief that “necessity has no law”. But, today we have witnessed in this Honourable House a struggle of opinions between my friend, Sir Cowasji Jehangir, representing the capitalists of Bombay, and that stout champion of labour interests,—Mr. Joshi. It would be very interesting and illuminating if the Finance Member would tell us how much Government receive from taxes of all kinds paid by the industrial and labouring classes as compared with the total taxes paid by capitalists. I do not think that the capitalists would then have much to shout about. The Post and Telegraph retrenchment policy of Government has been so stoutly defended by my friend, Sir Cowasji Jehangir, for whom I have a great regard, but with whom I certainly do not agree. I know he was the Chairman of the Retrenchment Committee that sat on Posts and Telegraphs. I have read the report of his Committee very carefully, but I am sorry I cannot join

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the Government of India in congratulating the Committee on a report that has meant so much misery and unhappiness to so many of their servants and in which my community suffered much. Sir Cowasji Jehangir, however, struck a true note when he said that the whole matter depended on the policy of Government. He asked whether the Telegraph Department was an utility department or a commercial department. Sir, the Government Benches know very well—I speak subject to correction and I will sit down and await a correction—that the Telegraph Department of the United Kingdom has never paid its way and every year the House of Commons is called upon to foot the bill by special enactment. With all respect, I ask the Honourable Member in charge why

Sir Thomas Ryan: I believe it is because the Telegraph Department has largely been robbed by the telephones.

Lieut.-Colonel Sir Henry Gidney: I do not want you to answer my question just now: I want to develop my point. I want to know why do the Government in this country ask the Postal Department to pay the debts of the Telegraph Department and why has it, in addition, for the same purpose lately indented on the little profit made by the Telephone Department?

Sir Thomas Ryan: The accounts are quite distinct.

Lieut.-Colonel Sir Henry Gidney: But you do not allow it to make itself distinct today. When these two departments were separate, *i.e.*, before they were amalgamated some years ago, about 1914, I am sure their profit and loss was a different one than today. But whether it is different or not, the point to be decided by this House and Government is what is their policy as was pointed out by Sir Cowasji Jehangir.

Sir Thomas Ryan: May I draw the attention of the Honourable Member to page 4 of the Detailed Estimates and Demands for Grants which shows perfectly clearly the distinction between the accounts of the Post Offices, the Telegraphs, the Radios and the Telephones?

Lieut.-Colonel Sir Henry Gidney: I shall look at them again. My point is this. Will Government, on the floor of this House, deny that the excess expenditure over returns incurred in the administration of the Telegraph Department is met from the profits of the administration of the Postal Department?

Sir Thomas Ryan: I am not prepared to deny that it is *not* met. I am prepared to deny that it is so met. (Laughter.)

Lieut.-Colonel Sir Henry Gidney: I thought so. I knew it. It is robbing Peter to pay Paul.

Sir Thomas Ryan: That is exactly what we are not doing.

Lieut.-Colonel Sir Henry Gidney: Then what exactly are you doing? Why not abolish the Telegraph Department if it does not pay you?

The Honourable Sir Frank Noyce: That is an extremely helpful suggestion.

Lieut.-Colonel Sir Henry Gidney: I am always delighted to supply my Honourable friend with helpful suggestions and I am glad to know he will consider my suggestion. But apart from the humorous aspect, will Government deny that the chief aim and object of these retrenchment Committees is to reduce the staff, and so why reduce the staff in the Postal Department to be able to maintain the Telegraph Department and *vice versa*?

Sir Thomas Ryan: That is not done.

Lieut.-Colonel Sir Henry Gidney: You wanted your Postal Department at a time when India was not so progressive as it is today. Now people are clamouring for having more communications; aeroplanes, aërials, radios and other things have come to stay in this country, and, in the teeth of this advanced India, a country crying for more, you want to reduce your postal and telegraph services, to reduce the number of post and telegraph offices and reduce the staff of your subordinates. Why do you not cut the pay of your senior officers, and stop your Lee Commission concessions? (Hear, hear.) You will not do that. Did my Honourable friend, Sir Cowasji Jehangir, recommend this measure of economy as President of his Committee? No, he did not, and why?

Sir Cowasji Jehangir: We were not allowed to do so. They were not within the scope of our enquiry.

Lieut.-Colonel Sir Henry Gidney: When Sir Cowasji talked about retrenchment in the superior staff, why did he not mention this point in his speech? He was silent about it. Why? The question really does depend on this aspect of it. I submit if the policy of the Government of India is that the Telegraph Department should remain as a utility department and not as a revenue or a commercial undertaking, then this House must pay its debt. You must not rob the credit of the Postal Department which Department mainly serves the needs and the purposes of the poorer Indian.

The Honourable Sir Frank Noyce: I am sorry to interrupt the Honourable Member, but I entirely fail to follow his argument. What does he mean by saying that we are robbing the Postal Department? He will see from the accounts, which have been placed before him, that the Postal Department is not yet paying its way, and how, therefore, can we rob one insolvent to pay the debts of another insolvent?

Lieut.-Colonel Sir Henry Gidney: Was it not paying its way before the Lee Commission concessions came in? Anyhow, my Honourable friend, Sir Cowasji Jehangir's statement that the total cost of the salaries of these Departments was about eight crores was supported by the Director-General, Posts and Telegraphs, and that the superior staff

Sir Thomas Ryan: No, Sir. My Honourable friend, Sir Cowasji Jehangir, was, I think, mentioning the salary bill.

Lieut.-Colonel Sir Henry Gidney: I meant that. Sir Thomas Ryan said that the total salary cost of the superior officials was 50 lakhs.

Sir Cowasji Jehangir: No, 48 lakhs.

Lieut.-Colonel Sir Henry Gidney: That works out roughly to one-sixteenth of the whole salary bill of the Department. Now, Sir, I should like to know from Sir Cowasji Jehangir, a very successful capitalist Knight of Bombay, whether he could run his own business successfully with overhead charges (i.e., salaries of superior staff) one-sixteenth of the total salary bill. This refers to 50 lakhs out of eight crores of rupees.

Sir Cowasji Jehangir: I am not here to teach my Honourable friend things. I really hoped he was not so ignorant.

Lieut.-Colonel Sir Henry Gidney: I am very sorry to hear that, but ignorance is often reflected from one to the other. (Laughter.) I suppose that when my Honourable friend gets on his feet, there will be a reflex action on his anatomical organs, because the air will go up and his brain will come down. (Laughter.) Sir, we have had many Retrenchment Committees, but none of these were appointed by this House. Members of these Committees were nominated by Government. There is another report of the Varma Committee which is now before the Government. If that report is accepted by the Government, I know what it will mean to the community which I have the honour to represent in this House. It will mean almost complete extinction of the Anglo-Indian community from the telegraph service. I know the Honourable Member in charge is carefully considering that report, but I do wish to state on the floor of the House that that report however necessary it may be in the minds of the Committee, in my humble opinion, it certainly is not necessary for the efficient administration of the Telegraph Department.

Now, Sir, we have heard a good deal about telephones. I remember three years ago when I met the then Director-General of Posts and Telegraphs with a desire to extend the telephone system (because one trial that was made in a certain division under a certain officer, who is now dead, was a success), I asked the then Director-General whether he was going to extend the telephone system. He replied, he saw no need for it. I am glad to know that the telephone system has been recently extended, and this is a sign of the awakening of the Department and a desire to keep pace with an advancing India and the modern progress of other countries so far as India's relationship with them is concerned.

Sir, I support this cut motion. I support it, because I think it is right that this House should be told who is going to foot the telegraph bill. If the Postal Department is not paying, is the public to suffer in consequence? The Government of India are so enamoured of retrenchments and reductions of their subordinate staff and so oblivious of the urgent need of reduction in their superior staff that all their retrenchment policies are ill conceived and wholly wrong. My Honourable friend, Sir Cowasji Jehangir, used a very mild word when he said this retrenchment "ruthless". I should like to call it by a worse name, but I hesitate to do so. I wholeheartedly support the motion that has been moved by my Honourable friend.

Mr. D. K. Lahiri Chaudhury (Bengal: Landholders): Sir, I am not one of those who at this stage is going to discuss the policy whether the Telegraph Department is run on a commercial basis or as a public utility concern. As for me, if anybody asks, I will say that it is run as a public

utility concern. I want to make one observation on this point. When my Honourable friend, Colonel Gidney, was making his eloquent speech on this subject, he declared that efficiency is sacrificed at the cost of economy. I welcome this suggestion, because efficiency plays a very important part in the services, and I am one of those who will stand up side by side with my Honourable friend, Colonel Gidney, when the question of efficiency comes up. (Hear, hear.) Let me take one little point in this connection about the Telegraph Engineering Department, and I hope my Honourable friend, Colonel Gidney, will give his conscientious support to my views. A sum of Rs. three lakhs 30 thousand has been provided for in the Budget under the head "Unserviceable stock materials written off". When there is a big staff of officers in the Telegraph Engineering Branch, I fail to understand why such losses should be incurred by the Department year after year. That is a question of efficiency. There must be something rotten in the supervision carried on by this big and highly paid staff for which the Department has to suffer such heavy loss. Although the Department carried out retrenchment measures in the Posts and Telegraphs Traffic Department, no retrenchment has been made in the Engineering Branch of the Department.

Sir Thomas Ryan: That statement is entirely incorrect. I will allow it to pass now, but I will deal with it subsequently.

Mr. D. K. Lahiri Chaudhury: I am always open to correction. Up to the year 1913-14, both the Telegraph Traffic and Telegraph Engineering Branches were managed by the Engineering Officers, but after the amalgamation of the Telegraph Department with the Post Office in the year 1914-15, the Engineering Officers were not required to hold charge of the Traffic Branch, and as many as 28 officers' posts were created. But there was not any proportionate reduction in the number of Engineering Officers' appointments. In 1913-14, there were as many as 75 Engineering Supervisors both in the General and Electrical Branches, but now the number of Supervisors in both these branches has swelled up to 217. I am, of course, open to correction. This is not all. Three sets of officers are maintained for the Engineering Branch, namely, Telegraph, Wireless and Telephone, and we find them huddled together and working in the same station. My friend, Mr. Mitra, suggested time after time that these three departments should be amalgamated so as to reduce the number of officers. The Telegraph Establishment Inquiry Committee have also suggested amalgamation of the different engineering branches, but nothing has been done in this direction although Government are very prompt in effecting retrenchment on the postal side.

Sir, this is the one little thing to which I wanted to draw the attention of the Honourable Member in charge. Sir Henry Gidney spoke of efficiency and I also stand by him; for the sake of efficiency, there should not in future be so much losses in stock materials.

Sir, I support the motion.

Mr. B. V. Jadhav (Bombay Central Division Non-Muhammadan Rural): Sir, I rise to support this motion. Although I see that certain persons feel a sort of contempt for my friend, Mr. Joshi, because he introduces ideas about labour and the labour movement in this House, still

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I almost agree with him. The Postal Department is a very useful department, and it has been worked up to this time with efficiency. The Telegraph Department also is a utility department and it is also worked with efficiency. But the expenditure in the Telegraph Department is much higher than its income, and the loss on the Postal Department is not so very heavy. But, at the same time, the Member in charge is very anxious to increase the income of the Postal Department by various changes in the rates.

It is not very long when the postcard was sold at a pice; its price was then raised to two pice, and now it has been raised to three pice. The postage rates also have gone up from half an anna to one anna and a quarter; and the book-packet rates, which were half an anna for ten tolas, are now half an anna for five tolas, and that rate is proposed to be enhanced by about 50 per cent. next year. The Postal Department does not suffer so heavy losses as the other Departments, and while I approve of the decrease in the minimum rate for a telegram from 13 annas to 9 annas, because it would ultimately lead to an increased revenue from telegrams, I am sorry to see that Government are not very responsive to the complaints of the public who are suffering from the enhanced rates in the postage rates, and these enhanced rates are not giving the expected additional revenue, but the law of diminishing returns is very heavily at work.

I shall take the value payable system, for instance. Formerly, a value-payable article did not require the article to be registered. The article was delivered on the payment of the ordinary book parcel rates and the money order commission. In order to enhance their revenue, the Postal Department added the registration charges, and in order to tighten the hold upon the people and in order to extract more revenue, they refused to keep the value-payable article in the post office for a week or ten days as was their custom, within which the person to whom it was sent was allowed to take the article, but the period was reduced to a very few days, and if the article was not taken during that time, demurrage was charged. What was the result? The result was a heavy downfall in the revenue from value-payable post. The people have now found another way of sending their articles under the cash on delivery system. They send the article through a co-operative society. The money order charges which were recovered by the post offices are now recovered by the co-operative and other banks and the Postal Department is a sufferer to that extent. If my Honourable friend, the Member for Industries, will make inquiries as to what was the income from this source about five years ago and what the income is at the present time, he will see that the penny-wise policy has cost in pounds and pounds to his Department.

Then, again, Sir, the book-post is going to be very heavily taxed for the simple reason that the persons who formerly used to write cards are now sending their matter in a cover marked book-post. The wise remedy would have been to reduce the cost of the postcard. Instead of taking this wise course, Government now propose that the book-post rates should be raised. I am afraid, Sir, this will not give the additional revenue to the post office, but it will in the end result in reducing revenue. The bookseller cannot afford to send his books at the enhanced rates through the post office.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): Order, order. The House is now discussing the retrenchment policy of the Posts and Telegraphs Department.

Mr. B. V. Jadhav: I am coming to that, because I want to show why the retrenchment policy has become necessary.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The arguments of the Honourable Member appear to be too far-fetched.

Mr. B. V. Jadhav: Well, Sir, the policy is one of retrenchment, and I will say a few words about it. We know that formerly the articles from one post office to another were taken by runners from one big place to another, from the railway station into the interior. Now, on account of taxi facilities, the carrying of post bags is now in most places transferred to the taxis. But I am under the impression that, when the old runners' services were dispensed with, the services of the overseers, who supervised their work, have not been retrenched to that extent, and they are still receiving salaries for very diminished work; and that is a wastage which might be stopped. There are some other services in the same way. The nature of the services has changed altogether bringing about another set of circumstances, but the old establishment is still there and doing perhaps menial work of the Inspectors and the Superintendents of Post Offices. That is a matter which perhaps the Postal Department may pay more attention to.

The Telegraph Department has always been a drain upon the revenues of the State, and as it is a public utility department, nobody will grudge a small loss. But when the loss becomes heavier and heavier, then the question of retrenchment and very heavy retrenchment comes in. I think there is a good deal of scope for retrenchment in the Telegraph Department, by amalgamating the engineering service and by reducing salaries at the top. The rate of overhead charges at 6½ per cent., as was stated here by my friend, Colonel Gidney, is not, I think, a very heavy one. . . .

An Honourable Member: 16 per cent.

Mr. B. V. Jadhav: No. 1/16th which is 6½ per cent. . . .

Sir Cowasji Jehangir: In no other Department can it be 1/16th.

Mr. B. V. Jadhav: I think it is a very low overhead charge, and I would not grudge it. I hope the other Departments will show such good results as the Postal Department has done. I do not mean to say that the overhead charges in the Postal Department should be reduced, but I want to bring to the notice of that Department that there are certain unnecessary services which are maintained, because they were required in the olden times. Circumstances have changed a great deal, and, therefore, everything ought to be taken into consideration, and care should be taken to stop the waste wherever it exists. Sir, I support the motion.

Mr. Amar Nath Dutt (Burdwan Division: Non-Muhammadan Rural): Sir, I did not know, before my friend, Sir Cowasji Jehangir, spoke, that this side of the House had laid down a policy that the Posts and Telegraphs Department should be conducted on commercial lines. On the

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other hand, my memory goes back to a time more than ten years ago, when Sir Atul (then Mr. A. C.) Chatterjee, who was the Member in charge of the Industries and Labour Department, laid down as the policy on the Government side, not on the side of the Opposition, that the Postal Department was both a commercial and a public utility department; and I think the Government still maintain that view. I shall be really glad if the proposition of my Honourable friend, Sir Cowasji Jehangir, were accepted by the Government and the Postal Department was run on a commercial basis. But so long as Government do not do that, I think we are entitled to ask that this Department's utility should not be sacrificed merely for commercial purposes..

If that be so, the one question that comes paramount in my mind is whether or not efficiency can be sacrificed for the sake of economy. That is a question which I think can be more properly answered by the members of the Department; but I may be permitted to observe that I cannot agree with my former Chief, who was once the President of a particular Committee, of which I happened to be a humble member, that post offices should be abolished which do not pay. In fact if he turns over the report which we signed under his guidance, he will find a recommendation to the effect that a class of post offices may be abolished, but not two classes which are either of strategic importance or the loss on which is not more than Rs. 120 a year. Any one who has any experience of village life in India knows that there are post offices which are run at a cost of less than Rs. 200 a year. They may be extra-departmental post offices; but these post offices render a far greater service to the dumb millions of this country than the post offices which are at Bombay or Calcutta or Madras or in the City of Imperial Delhi, because, in those far off villages, from which you drain the labourers whose champion my friend, Mr. Joshi, is, and whose services capitalists like my friend, Sir Cowasji Jehangir, has to utilise to get better amenities of life, that these poor men who serve them in those industrial areas can send their letters to their village homes only through these small post offices in far off villages which may or may not pay. Of late I have noticed that some of the branch offices have been reduced to the status of extra-departmental ones. If the efficiency of the service which the far off people need is not in any way diminished by this measure, I have no objection to it; but if, merely for the sake of economising, this kind of retrenchment is availed of, certainly I cannot approve of the policy of the Government. It may be said that post offices in such big Cities as Delhi, Cawnpore or elsewhere pay for themselves. Then, why not abolish post offices elsewhere? I know of areas, of about 100 square miles, where there are at present probably at least ten post offices; and I do not think all the ten post offices in that area can really pay; but that is a source of revenue in this way that people from those places living in industrial towns have correspondence with those centres and the income of these industrial centres like Cawnpore and Delhi will be diminished if post offices were not there. You can reduce those post offices from ten to five, and distribute letters fifteen days in the month; that will not be efficient service. So, I beg to submit that the question of efficiency and the question of real service and real utility to the people should be kept in mind before adopting any scheme of retrenchment. It has been said that the Telegraph Department swallows the profit of the Postal Department. But as has been pointed out by Sir

Thomas Ryan, even the post office is not paying at the present moment; and if we go a little deeper into the thing, why is it not paying at the present moment? You will find the reason in the raising of the postal charges. Twenty years back, when postal rates were not raised, and probably it was necessary to raise them at that time because of the high prices owing to the war, but when the cost of living and everything has gone down now, I think it was necessary that the postal charges should have been reduced and there would have been more money in the coffers of the Postal and Telegraph Department if they reduced the postal charges than what they propose to maintain at the present moment. . .

Mr. B. Das (Orissa Division: Non-Muhammadan): You did not recommend that in the Retrenchment Committee before.

Mr. Amar Nath Dutt: I think my friend knows the limitations under which we had to work in that Committee.

Sir, it is said that the Telegraph Department should be abolished. If the Telegraph Department is to be abolished on the ground that it does not pay, then, I think, there are many other Departments and many other concerns of Government which do not pay and which can be abolished. Our luxuries do not pay us, the type of education which we give to our children at the present day does not pay us,—we spend Rs. 300 a month over a son who does not earn even Rs. 40 a month in these days. Therefore, I submit, it is not a question whether the Telegraph Department pays or not, but it is a question whether the Telegraph Department, as a public utility concern, gives people the amenities of life which are necessary. That is the thing to be considered. I do not know who suggested the abolition of the Telegraph Department,—I think it was suggested by my friend, Sir Cowasji Jehangir,—but if that Department were abolished, I think my friend's business would have suffered, and with Lady Jehangir in Bombay and my friend here, to get any news from her, it would have taken three days which certainly would not have pleased him very much. . . .

An Honourable Member: In that case he would use the telephone and not the Telegraph Department.

Mr. Amar Nath Dutt: This policy of retrenchment is one which I cannot approve of. Firstly, Sir, in these days it is very necessary in the interest of law and order that every one of our youngmen should have occupation instead of their joining the army of revolutionaries and terrorists and be a menace to civilization and progress of our country. I think, Sir, that not a single individual should be retrenched or should have been retrenched. Not only that, I go further and say that retrenched men should be re-appointed immediately thus preventing them from joining the ranks of revolutionaries and terrorists. Sir, it is hunger that drives men to madness, and madness brings in these ideas of sedition and revolution in the country. Sir, in the interest of the country, in the interest of the governed and the Government, it is necessary that more men should be employed, and there should not be any retrenchment. There should not be hunger facing any individual, be he a highly educated man or be he a humble client of my friend, Mr. Joshi.

Mr. B. Das: Mr. Joshi is a well educated man.

Mr. Amar Nath Dutt: He is well educated, and, therefore, he is the champion of labour, and he is not that type of champion of labour who gets Rs. 100 a day as pocket money, but he is a true champion of labour. He is a true servant of India, for whom I have the greatest respect and regard. So what I say is, if necessary, you should reduce your expenditure in other ways, but you should not retrench a single individual. With these words, I support the motion.

Diwan Bahadur A. Ramaswami Mudaliar: Sir, if I intervene in this debate, it is with a view to participating in the general discussion whether the Posts and Telegraphs Department is a commercial department or a non-commercial department, or even to discuss any general questions of policy with reference to retrenchment, but merely to draw the attention of the Honourable Member in charge to a local grievance as to the way in which retrenchment is being carried on. I may be descending from the sublime to the somewhat ordinary, but I think I will be doing more good to the persons concerned than if I were to debate on these general principles. I refer to the City of Madras and to the retrenchment that is proposed to be carried on in the Dead Letter Office in the City of Madras. I understand that the Dead Letter Office section, the Post Master General's office and the Presidency Post Master's office are all three branches of the same unit, they were considered as one unit in the past, that clerks were interchangeable from one office to another, that it is merely an accident that clerks who are now working in the Dead Letter Office are there and not in the Presidency Post Master's office or in the Post Master General's office. Now, the retrenchment that is proposed to be carried on is this. They find there are too many clerks in the Dead Letter Office, and it is proposed to retrench about ten clerks. Now, these clerks are there not by their choice, but because they have been found specially fit for the very complicated work that is carried on by the Dead Letter Office. Those who know anything of that work will realise that the clerks who are posted there must be fairly clever people, they must be people who are in a position to decipher sometimes undecipherable addresses, some of them in hieroglyphics, some of them almost impossible to be made out by ordinary people. These clerks were at some previous period employed in the Presidency Post Master's office or the Post Master General's office. If they had continued there, they would not have had the menace of retrenchment. I am not going into the question whether ten men should be retrenched or not. I accept it, and having accepted it, I suggest that retrenchment should be applied to all the clerks taken together and that similar retrenchment should be applied to whichever clerk who has put in more than 25 years service or is found inefficient either in the Post Master General's office or in the Presidency Post Master's office. Such men should all be retrenched, they should be got rid of in the first instance, and this retrenchment of ten clerks should be distributed over the three sections. It would mean in the final result that some of these clerks who are working in the Dead Letter Office without being retrenched, may be posted either in the Post Master General's office or in the Presidency Post Master's office. That I think, would be a fairer method of retrenchment than to retrench only those who happen to be in the Dead Letter Office by mere accident and through no fault of their own. I think that is a grievance which does deserve the serious consideration of my Honourable friend, Sir Thomas Ryan. I believe applications have been sent and memorials have been addressed both by the Associations concerned and by the individual officers regarding this, and I am also given to understand that the proposed retrenchment has not been carried out. I do suggest, Sir, that before retrenchment is being given

effect to, this aspect of the case may be considered, and while I agree, there may be necessity for retrenchment, I do not think it is fair to confine the retrenchment only to the ten men who happen to be in the Dead Letter Office, but, in my opinion, the retrenchment should be spread over all the sections.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): Would Sir Thomas Ryan like to speak after lunch?

Sir Thomas Ryan: I think it will probably take some time, and if you approve, Sir, I should prefer to speak after lunch.

The Assembly then adjourned for Lunch till a Quarter Past Two of the Clock.

The Assembly re-assembled after Lunch at a Quarter Past Two of the Clock, Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty) in the Chair.

Sir Thomas Ryan: Sir, I am glad to observe that among the criticisms brought against my Department from time to time, it is comparatively very rarely that I hear any complaint that it does not do satisfactorily the work for which it is employed; we very rarely hear complaints that we do not carry the letters and deliver them with reasonable speed, or that telegrams are not carried with reasonable promptness and expedition, although I do not claim that we have attained perfection.

Before I come to the immediate point before us, I should like, with your permission, to take advantage of this occasion, which is practically my last appearance here, to acknowledge the co-operation of the post and telegraph staff of all grades to whom I am indebted for that comparative freedom from serious criticism of the Department which it at present enjoys. I have acknowledged their services at the close of my Annual Report, and I think that the acknowledgment is well deserved. (Hear, hear.) We have now before us a motion to condemn the Department because of its policy of retrenchment. I think, before I come to observations on detailed criticisms, that it is desirable that I should refer clearly to the policy laid down for the Department—as it is this which underlies our policy of retrenchment. As Mr. Amar Nath Dutt has said, this policy of the Department has been quite clearly laid down by Government in the past. It was announced by Sir Atul Chatterjee in the Assembly on the 12th March, 1924, and I will just read a few sentences from what he said:

“I entirely agree with Mr. Neogy in considering that the Post Office should be looked upon as a public utility service. But in the same way as the Railways and any other organisations which are for the benefit of the general public and are looked upon as public utility services should at the same time pay their way, I consider that the Post and Telegraph Department should pay its own way; and I have the authority of my Honourable Colleague, the Finance Member, in saying that the Government do not look to the Postal and Telegraph Department as a revenue earning Department.”

He then went on to say that it is a valuable monopoly and:

“In my view that monopoly should be so worked as to be a source of benefit to the general taxpayer without being a burden on him.”

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Now, Sir, if the view expressed by Mr. Joshi were accepted as indicating the policy of the Department, nobody would be better pleased than myself. We would provide postal and telegraph services, wherever they are wanted, regardless of cost. We could provide a magnificent service; cost not coming into consideration, naturally there would be nothing to prevent us from meeting all demands. I should be able to satisfy all Members of this House, and I should leave India with considerably more kudos than I am likely to do; though the Honourable the Finance Member might look a little blue, I should not worry about him. (Laughter.) However, the accepted policy is that the Department must pay its way. It has been very far for some years past from achieving that ideal, and obviously those who are in the immediate charge of the Department must devote their energies to coming, as near as possible, to that mark. When, as at present, the Department is working at a loss in both of its main branches, it is obvious that the departmental staff must do what they can both to increase revenue and to reduce expenditure. As there has been a good deal of comment, I think rather ill-informed, as to the relative position of the postal and telegraph branches of the Department, I should like to dilate a little on this point. The assertion that the postal branch is blamed to support the telegraph branch rests on reiteration and not on proof. I hardly indulge in poetry, but I should like to say that I believe that my Honourable friend, Mr. S. C. Mitra, my Honourable friend, Mr. Lahiri Chaudhury, and possibly one or two others have sat at the feet of that distinguished English mathematician, the late Mr. C. L. Dodgson, who wrote a great many books, and in one of his books one of his characters he quotes as saying:

“Tis the note of the Jubjub! Keep count, I entreat;
You will find I have told it you twice.
Tis the song of the Jubjub! The proof is complete,
If only I've stated it thrice.”

It is the voice of the Post and Telegraph Union; and we hear it constantly reiterated that the postal branch is the victim of the villains in the telegraph branch of the Department, and this assertion is repeated so frequently that it has become almost to be believed in certain sections of this House.

Now, Sir, I should like to refer to our accounting system as bearing on this question. The accounts system of the Posts and Telegraphs Department has been examined comparatively recently by a Committee presided over by my Honourable friend, Sir Cowasji Jehangir, and that Committee made certain recommendations. It accepted in the main the principles and methods of accounting in force for the Department as a whole, and it made recommendations for certain modifications. The recommendations of that Committee were very carefully considered by Government and a memorandum was placed before the Public Accounts Committee explaining quite clearly why in certain respects the Government of India were unable to fall in with the recommendations of the Committee. Mr. Mitra, recently in a very rapid speech containing more inaccurate statements than I have ever heard in an equally short period of time referred to among other things to the iniquity of the Government in not adopting the recommendations of the Jehangir Committee. Sir, in Appendix No XXVI, at page 219 of Volume I of the Report of the Public Accounts Committee on the Accounts for 1930-31, there is a memorandum by the Financial Secretary on the recommendations of the Jehangir Committee explaining why the Government

of India were unable to accept some of those recommendations. That memorandum was brought before the Committee on the 18th August, 1932, Mr. Mitra being present. Its consideration was then postponed. A further memorandum referring to the previous one and summing up the position was placed before the Public Accounts Committee at another meeting on the 8th August, 1933. Mr. Mitra, again, was present, and it was recorded in the final report that the Committee noted the decisions of the Government of India and had no remarks to offer. That statement was signed by Mr. Mitra. It is perfectly open to Honourable Members to say that the accounts of the Department as a whole may be substantially accurate, but that the divisions of receipts and of expenditure as between the branches of the department are incorrect, and I know that Mr. Mitra and certain other Members take that view. They never give us any reason for their view. They accept it as a hypothesis that the Postal Department or the postal branch is being always done in the eye. It is quite true as regards receipts that there are certain adjustments made on the basis of certain averages. So far as I know, these adjustments are just as likely, if inaccurate at all, to be inaccurate to the prejudice of the telegraph branch as of the Postal Branch. However, the whole question of the system of adjustments between branches of the Department is about to be placed specifically before the Public Accounts Committee, and the material necessary for that is now being completed in my office. The House may, therefore, rest assured that this question of the accounts of the different branches of the Department will be considered by that Committee and I think that that is all that can be said on the point at present and I hope that Mr. Mitra, after signing the report of the Committee dealing with that matter, will not immediately afterwards disown it.

Meanwhile, Sir, the accounts of the Department are as accurate as we know how to make them, and they show both main branches of the Department working at a loss. Therefore, as I have said, it is my duty to see that in addition to increasing the receipts, as much as possible, I keep the expenditure down as much as possible in all branches.

Now, Sir, retrenchment being necessary, no apology is being called for from me for doing by best to effect it. I think that a special tribute is due—it has already been rendered this morning, and, I am sure, on previous occasions—to the Retrenchment Committee presided over by Sir Cowasji Jehangir (a Committee different from the one I have previously mentioned) for the invaluable assistance given in pointing the way to certain economies. The recommendations of that Retrenchment Committee have been accepted and carried into force practically *in toto* by the Government of India. But the necessities of the situation were such that Government should not rest content there and other possibilities of making savings have also been pursued and further valuable savings have been effected, which were not gone into in detail by that Committee.

Now, Sir, one persistent misstatement made by the Postal Union or representatives of the Postal Union relates to the incidence of retrenchment. It is commonly alleged that the retrenchment has been ruthless and heavy in the postal branch, but practically negligible in other branches. I shall give figures, and I trust that they will show Honourable Members, who have the patience to listen to these figures, how far from the truth that view of the case is. I have here a statement showing the approximate results of retrenchment of personnel in the Department likely to be effected up to the end of 1933-34, that is, to the end of this month, and I have here figures showing the percentage of total retrenchment to total strength in

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numbers of staff and also in relation to the cost of staff. As regards numbers, gazetted officers 11·9 per cent have been retrenched. Clerical staff in the selection grades 12·6 per cent, in the upper division time scale 15 per cent, but against this there has been an increase in the number of lower division clerks. There has been an increase also, naturally, in the number of extra-departmental postmasters appointed in lieu of departmental postmasters, and the net effect on the clerical staff is a retrenchment of 4·3 per cent. In the numbers of lower subordinate engineering staff, which we are constantly being told has not been touched, there was a retrenchment of 14·5 per cent. In the traffic branch, which is represented as being specially favoured, there was a retrenchment of 12·3 per cent in telegraph masters and telegraphists. In the postmen class, the number is exactly the same, 12·3. In the engineering line staff, 5·2 and inferior servants 8·3, I hardly think the House will wish me to read the corresponding figures of percentages relating to pay charges. They correspond fairly closely with the figures of numbers of staff. Now, of course, there are some people who say that gazetted officers and superior officers are quite unnecessary, and, if employed at all, their numbers can be cut down indefinitely. I know there are some people in this House who hold that all the Superintendents of Post Offices might be abolished! In the first place, I should like to emphasise what I have already said in my annual report on the subject of the overstaffing of this Department with gazetted officers. The point has been made so often that I dealt with that in a special paragraph in the last annual report. I shall read a few sentences from that:

“The total number of superior gazetted staff was 489 at the end of the year. This number includes 154 divisional and other Superintendents, 49 post masters and 73 telegraph traffic officers most of whom are in executive charge of the larger post and telegraph offices or of postal and railway mail service divisions, and 115 assistant and deputy assistant engineers most of whom are in executive charge of engineering subdivisions or in comparable posts. The remaining 98 officers are actually holding higher charges such as are commonly regarded by the general public as controlling the business of the department.”

Mr. S. G. Jog (Berar Representative): What about Post Masters General and Deputy Post Masters General?

Sir Thomas Ryan: They are included in the remaining 98. I deny most emphatically that the Posts and Telegraphs Department is overmanned with gazetted staff. The figures which I have quoted will satisfy the House anyhow that retrenchment has not been confined to the lower staff by any means. Nor is it the case, as has been represented, that the engineering officer staff has not been reduced. There were various recommendations made by the Posts and Telegraphs Retrenchment Committee involving the reduction of one post of Deputy Chief Engineer, one post of Divisional Engineer, Telegraphs, four posts of Assistant Engineers, eight posts of Deputy Assistant Engineers, one post of Assistant Electrical Engineer, five posts of Deputy Assistant Electrical Engineers. If the retrenchment on the engineering side, as a whole, be considered, it will be found, I think, undoubtedly to be somewhat less than the retrenchment in the postal or traffic branches of the Department; but there is this essential difference that whereas the staff in the traffic branch or the postal branch can be understood to have some relation to the actual volume of traffic and work which has been very much less in recent years, it is not the case that the engineering staff, high or low, can in a similar way be

directly co-related with the volume of traffic. The wires of the Department and the instruments of the Department have to be maintained, and they have to be maintained as efficiently whether the traffic passing over the wires is big or small. Actually the wire mileage of the Department has been increasing. Consequently, it is quite unreasonable to suggest that there should be any retrenchment of engineering staff comparable with that which may be possible in times of slack traffic on the postal or the traffic sides. I am indebted to Sir Cowasji Jehangir, and I regret he is not here to hear me say so, for presenting this matter of retrenchment in its true light this morning. It is obvious, I think, that while the policy of Government, which I have mentioned, holds the field that the Department cannot relax its efforts to find all reasonable economies.

A good deal of stress has been laid by one or two Members on the recommendations in the Varma Committee's Report. That was a Committee appointed under the Chairmanship of Mr. Varma, now Financial Adviser, Posts and Telegraphs, to investigate the methods of working and organization in the telegraph traffic branch of the Department. I should like, if I may, at this stage to mention my personal indebtedness to Mr. Varma for the invaluable assistance he has given to me through our association in connection with the posts and telegraphs work. Any improvement which can be pointed to in our financial administration and any improvements in our economical administration are, I think, mainly to be credited to Mr. Varma for his invaluable guidance and advice. (Applause.) As Chairman of the Committee, which I have just mentioned, Mr. Varma has also done invaluable and useful work and he with his colleagues has investigated, in the most painstaking manner, the whole system of dealing with our telegraph traffic. The result is a very full report in which every recommendation made is explained in considerable detail. I do not suppose many Members have read it although some have put down questions about it, and a copy is available in the Library, but I should like to emphasise that this is not a retrenchment report in the ordinary sense. It is not a report indicating merely where staff can be reduced or expenditure curtailed in other directions, merely because of the falling off in business. The recommendations here involve, if accepted in full, a complete reorganization of the telegraph system, and I might mention just a few items which are dealt with in this report, as giving the House some idea of its scope.

The Committee recommends a very important revision of the system and standards for calculating the strength of the operating and clerical staff in our telegraph offices. They discuss the question of, and recommend the extensive installation of, mechanical signalling equipment. They recommend considerable savings of staff through the somewhat heroic measure of abolishing all the reserves in the telegraph operating staff and making good shortages of staff by other means. They propose radical changes in the system and scope of supervision in our telegraph offices. They make far-reaching proposals for the substitution of non-technical for technical staff, and so on. Sir, these, as a whole, are, I believe, most valuable recommendations, but they have to be considered with extreme care, because, to anticipate a point I shall come to presently, I agree entirely with the main proposition which many Members have advanced that in our search for economy we must not sacrifice efficiency. Well, Sir, these recommendations of this Committee have aroused an immense amount of opposition and criticism, partly interested I think, but certainly

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partly not interested but based on perfectly *bona fide* uncertainty of the practicability and effect of the adoption of these measures. It is for that reason that I have not been able even now to submit a report, with my fully considered views, to the Government of India for their orders, although my statement of the case is now approaching completion. Members are apprehensive that the recommendations in this Report will involve a further heavy retrenchment—and I know that very great apprehensions are entertained—and as bearing on this I think it is permissible for me to say that it is not likely that I shall be able to recommend the immediate adoption or the sudden introduction of what I might describe as the more revolutionary proposals in this report. It is more likely that I should recommend that they should be introduced and tested tentatively and gradually, and I have, therefore, every confidence that there will not be, in consequence, anything of the nature of the sudden throwing out of employment of large numbers of men which has been anticipated. That is an expression of my personal attitude towards this report, which, I may say, I have discussed in the greatest detail with delegations from the two principal unions of telegraph servants. I am not, of course, able to say what view the Government of India will finally take. I may mention incidentally that I think my Honourable friend, Sir Henry Gidney, is somewhat misinformed or has misjudged the situation in thinking that the recommendations in this report spell disaster to his community so far as employment in the telegraph branch of the Department is concerned.

Lieut.-Colonel Sir Henry Gidney: I am very glad to hear it.

Sir Thomas Ryan: My friend's satisfaction is a little premature, I am afraid, the truth is that it is the changes made in the system of recruitment to telegraphists' ranks which were made some years ago which have produced and are likely to produce some ill effects so far as the members of one community are concerned, but that has nothing to do with the recommendations of this Report. However, the question of the recruitment of that community is a separate one, and I need not pursue it here.

Now, I have said that I am in general agreement, and I am sure, the Government of India are in general agreement, with the view expressed by several Members that we must not carry out retrenchment without proper regard to efficiency; and it certainly has been my instruction to the officers of the Department that, while making strenuous efforts to reduce the cost of the administration to the utmost, they should keep efficiency in view. I do not say that in these efforts to secure economy in some directions, the public convenience may not be to some extent affected. We have, for instance, on the recommendations of the Cowasji Jehangir Committee, reduced the numbers of postal deliveries in various places. If that is regarded as an impairment of efficiency, I admit we have impaired efficiency, but there are very few narrow limits within which we are willing to go in the direction of impairing efficiency. This morning, for example, it was stated by my Honourable friend, Mr. Maswood Ahmad, that one of our measures, the extension of the system of working our post offices by means of extra-departmental agents, has resulted in the shortening of hours and in serious inconvenience to the public in certain places. If the Honourable Member would give me separately some particulars of any cases which have come to his notice of that kind, I shall

be only too glad to go into the matter with the Post Master General concerned and see whether anything can be done to remove any real grievance from which the public may be suffering.

A good deal has been said about the question of our failure to give proper postal facilities in rural areas. Well, Sir, before the financial collapse, we were doing a good deal in that direction. Every year we opened large numbers of new post offices, experimentally in the first place, and we made these offices permanent where there seemed to be any hope, after trial, of their proving successful, and undoubtedly we have had temporarily to abandon that policy under the stress of financial pressure. It is quite true, as has been urged, that we have been closing down offices rather than opening new ones, and I am afraid that it is a case in which, if we are to observe the policy which Government have adopted so far with the general approval of the House, I cannot promise that there will be anything considerable extension of postal facilities in rural areas until the finances of the Department look distinctly better. At the same time, we are by no means going so far as to close all offices which are not paying; even now there are a large number of unremunerative offices, on each of which some actual loss is being incurred.

Another statement made and directly relevant to the question of our retrenchment policy relates to the hardship to individual members of the staff who are thrown out of employment and a passing allusion was made to the effect that they were having no appeal to the Director-General. I think the Honourable Member, who made that remark, was slightly confusing the question of appeals against retrenchment with the question of appeals against orders passed in disciplinary cases. There has been a good deal of discussion about the Statutory rules and orders of Government relating to the imposition of penalties and appeals against them, and it is true that in many cases the rules provide for no appeal to the Director-General. But there is nothing whatever to prevent any member of the staff, who comes under retrenchment, from making a representation—it would not technically be an “appeal”—there is nothing to prevent him making a representation to the head of the Circle and in turn to the head of the Department and to the Government of India. I have received and have considered a certain number of such representations, and I am quite ready to consider any case if reasonable ground is shown.

I think I have touched on the main issues which were raised this morning, but there are a large number of points, more of detail, and I shall endeavour to touch on some at least of these before my time has expired.

Reference has been made to the question of retrenchment in the Dead Letter Offices, the point being that the staff in these offices is being fixed with reference to what is known as a “time test” based on the average time certain operations found to take. It has been represented that certain work no longer goes to these Dead Letter Offices which used to be performed in them, and that as this was the easiest work to do, the work which still remains in the Dead Letter Office is harder and takes more time, and so that the time test should make more allowance for it. It is quite true that one Post Master General or more than one, have recommended a move in that direction, but others have thought it unnecessary; and my decision has been that as the time test is anyhow

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never adopted as an absolute fixed rule of thumb, it is not necessary to change it, but heads of Circles know that they have every ground for expecting allowance to be made if they find in practice that the staff of the Dead Letter Offices is being overworked when the total strength is fixed with regard to the existing time tests. My Honourable friend, Mr. Mudaliar, made a minor point regarding the actual treatment of a certain number of men likely to be retrenched in the Dead Letter Office in Madras. The Post and Telegraph Department employ an immense number of men in different parts of the country and employed on different cadres, and we have not thought it practicable to deal with these retrenchment questions in such a way as to involve constant adjustment between one cadre and another. The line we have taken, rightly or wrongly, I, of course, think rightly, as a practical proposition, is where retrenchment in a particular cadre has been found necessary, some person from that cadre has been actually retrenched and we have not attempted to make cross adjustments between one cadre and another. The different offices to which Mr. Mudaliar referred are offices with different cadres, and it is, in pursuance of the practice which I have described, that we have effected our retrenchment in the Dead Letter Offices and propose continuing to do so. I will, however, say that I see there is undoubtedly some reason in the other view of the case that where you retrench in one office, you may have possibly a vacancy occurring in the other and you should transfer that man across; it would be accompanied by various inconveniences, among others it would interfere with the promotion in the cadre which normally goes to the men in that separate cadre. I will promise my friend that I shall look into the point once more; my decision has been against the view which is represented, but I will examine it afresh and see whether we can concede something to the view that he has expressed.

It was alleged by one speaker this morning that, in establishing the appointment of a Deputy Director-General of Finance, we were merely restoring under another name a post which has been retrenched in my office. Well, Sir, those Honourable Members, who were members of the Public Accounts Committee, will remember that a great deal was said there upon the need for improvement in the financial administration of the Posts and Telegraphs Department, and although I myself took and still take the strongest exception to some of the criticisms levelled against the Department before the Public Accounts Committee, I cannot deny that there is great room for improvement in the general financial administration, and it was in pursuance of the views expressed before and by the Public Accounts Committee that the creation of this post was decided upon. The proposals for actually creating the post were placed before the Standing Finance Committee and were approved by that body. The work of this officer will have nothing to do with the work which used to be done by the Deputy who was retrenched on the establishment side in my office, and there is no foundation whatever for the suggestion that we have merely in this case restored under one name a post abolished under another.

Reference was also made to our action in incurring further capital expenditure on the Telegraph Department, but I think there has been some misunderstanding on this point. My Honourable friend, Sir Frank Noyce, desires me to explain a little more clearly than was possible at

the moment what has actually happened. We are restricting capital expenditure nowadays practically exclusively to work necessary for the development of the telephone branch of the Department, and we incur expenditure only which will be directly and almost immediately profitable. It is quite true, as I think my friend, Mr. Joshi, pointed out that a considerable amount of this expenditure was booked not under the head "telephones", but under the head "telegraphs". The reason is that the cost of all the trunk wires and the line equipment is booked under the head "telegraphs", actually there are no separate telephone trunk lines. But although the capital expenditure is booked under the head "telegraphs", there is an adjustment in respect of the use of the equipment between the telephone branch and the telegraph branch, so that in actual fact, the expenditure, as I have said, is being incurred for the benefit of the telephone branch and the ultimate debit for the use of these wires and instruments and the interest on capital is brought against the telephone account.

Some condemnatory remarks were also made with regard to another matter, our incurring substantial losses on unserviceable stores. I should like to mention with regard to this question of store that we have been making a very great improvement. When the country emerged from the Great War, we had a stores balance of over 2½ crores in book value and we have been doing our utmost in recent years to bring down this to a reasonable figure. At the end of the coming year, we estimate the total stores balance will be round about 50 lakhs in value, including about 20 lakhs of stores held for, and at the cost of, the Army Department. It is inevitable that, in the management of any big stores organisation in which the balances are being rapidly brought down, there shall be a certain amount of write off of unserviceable and obsolete stores. In every store yard, there must be from time to time a clearing up and writing off or writing down of the value of unserviceable or obsolete stores. The figures relating to this matter come regularly before the Public Accounts Committee every year and it is open to members of that body, who are interested in this point, to deal with it there.

I think it was Mr. Lahiri Chaudhury who referred to the circumstance of our having three classes of engineering officers for different kinds of work. Actually that is not the case of the superior officers of the Department except in so far as we have a very small separate staff for the highly specialised business of wireless engineering. But it is quite true that we have a division into more or less water-tight compartments of officers employed on telephone, electrical and general engineering, and my Honourable friend will be glad to learn that this point has been rather fully dealt with by the Varma Committee and the views of that Committee bearing on this are amongst those, on which I shall shortly be making my recommendations to Government, and I shall certainly give due weight to the fact that my Honourable friend, Mr. Lahiri Chaudhury, also thinks that something should be done in this matter.

I need not follow my Honourable friend, Mr. Jadhav, as I think most of what he said will be of more relevance when we come to discuss the provisions in the Finance Bill relating to postal rates, but I was glad to notice incidentally that he admitted that there was at present an abuse of the book-packet system by some who ordinarily send their communications by postcards.

Mr. Amar Nath Dutt, although he signed the report of the Cowasji Jehangir Committee, which recommended rather extensive retrenchment,

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has curiously enough now changed his mind and says that he would not have any retrenchment of the staff, but would have reduction in other ways. I shall be most grateful to him if he will indicate some of those other ways in which we can make further practical retrenchments.

Sir, I have probably not dealt with every detail which has been mentioned this morning. I am afraid the time available would not permit of that, but I trust I have said enough to show that our general retrenchment policy is in accordance with the policy which has been known to and accepted by this House for many years, and that it is inevitable that our efforts at saving expenditure must continue, and that we have not been unreasonable in the manner in which we have been carrying it out. I think I may safely say that to vote against the continuance of retrenchment is to vote against the most practical step that I can adopt towards the ultimate further reduction of postal charges.

Mr. S. C. Mitra: Sir, I regret that my friend, Sir Cowasji Jehangir, was absent when I moved this cut motion early this morning. He misconceived the whole purpose of my motion and devoted his speech of more than half an hour to a matter on which I fully agree with him. In my motion, I have never said that I am against retrenchment. I only take exception to the method that the Government of India have adopted in giving effect to the retrenchment policy. Sir, I accept Government's position that the Postal Department is a public utility department, and I further agree with them that there is no reason why, because it is a public utility department, it should not pay its expenses. But what I maintain is that the postal side of this Posts and Telegraphs Department is paying its way, and I shall presently show from the figures quoted by Sir Thomas Ryan himself in the latest Administration Report that it is paying its way. And I shall presently substantiate my grievances against that Department as to why they have not taken practical steps to show to the contrary, if they wanted it. I know Sir Thomas Ryan is rather sensitive about the remarks passed in this House, and I appeal to him to bear with me for a few minutes and consider the points that I make. In his latest Report, he shows that in the postal side there is a deficit of Rs. 6,07,345, while, on the telegraph side, there is a deficit of Rs. 33,47,588. A few lines below in the same Report it is stated that for the retrenched personnel and for their gratuities, commutation of pensions, etc., they had to pay during the year Rs. 7,38,057. What does it prove? If these extraordinary payments had not been made, the Postal Department, even according to his own calculations, was paying its way. But my contention is far more substantial than that. As I have said, I do not claim to show merely by this that if you wiped out this emergency payment during the year, it is a balanced Budget. But, apart from that, in this House I made a complaint that proper allocation was not made between Postal and Telegraphic revenues. I will repeat now what my allegations were. I said that for the telegrams you can have separate stamps, and after the year we can count it up, as has been done with the revenue stamps this year. In every Post and Telegraph office, there is an account of how much they get in the shape of telegraph stamps. With a little trouble and the expenditure of a few rupees, they can specifically say what amount is due to the Telegraph Department and what

amount is due to the Postal Department. What they now do is—they have fixed a problematic ratio. Why do you always take shelter behind this useless excuse and make a whimsical allotment of postal and telegraphic income? Have a calculation of telegraphic income and a calculation for post office income, and you can once for all allay apprehensions by giving the exact figures that this is the amount you get from the Telegraph Department, that this is the income of the Telegraph Department and that this is the income from the Postal Department. Once for all you can refute our allegation if it is not correct.

Sir Thomas Ryan: Sir, I may say, if the Honourable Member will excuse my interrupting him, that at one time there were separate postal and telegraph stamps and they were abolished, as I believe, in the interest of public convenience. The Honourable Member may be perfectly right in saying that the present system is unfair to the Postal Department, though I have no reason to believe that it is more unfair to them than to the Telegraph Department. But, in any case, this question will come specifically and categorically before the Public Accounts Committee very shortly.

Mr. S. C. Mitra: As Sir Thomas Ryan has referred to the Public Accounts Committee, I think I should clear myself of the charge he made, because, when he was quoting from the report of each meeting of the Committee and said that I was present, I thought he was searching my name to decide whether I should be entitled to a Knighthood for regular attendance at these meetings like some other Members, I mean my friend, Sardar Jawahar Singh, who got a Knighthood merely for regular attendance in the Assembly. But curiously enough I found that he was quoting from the Report Volume, page 36, where it is said in paragraph 57:

“The Committee noted the decisions of the Government of India and had no remarks to offer.”

Now, Sir, you will bear with me for a few seconds while I show how this statement in the Report really represents the true state of things. I refer to the Evidence Volume and you and the House will judge how far they are correct or I am correct. On page 71, the Chairman said:

“The Jehangir Committee report is not before us. Only one particular recommendation of that report and the action taken upon it has been before us in Appendix IX.

Mr. Ram-ay Scott: The Government may put in a Resolution asking the Assembly to consider whether the division between the Posts and Telegraphs is correct.

Chairman: It is rather difficult for us to record any finding on an issue which has not been placed before us.

Mr. Badenoch: The whole method of distribution has been before the Auditor General. The whole scheme was worked out by myself and Mr. Varma and was put before Sir Frederic Gauntlett and the Government of India and that method was accepted. As far as I know the Posts and Telegraphs Accounts Enquiry Committee accepted it *en bloc*.

Mr. Varma: The Jehangir Committee was appointed as a direct result of the recommendation of the Public Accounts Committee. The Committee have examined in accordance with the terms of reference, every one of the principles on which commercialisation of accounts was carried out by Government in 1925. It is clear that barring certain small modifications here and there, the Committee had no objection to raise against the principles on which the commercial accounts were organised in 1925. I submit that this report is before this Committee and they can record their opinion.

[Mr. S. C. Mitra.]

Chairman : It is a little difficult to ask non-official members to record a definite finding on an issue which has not expressly been framed for their consideration at this meeting.

Mr. Varma : The Accounts Committee was appointed at the instance of the Public Accounts Committee and the Report of that Committee is before the Public Accounts Committee.

Mr. Badenoch : The method of allocation was accepted by Sir Frederic Gauntlett in 1925 and by the Government of India. We have no reason to reconsider that, so that the original acceptance stands.

Mr. S. C. Mitra : The Committee wanted to have a day for discussion but somehow or other they could not have."

That was the position on the last Report: it was decided that a day will be devoted in the Public Accounts Committee to go through this Report: that was denied. To continue my quotation: Mr. Varma then said:

"In paragraph 15, the Committee say :

"The Committee discussed the procedure for dealing with the report of the Posts and Telegraphs Enquiry Committee and accepted the suggestion of the Chairman that it was not necessary for Government to consult the Public Accounts Committee in regard to those recommendations which they accepted, but that in cases where Government felt unable to accept the recommendations, the Committee should be given an opportunity of considering the points involved and recording its views'."

Chairman : All I am prepared to do is to record a note that the Posts and Telegraphs Committee did not make any recommendation that there should be a departure from the arrangements which have been agreed to between the Auditor General and the Department regarding the classification of charges in the commercial accounts so as to exhibit a proper working of the Department as between the two branches and that we will also inform the Auditor General that this position is correct. Beyond noting that we cannot go further because that particular point has not been brought before us.

Mr. Anwar-ul-Azim : It would be tantamount to an expression of opinion by the Public Accounts Committee. The Director General Posts and Telegraphs, has got the opinion of the Jehangir Committee; then why trouble us now?

(The other non-official members agreed with Mr. Anwar-ul-Azim.)

Chairman : I think, Sir Thomas, you should be content to quote the Jehangir Committee Report, as an authority in the Assembly when the question comes up and not ask the support of the Public Accounts Committee. If the matter is brought before this Committee with all the relevant material the Committee will consider it."

After this, is any refutation of the charges necessary of what Sir Thomas Ryan said that I do something in the Public Accounts Committee and contradict it here? We did not go into the Report at all and much less accepted it.

Sir Thomas Ryan : May I say that just now when I was speaking, I attempted to draw a very clear distinction between two things, first I took the question of the recommendations of the Committee presided over by Sir Cowasji Jehangir, that is, relating to the accounts of the Department as a whole: the recommendations in that Report were not completely adopted by the Government of India, and the Government of India explained to the Public Accounts Committee their views with regard to those recommendations which they had not accepted. The Public Accounts Committee considered the explanation given by the Government and they recorded that they had no remarks to offer on the subject. That statement

was signed by, amongst others, Mr. S. C. Mitra. I was speaking and I speak now of the Report of the Public Accounts Committee on the accounts of the Department *as a whole*. It was quite true that, when I appeared before the Public Accounts Committee, I sought their verdict on another question, the separate question of the division in our accounts between the different branches of the Department, and I think that what Mr. Mitra has read is relevant to that separate question. There I failed—I got no verdict from the Public Accounts Committee—and it was left at this, that the matter would be brought before the Public Accounts Committee separately; and as I have tried to explain just now that submission to the Public Accounts Committee will be made; but undoubtedly in his speech on the General Budget, Mr. S. C. Mitra did tax Government with not having accepted the recommendations of the Cowasji Jehangir Committee: to the extent to which Government have not done so, Government had the support of the Public Accounts Committee.

Mr. S. C. Mitra: You are misquoting me: I think you could not follow me, as I was perhaps reading very fast.

Sir Thomas Ryan: When the actual documents are not before the House, it is difficult for me to discuss them further: but, I maintain, it is verifiable from the records of the Assembly that, a few days ago, Mr. Mitra taxed us with not accepting the recommendations of the Cowasji Jehangir Committee, whereas he was a party to the acquiescence in the attitude of the Government towards those recommendations.

Mr. S. C. Mitra: Sir, I do not like to remonstrate with Sir Thomas Ryan at length—I will only read the last sentence of the Chairman's ruling that day:

"If the matter is brought before this Committee with all the relevant material, the Committee will consider it."

At that stage, we were not allowed to discuss that question. In the very beginning, I said

"As regards paragraph 3, the Government of India had not been able to accept the four recommendations,"

and I wanted to discuss the whole thing. If you read the whole discussion, Sir, you will be surprised to hear how the Public Accounts Committee was treated by this Department. It was mostly at the instance of the Honourable the Finance Member, Sir George Schuster, who from the very beginning as Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee thought that there should be a small sub-committee to go into the depreciation fund and other accounts of the Postal Department—he was not very happy over these matters and suggested that there should be a small sub-committee of the Public Accounts Committee itself to go through the matters: but for some reason, best known to Government, they appointed a different Committee and that Committee reported; but we wanted that the whole report should be placed before the Public Accounts Committee; but, as I have quoted here, they said that the Government of India had gone through it and discussed it with the Auditor General and there is no chance of their going back on it; and so, what was the use of submitting the Report? That was the reason why the Chairman, Mr. Lloyd, at that time, ruled that the whole Committee's report was not before us

[Mr. S. C. Mitra.]

and so we were not allowed to enter into the merits of the whole report. I do not make any specific complaint against that; but when Sir Thomas Ryan brings a charge against us and wants to say "Mr. S. C. Mitra in the Public Accounts Committee slept over this matter, and now he comes to this House to mislead it", I have to refute his misleading statement.

Now, let us come to the main points. I fully maintain that this Postal Department is self-supporting, and it is not I alone who stress this point times without number, but it is the opinion of the general body of elected Members on this side of the House; and when we challenge them every time as to why they do not for one year at least spend something and show the exact figures—because they have in their accounts the receipts from stamps for telegraph purposes, and they can get it for any year—and then come and face us with the facts, they will never take up that suggestion: every time they have a whimsical way of fixing a certain percentage—it is known to them only how they arrive at that ratio—as allocated to the telegraph side and some percentage as going to the postal side. But why should we be treated to these hypothetical percentages, and why should we not at least for one year see for ourselves whether this Department is self-supporting or not? So, Sir, I say that it is due to miscalculation and a wrong appreciation of the Budget position that the postal side is considered to be unable to pay its way.

Then, as regards retrenchment, I made my points in my speech. There is, however, one point on which I should like to have some information. The other day we came to know that in the Army Department the five per cent cut in the pay was in some specially hard cases exempted, but so far as the Postal Department is concerned, I do not know of any such hard cases in which the authorities have exempted people from this five per cent. cut in salary, though in this Department most of the people are underpaid officials. Sir Cowasji Jehangir's Committee recommended a certain scale of retrenchment. I speak, of course, subject to correction by the Honourable Member in charge, and I want to know whether they have not gone very far to the extreme from the suggestions made by that Committee? Was there any suggestion for doing away with any percentage of the selection grade posts which affected a large number of officers in the lower grades? Is it not a fact that in July, 1931, when this Committee met, the price of the postcard was two pice and that of the envelope was one anna? Not only have the Postal Department accepted the recommendations of this Committee, but they have gone far ahead of those recommendations, particularly in regard to the retrenchment of lower grade officials. I would request my friend, Sir Cowasji Jehangir, to see for himself what is the position of this Department before he gives a general certificate to the Government that they have done nothing but justice. Sir, I maintain that there should be retrenchment in every Department of the Government. On principle, I am as strong as my friend, Sir Cowasji Jehangir, in holding that there should be retrenchment wherever it is possible, but there have been several Retrenchment Committees. Sir Cowasji Jehangir presided over two Retrenchment Committees, Mr. Varma presided over some Committees, and now they have got a sanction of Rs. 60,000 for another Retrenchment Committee. In this way, Retrenchment Committees are going on. Now, if Government really want an expert Retrenchment Committee, they should select a Committee from outside, because, so far, in these Committees their own officers sit and decide

matters in a way prejudicial to the interests of poor post men and poor clerks, while sparing higher officers. That is a policy against which I have to take exception. I am not against retrenchment. Therefore, I see no reason why I should not press this motion.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The question is:

“That the demand under the head ‘Indian Posts and Telegraphs Department (including Working Expenses)’ be reduced by Rs. 100.”

The motion was negatived.

Condition of the Extra Departmental Agents.

Mr. S. C. Mitra: Sir, I move:

“That the demand under the head ‘Indian Posts and Telegraphs Department (including Working Expenses)’ be reduced by Rs. 100.”

The Postal Enquiry Committee of 1920 introduced time-scale of pay for all the employees of the Postal Department save and except the extra departmental agents. The scale of pay of the entire staff of the Department was further re-examined in 1926, and, as a result, the scale of pay now enjoyed by the staff was sanctioned, but this time also the extra departmental agents were left untouched. Assurances were given times without number that the cases of these officials would be considered, but nothing substantial has been done yet. The Postal Unions have also been pressing for the last 12 years for increasing the emoluments of the extra departmental agents, but its prayer has been respected by the Government by issuing orders recently for further reduction in allowance. The meagre allowance which these unfortunate officials are getting are just sufficient to meet the expenses of the midday tiffin only. In comparison with the volume of works, the nature of duties they have to perform and the amount of responsibilities they have to shoulder, the allowance they draw is nothing and these extra departmental agents can rightly be designated as a band of honorary workers. Now, the Government, instead of taking steps to increase their emoluments, have issued orders fixing a new standard for determining the allowance of such officials. The Director-General in his G. O. No. 6, dated the 23rd June, 1932, has laid down the following principle for counting the points:

- (1) That for each Rs. 15 worth of stamps and stationery sold per mensem up to Rs. 75 and for each Rs. 30 worth in excess of Rs. 75 per mensem—one point.
- (2) That for each Rs. 500 worth of money orders issued and paid, savings bank deposits and withdrawals and cash certificates issued and discharged—all taken together—per mensem up to Rs. 3,000 and for each Rs. 1,000 worth of each transaction in excess of Rs. 3,000 per mensem.

In fixing the above standard, the amount of labour each extra departmental agent has to perform has not at all been taken into consideration. Officials doing more work may sometimes draw less allowance than those who are actually performing less work. As for example, according to the new standard up to Rs. 75 worth of stamp sold per mensem will count one point, but if thorough examinations of records and statistics are made, it will come to light that there are offices in which an extra departmental agent has to deal with one or two or utmost ten persons

[Mr. S. C. Mitra.]

in selling stamps worth Rs. 75 or so, but instances are not rare in which it will be found that there are certainly extra departmental sub or branch offices in which an extra departmental agent has to satisfy 100 or 200 persons in selling stamps equivalent to one point.

In similar ways, it can be shewn that a sum of Rs. 500 can be remitted by a single person by a single money order and sometimes such a sum is found to be remitted by 50 (fifty) persons by 50 different money orders. A postmaster, in issuing cash certificates of Rs. 500 as face value consisting of five cash certificates of 100 rupee denomination each, has to do more work and spend more time than a postmaster who has the good fortune of issuing by a single certificate of Rs. 500 denomination.

The Honourable Sir Frank Noyce: I am very sorry to interrupt the Honourable Member. May I draw his attention to the fact that he is placing my Honourable friend, Sir Thomas Ryan, at a very great disadvantage?

Mr. S. C. Mitra: Do you want a louder voice?

The Honourable Sir Frank Noyce: No, Sir; I should like to have a little less speed. The Honourable Member is not racing against time as he was on a previous occasion.

Mr. S. C. Mitra: I accept the suggestion, Sir. I thought that the subject matter that I am now dealing with was so common place to the Director-General who is retiring that he would be able to follow the speech even if it were delivered at a much more rapid speed.

The Honourable Sir Frank Noyce: I might explain, Sir, that I at any rate am willing to learn from him.

Mr. S. C. Mitra: It is, therefore, necessary that amount of labour should be counted in determining the allowances and establishment charges of an extra departmental sub or branch office.

In paragraph 3 of the Director-General's G. O. No. 6 of 23rd June, 1932, it is stated as follows:

"The standard should be applied to all extra departmental branch offices and when such application would result in a decrease of existing allowance, this is to be limited in the case of present incumbents to 10 per cent of the sanctioned allowance."

But it is to be applied subject, of course, to the proviso in paragraph 2 above in full on any change of incumbents. Thus it is definitely laid down that in applying the standard the emolument of an extra departmental agent should not be decreased by more than ten per cent. of his present allowance, but it appears that the divisional authorities, perhaps, under instruction from the head of the Circle have ordered in some cases 30 or 40 per cent reduction. Such reduction according to the orders can only be done on any change of incumbents. There are also instances that full reduction has been effected by changing the incumbent even.

In short the extra departmental agents asked for bread, but they have been given stone. The Government, instead of taking steps to increase their allowances, have fixed such a standard, according to which calculation the allowances of all the extra departmental agents have been

reduced. An official who was getting Rs. ten per month will now get Rs. five only. This is a negation of justice.

The demand of the staff is to revise the standard in such a way that at least no body's allowance is substantially reduced. The plea of the Government is that this is their extra work. Sir, I know that my Honourable friend, Sir Frank Noyce, is not well acquainted with the details of the postal administration, and so I should like to elaborate the subject still further. These people are not Government servants according to Government interpretation, but still they carry out the duties of postmasters with a small allowance ranging from Rs. 5 to Rs. 12 or Rs. 15. I hope that my Honourable friend, Mr. Amar Nath Dutt, will explain to the House how necessary and how essential is the service of these extra departmental agents throughout India, and they are the real foundation of this Postal Department. They, in the numerous villages, perform functions for this Postal Department, but curiously enough they are not recognised as Government servants. There is a curious rule, before these persons are enlisted, that they are asked to say whether they have any subsidiary business. In these hard days, when people cannot get even mere subsistence, they give wrong information saying that they have some subsidiary business, that they have a shop or that they have a teachership, and thus they secure these posts of extra departmental agents. But the work is so onerous that the whole of their time is devoted to this work. They do not get any advantage of the leave rules, and, if they have to go on leave, they must bring a substitute for whom they are responsible. The result is, if anybody goes through the postal administration report, he will find there are numbers of cases of theft and embezzlement by these very poorly paid officers who have to deal with large sums of money. We have all along suggested for a long time that at least their allowances might be increased. They have to pay from their own pockets for contingencies and even for a lamp or ink, and they have to supply their own chairs and tables. This is the justice that is being done by the Department! When this matter was represented to that kind and good ex-Director-General Sir Hubert Sams, he took the matter very sympathetically, but as there were thousands of such persons.—even if their emoluments were increased by one or two rupees, it would amount to a very substantial sum,—the financial stringency stood in the way. Now that the budget of the Department is going to be balanced, the Department should favourably consider the question of increase in the allowances of these extra departmental agents. The system of recording points which they have now adopted is a very curious system. They get a point for sending a money order of Rs. 500. If one man sends that amount, it is all right, but when 20 or 30 persons send money orders, the total of which comes to Rs. 500, it means 20 or 30 times more work for the man, but according to the curious rules of this Department the amount of money order is considered and not the labour that is involved in sending out these money orders. With these words, I move.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): Cut motion moved:

“That the demand under the head ‘Indian Posts and Telegraphs Department (including Working Expenses)’ be reduced by Rs. 100”

Maulvi Muhammad Shafee Daoodi (Tirhut Division: Muhammadan): Sir, I also live in a village in which there is an extra departmental agent. I have some knowledge of the drudgery through which these people have to go. In a village, generally people come and purchase one postcard, one envelope, and so on, and they are not rich men to purchase at one time a large number of postcards and envelopes.

[At this stage, Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shannukham Chetty) vacated the Chair which was then occupied by Sir Abdur Rahim, one of the Panel of Chairmen.]

Generally hundreds of persons would come to the man, and the poor fellow would have to spend not less than two or three minutes for every one of them in giving them a postcard of three pice. So is the case with money orders. These extra departmental men have got to teach people how to write money orders, because you do not find many people in the village to do that work, and those money orders are all of very small value. So, if the point system which has been suggested is going to be brought into operation, then people would have nothing left to them. The present scale of remuneration given to them is very, very small. In my Province of Bihar, it is only Rs. 10, but if this is going to be reduced, then there will be nothing left for these people to live on. Therefore, I think the point system should be revised so far as these extra departmental agents are concerned. The value in money should not be the consideration for giving remuneration; the amount of work put in should be the real test to guide as to what they should get. With these words, I support my Honourable friend, Mr. Mitra, on this point.

Mr. M. Maswood Ahmad: I want to make certain observations in this connection. There are many troubles which these extra departmental agents feel, and one of them is that they cannot contribute to the provident fund. When they are doing the same duty as departmental men, with a very scanty remuneration, they should have the privileges which the departmental officers have and they should have a chance to contribute to the provident fund as well. Again, my experience of Bihar is that all these extra departmental agents get the same pay whether the work is less or more, and that is not a good system. In certain places you will find the work is greater, the number of money orders is much larger, more letters have to be dealt with, and such people must get more allowance than those who have less work. At present there are two or three different kinds of these extra departmental officers. Some deal with money order and letter business only, some do registration and insurance business also, and yet some others do savings bank business. Though they have their works increased, their pay and allowances remain as before.

I have some knowledge of these extra departmental offices. In my village, the man in charge of the office gets Rs. 8, and not Rs. 10 as suggested by my Honourable friend, Mr. Shafee Daoodi. Generally it is Rs. 8 in my part of the country. He got the same pay when the work of the office, Khalilabad Nataul, was confined to money orders and letters only. Afterwards they added registration, insurance, and, again, the savings bank business, but all this time there has been no increase of pay. This is very hard and the Department must consider such cases sympathetically. They need not increase the allowance where the work is less,

but where the work is more, the remuneration also should be more, and when they give more time, they should certainly get more money for this work.

I hope my friend will not ask my friend, Mr. Mitra, when he is moving his second motion, to go slowly. Though it is better for my Honourable friend to learn something, still it is injurious for us, because there are many other cuts. With these observations, I support the motion moved by my Honourable friend.

Sir Cowasji Jehangir: Mr. President, so far as I remember, the Retrenchment Committee did examine the question of these extra departmental postmasters and they came to the conclusion that they should be encouraged. It was pointed out to the Committee that it was very difficult to get petty shop keepers, teachers and men of that class, who are appointed as extra departmental postmasters, to consent to serve. Naturally the answer was that you must make it more attractive and I believe that one of the recommendations of the Committee was that, since they also recommended the abolition of a certain number of post offices, these extra departmental postmasters should be given more attractive terms. That I believe, was the recommendation of the Committee. I have not been able to look it up. I have not been able to get a copy of the report yet. Sir Thomas will be able to verify whether my facts are correct. If so, the question arises how Government's action is consistent with the report, if Mr. Mitra's facts are correct. So far as I could follow Mr. Mitra, he quoted some orders of Government whereby the remuneration given to these extra departmental postmasters was actually reduced. If that fact is correct and if my memory does not play me false, such a policy would be exactly opposite to the policy suggested by the Retrenchment Committee. I think the point requires further elucidation. If, on account of retrenchment, we are to get rid of post offices which are never likely to pay, something must take their place and the only thing that can take their place is extra departmental postmasters. There must be some misunderstanding somewhere, I believe, and I would appeal to the Director-General of Posts and Telegraphs to clear up the point and to tell us how far he has encouraged these extra departmental postmasters.

Sir Thomas Ryan: There is a very large number of extra departmental postmasters employed in the Posts and Telegraphs Department. The number approaches 20,000, and obviously if I am to pursue the ideal of getting the work of the Department done as cheaply as reasonably possible, it is necessary that I should keep down, as far as reasonably can be done, the amount paid to these people. One rupee increase per man per month might seem a very small sum, but it represents in the aggregate over two lakhs a year, and it is necessary to keep down our expenses. Certainly, we have, fairly recently—I do not remember the precise date quoted by Mr. Mitra—endeavoured to see whether we can get extra departmental agents on more economical terms than before. It is true that the Committee presided over by my friend, Sir Cowasji Jehangir, recommended an extension of this system. On the point of remuneration, however, they only said:

“We recommend that if it be found necessary to attract a suitable quality of men such as respectable shop keepers, etc., Government should agree to increasing the allowances to Rs. 30 or Rs. 40.”

[Sir Thomas Ryan.]

We have approved of enhanced allowances being given *where necessary*, which is all that the Committee recommended, but I am sure Sir Cowasji Jehangir, who spoke eloquently this morning in favour of economy and the avoidance of extravagance, would not recommend that we should pay more than we need pay under this head. I must confess I was somewhat at a disadvantage, when my friend Mr. Mitra, was speaking, of not being able to follow very closely his very fluent speech. but I can at least say this much that even I, like Sir Frank Noyce, am prepared to learn from my friend, Mr. Mitra

Mr. S. C. Mitra: We cannot hear you. We have the same disadvantage.

Sir Thomas Ryan: I shall certainly, when I get the text of what my friend, Mr. Mitra said, I shall study it very closely and I will undertake to review the question of the remuneration of these extra departmental agents, but I trust that the undertaking to review it will not be understood as a categorical promise that it will inevitably be increased. I will examine the matter and if I should find that there is reason for reopening the question of their remuneration with a view to raising it, I should not hesitate to take the necessary action. There is just one point. It was stated that divisional officers go beyond the instructions issued to them by the Director-General, and, if so, I shall take steps to correct them. I think in view of the assurance I have given that I will consider the subject, though not necessarily favourably, the motion will not be pressed to a division.

Mr. S. C. Mitra: In view of the sympathetic reply, I beg leave of the House to withdraw my motion.

The cut motion was, by leave of the Assembly, withdrawn.

Selection Grade Posts.

Mr. S. C. Mitra: I move:

“That the demand under the head ‘Indian Posts and Telegraphs Department (including Working Expenses)’ be reduced by Rs. 100.”

In course of last year’s Budget discussion, my friends, Messrs. Azhar Ali and Lahiri Chaudhury, brought to the notice of the Department the reckless manner in which the selection grade posts in the Post Office and Railway Mail Service were being retrenched, specially in Bengal and Assam, United Provinces and Bihar and Orissa, but I regret to note that, instead of any improvement, matters have gone from bad to worse and nearly 200 selection grade posts, including those of first class town inspectors, have been brought under reduction. I am of the considered opinion that this drastic policy will inevitably cause, if it has not done so already, serious deterioration of efficiency of the postal service. It goes without saying that, unless the supervision is strengthened by increasing the selection grade posts, cases of fraud and irregularities will tremendously increase and public interests will suffer. I have endeavoured to ascertain the principle on which the selection grade posts are fixed, but

I must confess I have entirely failed. On the other hand, the statistics supplied by the Department in the following table in reply to one of my questions go to show that there is absolutely no such principle.

| Name of Head Post Office or town sub-post office. | Number of clerks. | Number of sorting and overseer postmen. | Pay of Deputy Post Masters. | Number of Assistant Post Masters. | Pay of Assistant Post Masters. |
|---|-------------------|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| | | | Rs. | | Rs. |
| Chittagong . . . | 37 | <i>Nil</i> | 160—250 | <i>Nil</i> | <i>Nil</i> . |
| Dacca . . . | 55 | 6 | 250—350 | 1 | 160—250 |
| Mymensingh . . . | 44 | 1 | 160—250 | <i>Nil</i> | <i>Nil</i> . |
| Howrah . . . | 39 | 5 | 160—250 | <i>Nil</i> | <i>Nil</i> . |
| Bara Bazar . . . | 56 | 13 | 160—250 | 2 | 160—250 |
| Patna . . . | 38 | 2 | 160—250 | 1 | 160—250 |
| Agra . . . | 35 | 6 | 160—250 | 2 | 160—250 |
| Allahabad . . . | 48 | 7 | 160—250 | 2 | 160—250 |
| Lucknow . . . | 59 | 6 | 250—350 | 3 | 160—250 |
| Meerut . . . | 30 | 5 | 160—250 | 1 | 160—250 |
| Peshawar . . . | 37 | 2 | 160—250 | 2 | 160—250 |
| Kalbadevi . . . | 57 | 15 | 160—250 | 2 | 160—250 |
| Bangalore . . . | 44 | 5 | 250—350 | 2 | 160—250 |
| Madura . . . | 30 | 1 | 250—350 | 1 | 160—250 |

It will appear that the pay of Deputy Postmasters, Peshawar, Bangalore, and Madura is in the grade of Rs. 250—350, but that of the Deputy Postmasters, Chittagong, Mymensingh, Barabazar, Allahabad, Kalbadevi, etc., is in the lower selection grade of Rs. 160—250, although the number of clerks in the latter is more than in the former. These are only a few cases, and I feel sure that, if similar statistics are obtained for all the offices, they will strongly corroborate my statement. Again, the selection grade posts of Assistant Postmasters in some of the offices, specially in Bengal have been abolished in offices like Chittagong, Mymensingh, Howrah, Bowbazar, Park Street and Dharamtala, while they have been retained in the offices in the above list although the number of clerks there is less. Here, again, I say emphatically that if complete statistics are obtained, they will prove my assertion that, neither in fixing selection grade posts nor in abolishing any such posts, the Heads of Circles have followed any consistent standard. It all depends on their sweet will or rather whim.

It was mentioned last year as to how the Postmaster-General, Bengal and Assam Circle, was overzealous to effect retrenchment in his Circle, and,

[Mr. S. C. Mitra.]

in the matter of retrenchment, Calcutta had been hard-hit. As many as 16 selection grade posts have been brought under reduction. These selection grade posts were created as a result of the Postal Enquiry Committee. While in other Cities like Bombay and Madras, no retrenchment in the selection grade posts has been made, in Calcutta, retrenchment has been made with a vengeance. I shall specially cite here several cases. The Postal Enquiry Committee recommended 50 selection grade posts in the grades of Rs. 100—175, 145—170 and 175—225 taken together, of which 30 were recommended for the Calcutta General Post Office proper and 20 for the old Calcutta Railway Mail Service which has since been amalgamated with the Calcutta General Post Office. Out of these appointments, 11 have been retrenched. The Committee further recommended that the posts of Assistant Sub-Postmasters of Bowbazar and Dharamtala should be in the selection grade, but these two have been converted into time-scales. It has been stated that the posts of the Assistant Sub-Postmasters have been converted into time-scale, because of the fact that the pay of Deputy Postmasters of these post offices are also in the grade of Rs. 160—250, so these posts are considered redundant. So far as my information goes, the pay of the Deputy Postmasters of the following offices are also in the grade of Rs. 160—250, but the pay of the Assistant Postmasters are also in the same grade of Rs. 160—250. The offices are Allahabad, Peshawar, Meerut, Patna and Agra. Perhaps for Calcutta it is considered redundant, but for others it is considered a necessity. Of course, I do not say for a moment that restriction of selection grade posts in these offices has been improper, but it is just and proper.

From the comparative position of Bombay and Calcutta, I am led to think that there must be some sort of principle in the former while there has been none in the latter place. I find from the statistics supplied to me by the Department that in the money order department, Bombay General Post Office, there are five selection grade posts for 39 clerks, while, in the same department in the Calcutta General Post Office, there are only four selection grade officials for 64 clerks. Similarly, in the Savings Bank Department, Bombay, there are four selection grade posts for 21 clerks, while, in Calcutta, there are only three selection grade posts for 31 clerks in the Savings Bank Department. Instances like this can be multiplied. I am of deliberate opinion that this disparity is due to the difference in the mental outlook and angle of vision of the two heads of Circles concerned. For several years past, no Postmaster-General has held charge of Bengal and Assam Circle for more than a year. Being somewhat like a bird of passage, he could not have been quite as sympathetic and desirous of maintaining a continuity of policy like the Postmaster-General, Bombay. The fact of the Postmaster-General, Bengal and Assam, having been a Telegraph man, and, therefore, less familiar with postal affairs may have also something to do with this. The result has been that there has been more drastic retrenchment, not only in selection grade posts, but in the personnel of all the various cadres in the Post Office and Railway Mail Service subordinate staff in Bengal and Assam Circle. I wish to draw the impartial attention of the Director-General to this deplorable state of things.

The Postal Enquiry Committee laid down the standard that all post offices with five or more clerks, all Railway Mail Service travelling sections

with six sorters and stationary mail offices with seven sorters should be under the supervision of selection grade officials. They did not, however, lay down any definite and concrete standard for fixing selection grade posts in big offices. The Director-General has lately issued a formula under which supervisors, exercising supervision over the work of ten clerks, may be in the selection grade. This standard is very low as in practice a supervisor cannot supervise over the work of ten clerks. I particularly mention here the case of the Savings Bank Department where it is impossible for one supervisor to sign all the documents sent by ten Savings Bank clerks.

Similarly one supervisor cannot supervise over the work of ten clerks in the money order or insurance branch. The standard should considerably be raised especially for these important branches. In every office, where there are at least 20 clerks excluding the postmaster and deputy postmaster or the sub and deputy sub-postmaster, there should be one assistant postmaster in the selection grade to hold charge of the registration and parcel departments. In sub-offices in Calcutta, deputy postmasters are required to attend office at 10 A.M., and cannot leave office before 7-80 P.M. If an impartial enquiry is made, it will be found how much overworked they are. All deputy postmasters, as a rule, are most overworked officials. It is essentially necessary that they should be relieved of some of their duties. Where the money order branch is heavy, there should be another assistant postmaster for the money order branch. For inadequacy in the number of supervisors, the clerks also are detained up to late hours and the public are required to wait at the counters for long especially in the savings bank counter. The Telegraph Establishment Enquiry Committee have laid down the standard that an office with 36 telegraphists should be in charge of a gazetted officer with three other supervisors to assist him. I strongly recommend this standard for adoption in the post office also.

Sir, it is not unknown to officers, including the officers of the Indian Civil Service, that it is almost a condition of their service that there should be proper facilities and provision for promotion within their services—and my friend, Mr. Lahiri Chaudhury, suggests that that would add to the efficiency of the services also. I know that, particularly on this ground alone, in Bengal the I. C. S. raised their protest against the abolition of the posts of Divisional Commissioners, and it weighed with the higher authorities. But when we bring these comparisons to the case of the poor Indian officials, the Audit Department as well as the higher officers forget about the iniquity of abolishing these selection grade posts. If a proper service is to be maintained with efficiency, there must be proper supervision for the promotion of officers who discharge their duty properly. By the drastic reduction of these selection grade posts, I believe they are really interfering with the conditions of service of these officers. It seems, as we have read in the Law College, "equity changes with the Chancellor's feet" and here also, when a particular Post Master General comes, the number of selection grade posts varies. I should like to emphasise that where there is not a Post Master General for a long period, justice is not done to the officers of the Circle. In comparison with the Bombay Circle the Bengal and Assam and the Bihar and Orissa suffered.

To keep the officers in the Department contented, if there cannot be proper provision for their promotion, at least it should be shown that there

[Mr. S. C. Mitra.]

is no inequality between officers of the same grade and with the same qualification in the different Provinces. So, I appeal to the Postal Department that they will see that though there may be occasional discrepancies, this very violent variation in the abolition of the posts, giving less scope for these officers in some of the Circles for promotion, should be done away with. Sir, I move.

Mr. Chairman (Sir Abdur Rahim): Cut motion moved:

"That the demand under the head 'Indian Posts and Telegraphs Department (including Working Expenses)' be reduced by Rs. 100."

Mr. Bhuput Singh (Bihar and Orissa: Landholders): There is a fact which I wish to bring to the notice of the Honourable Member in charge of the Department. In the posts of Rs. 250—350 grades in the Calcutta G. P. O., officials working outside Calcutta are being promoted. It is further reported that in the next ten years not a single official of the Calcutta G. P. O. in the grade of Rs. 160—250 will get promotion in the grade of Rs. 250—350. This will bring twofold difficulty, firstly, if all such responsible posts are filled up entirely by men working outside Calcutta, the tone of administration may deteriorate as these men are not supposed to be so useful in Calcutta as they are in mufassil. The men who are now being promoted are all Inspectors. Before the revision of 1920, these Inspectors used to be appointed on Rs. 60 and they had to pass through the stages, *viz.*, Rs. 80, Rs. 100, Rs. 100—150 and Rs. 150—250 before they were promoted in the grade of Rs. 200—300. They, therefore, could not be promoted into this grade without completing at least 25 years of service. But the situation altogether changed. After revision, the pay of these Inspectors was raised to Rs. 100—175. It was also ordered that even an Inspector who was drawing Rs. 60 on the 1st December, 1919, was to be considered senior to those who were appointed in the grade of Rs. 145—170 on or after that date. There was no Inspector in Calcutta and the selection grade officials in the grade of Rs. 145—170 were considered junior to them. This has given the Inspectors an advantageous position. Since September, 1927, the pay of Inspectors as well as of selection grade has been placed in one grade, *viz.*, Rs. 160—250. An official of mufassil, by rendering service of nine or ten years only, gets promotion in that grade, while in Calcutta no one gets promotion in the grade of Rs. 160—250 without completing at least 20 years' service. So the Inspectors are always in a favourable position as they get into the grade at an early stage of their service. If this is allowed to continue, the chance of promotion of the officials of the Calcutta G. P. O. will be blocked for ever. So, I hope the Government will kindly consider the matter to remove this anomaly and give chance to men working in Calcutta to get these posts in the grade of the Rs. 250—350.

Sir Thomas Ryan: Sir, the principle on which selection grade posts are created is a general one, that such posts should be sanctioned only where the work and responsibility justifies the pay; that principle was laid down by the Postal Committee of 1920, and it has been maintained ever since by the Government of India. There can be no very precise rule of thumb indicating what posts should and what should not be held to pass by that test. I do not think it necessarily follows that when retrenchment is in the air and when every possible economy is being made, it is entirely reasonable to expect that the retrenchment effected in one part of India should necessarily correspond exactly with what is happening in another place.

Mr. D. K. Lahiri Chaudhury: If the work is the same, why not adopt the same principle in all places.

Sir Thomas Ryan: The conditions vary from place to place and the conditions of work in Bombay are, I believe, in various respects different from the conditions in Calcutta, and I think it is quite natural that there should be difference in the numbers of selection grade posts. At the same time, I may say, this disparity is very striking.

Mr. D. K. Lahiri Chaudhury: Then, how does the Postmaster General of Calcutta differ from the Postmaster General of Bombay?

Sir Thomas Ryan: As far as I know, there is no such outstanding difference to justify a difference in the pay of these two particular posts. But there is, for example, a difference between the responsibilities and work of the Postmaster General of Bombay and that of the Postmaster General of the United Provinces which does justify a difference and it is recognised; however, as I say, we agree that the actual disparity is very striking in the number of selection grade posts in Bombay and Calcutta, and this question is already under examination. In these matters, we have to rely very largely on the judgment of the officers of the Department in charge of the different Circles, and I have repeatedly urged the representatives of the service associations who have spoken to me on this subject, to discuss these matters directly with the Postmasters General, who are always ready to discuss them, and if it is thought that a particular post was wrongly removed from the selection grade category, they are always ready to go into the matter. I am afraid that I must maintain that attitude. We have to reduce the selection grade posts as well as other posts where it can reasonably be done, and I am afraid I can devise no rule of thumb which will obviate the use of personal judgment.

I think there is a great deal of force in the observations made that in the case of Bengal and Assam, some inconvenience has resulted from the frequent changes of personnel there; it has been rather noticeable for the last couple of years, and I am afraid that even for a little longer that Circle may suffer from the same disability. The fact is that in staffing these high offices, where one has only a limited number of men who keep going on leave, and so on and so forth, frequent changes are inevitable. With regard to the immediate future, there are a large number of senior officers retiring from the Posts and Telegraphs Department in the near future and this trouble may continue a little longer, but certainly the objection to it will not be overlooked by Government, and they will do their best to ensure greater continuity in these offices so far as they can do so though they may not be able to do that in the very near future. Reference has been made to the circumstance that it is probable in the near future that certain upper selection grade posts in Calcutta will be filled up by men from outside Calcutta. Well, the existing scheme of promotion of these posts in the Department is that all the lower selection grade posts in a Circle are on one list for promotion to the upper selection grade. It does so happen that at the present time a number of the senior men on this list are outside Calcutta. So I think it is probable that what the Honourable Member apprehends will come about. But it may equally well happen some other time that senior men should be in the Calcutta office and will have the first claim on the score of seniority to any posts falling vacant even elsewhere. I am afraid, that is a kind of disparity which is the inevitable consequence of the system under which a number of different cadres are merged for the purpose of promotion to higher posts.

[Sir Thomas Ryan.]

Sir, I do not think I have much further to urge on the matter. As I said, the principal point made by my Honourable friend, Mr. Mitra, regarding the disparity between Bombay and Calcutta is being examined, although I do not necessarily admit that there must be an equality.

Mr. S. C. Mitra: Sir, the purpose of my motion has been served by drawing the attention of Sir Thomas Ryan to the matter, and I beg leave of the House to withdraw the motion.

The cut motion was, by leave of the Assembly, withdrawn.

Grievances of Railway Mail Service Employees.

Mr. S. C. Mitra: Sir, I move:

“That the demand under the head ‘Indian Posts and Telegraphs Department (including Working Expenses)’ be reduced by Rs. 100.”

Sir, the purpose of my motion is not to censure Government in any way, but to draw the special attention of the Postal Authorities to the grievances of the mail sorters.

The grievances of the Railway Mail Service are manifold; their number is on the increase, and this is perhaps due to the apathy of the Postal Heads towards their Railway Mail Service staff and a policy of “aloofness” hitherto shown by them as regards the administration of Railway Mail Service. I am told that the heads of Circles, during the tenure of their office, seldom pay visits to Railway Mail Service mail offices and sections and enquire into the details and technique of the working, and the result is that they have to much depend on “office-notes” put up by the clerks of their office.

The main grievances, that I propose to deal with, are as follows:

- (i) *Supply of insufficient accommodation to the Railway Mail Service Sections.*—I know of a mail van D3/D31, running between Delhi and Lahore via Bhatinda, which always remains overcrowded with bags, with little space for the sorters to stand much less to freely move and breathe. The same is the case with the mail van in the mail train from Howrah to Delhi and we see how packed these mail vans are with baggages. I am told there is no space for the proper sorting of mails, and yet the Punjab Circle office has not paid any attention to this. I wonder, how articles under such circumstances are correctly handled and reach their destination at all.
- (ii) *Concentration of mails at one place and reducing the services, in order to effect savings in the establishment charges.*—The result is the indiscriminate dealing of mails. Centralisation in the Railway Mail Service lessens supervision and leads to congestion of mails, which, I should say, is harmful for correct and satisfactory sorting of mails. Not only this, to deal with heavy mails at one place within a limited time, extra staff and careful supervision is necessary. But, on the other hand, I find reduction of staff and slackening of supervision in the Railway Mail Service. The manner in which mails are transhipped at the Delhi Railway Station inspires amazement. If stoppage of trains is not sufficient to correctly load and unload mails, extra staff should be sanctioned for their correct examination within the limited time, or some other steps should be taken to set matters right.

(ii) *Reduction of Railway Mail Service Sets.*—The reduction of Railway Mail Service sets has been mostly effected by amalgamation of a number of Railway Mail Service sections resulting in the increase of the working hours of sorters. Sorting for continuously 10 or 12 hours in a running mail van at night not only puts great and tiring strain on the eyes of the officials concerned, but also seriously affects the health and longevity of sorters. But the reduction of Railway Mail Service sets has also been effected by placing novel interpretation of the terms "Night", "Partly night and partly day section" and "Running time of a section", and over-zealous heads of Circles have used their brains to interpret the Director-General's order in their own way. They have, in most cases, ignored the inclusion of platform attendance to the working hours of section, as also ignored the fact as to where the standard for transit sections are to be applied and where the standard for sorting sections. The sorters of D-31 section (so-called transit section) help, throughout their beat, the staff of D-3 section, with which it works, in the sorting of mails, and yet the D-3 section works in five sets and D-31 in four sets. I am told that previously both the sections were working in six sets. The staff of these sections, as of others similarly situated, are victims of wrong discretion and of incorrect interpretation of orders. Cases have also been brought to my notice that sections, the working hours of which exceed the prescribed maximum, have not been allowed additional sets, and I should cite as an instance the cases of M-16, O-2 and D-8 sections.

Then, there is another prayer of these men in the Railway Mail Service that Government should now consider amalgamating their cadre with the general cadre of postal officials. As a matter of fact, there are graduates and under-graduates who now enlist as Railway Mail sorters, and, after a certain age, it is difficult for them to do out-door work as efficiently as in their earlier years. So, if, in certain special cases, at least some of these Railway Mail sorters, after attaining a certain age and if otherwise found efficient, are transferred to the general postal service, that will greatly benefit these sorters.

Sir, as I have said before, it is not a motion for censuring Government, but merely to draw the special attention of the Director-General to the case of these Railway Mail sorters.

Sir, I move.

Mr. Chairman (Sir Abdur Rahim): Cut motion moved:

"That the demand under the head 'Indian Posts and Telegraphs Department (including Working Expenses)' be reduced by Rs. 100."

Mr. D. K. Lahiri Chaudhury: Sir, I rise to support the motion. I personally visited one of these mail vans while I was coming up from Howrah to Delhi, and I can tell it very frankly that it was with great difficulty that I got into the compartment. The doors were so narrow that I could hardly enter inside, and, even after I got in, I found that I could not stay there for more than five or six minutes. I was feeling suffocated in that hole,—I may call it a dungeon,—which was full of bags

[Mr D. K. Lahiri Chaudhury.]

with no moving space inside. Even the lavatory which is provided for those gentlemen, who work in that van, was blocked by the bags. Then I inquired how they could work in that little dungeon. They said they have to carry on the work for hours together. I was feeling very awkward all this time, being one of those who are privileged to travel in a first-class compartment. The whole room was stuffy and nothing better than a dungeon, and I thought it was a shame that the interests of the poor gentlemen who work there should be ignored in this way. So I hope the Honourable Member in charge will deal with this matter sympathetically and will take such action as will benefit them and give them some relief in the discharge of their duties.

Rai Bahadur Lala Brij Kishore (Lucknow Division Non-Muhammadan Rural): Sir, considering the tremendous amount of work done in the R. M. S. and in the post offices, the huge amount of cash which the subordinate staff in the post offices and R. M. S. have to handle every day, it is desirable from the public point of view that there should be a larger percentage of selection grade supervisory appointments there, so that the right type of men with requisite experience and merit should constantly supervise and scrutinise the work of the subordinate staff to prevent any fraud or loss. It will certainly be known to Honourable Members that a great amount of confidence is placed in these subordinate R. M. S. and post office people. So their claims to higher appointments should be favourably considered by the Government.

Then I come to the case of the poor Inspectors of Post Offices and the R. M. S. and Superintendents and Head Clerks. As to these two appointments, that is, Inspectors of Post Offices and R. M. S. and Head Clerks of Superintendents of Post Offices, every one of us knows what services these lower staff of the Post Offices and R. M. S. render to the public. These Inspectors and Head Clerks have also to pass a departmental examination which, in many respects, I am told, is even stiffer than the examination prescribed for Superintendents. Now, the multifarious duties and responsibilities which these people have to perform are most onerous, and the Inspectors of Post Offices and R. M. S. are vested with even no power at all. They are required to be thoroughly acquainted with the rules, the character and abilities of their subordinates, so as to be able efficiently to supervise their work and keep them under control. They have also to tour all round the year, even during the monsoons, during which period, I am sure, other officers of other Departments have not got to do that duty of travelling and touring. Considering this difficulty and considering their pay and emoluments, it is very strange that their claims are not so very much recognised and they are not considered fit enough to be given good emoluments or good allowances. They are practically in charge of the division at least for six months when the Superintendent is on tour. It is only with a view to removing their long standing grievances and disabilities that I am appealing to the Department to improve their conditions and to look to their grievances. Two of their chief grievances are that they have no good concessions in travelling allowance and their right of appeal is often curtailed in respect of penalties imposed on them by their Superintendents.

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

Sir, one of the biggest monopolies enjoyed by the State is under the head of Post Office and R. M. S., and I am glad to say that it is one of the most efficiently run Departments too. Every one will be thoroughly justified in paying his tribute of respect to the unfailing performance of duty by the postman who goes from door to door both in the villages and in towns. He does his work in all kinds of weather and under all sorts of difficulties. If he stands up for labour, then the postman is the person who deserves the respect and the sympathy of every one. But what is the treatment that has been meted out to this postman? He has suffered, because there are so many of them who draw in small amounts a large sum from the Exchequer. I will put my proposition shortly. The position is that, in other Departments, a limit has been fixed at Rs. 40 below which retrenchment cannot be operated; but there are only a few exceptions to it; one is the R. M. S. Department, where people drawing big salaries could produce by retrenchment probably a far greater saving without affecting such a large number of people than has been done by this economy campaign in the Post Office and the R. M. S. Department.

Sir Thomas Ryan: Sir, the Honourable the Mover of this motion has said that he has not moved this cut as a vote of censure, but rather to draw attention to certain disabilities under which the R. M. S. staff work. I am well aware that the work of a R. M. S. sorter is not entirely a happy one, and the conditions of work undoubtedly do involve a certain amount of rather unusual discomfort. To the best of our ability in the Department, we compensate the staff for that by fixing hours of work, specially for the moving sections, which are very much shorter than the hours for other men, and I think the working hours for a week are exceptionally short and the hours of rest are, as a rule, rather long. I do not know whether it is really the case, as Mr. Mitra believes, that Heads of Circles seldom visit the R. M. S. offices and vans, but I hope that they do so. Anyhow, I have always made it a point, when travelling, to spend a short time in the R. M. S. van to see for myself what are the conditions of work there, and I have found, as Mr. Mitra has observed, that sometimes the vans have been distinctly congested and at other times there was more room. Of course, I recognise that I share something with Mr. Lahiri Chaudhury which perhaps makes us both a little more sensitive to this complaint than others might be. The question of platform attendance being included in the hours of work has already been the subject of instructions from the Directorate and there have been complaints that the instructions are interpreted somewhat differently by different people; the matter is under investigation to make sure that there is no misunderstanding about it.

I do not think that Government can as a practical measure accept the proposal to amalgamate the R. M. S. cadre with the general cadre of the Post Office, and I feel that if they were to try to do so, Mr. Mitra and Mr. Lahiri Chaudhury would lose something of their well-deserved popularity with the general run of our postal staff.

I am very sorry I was unable to follow closely the observations made by my Honourable friend, Rai Bahadur Lala Brij Kishore, but I think what I can do probably to meet the views of the Mover of the motion is that I will have a copy of what has been said on this subject sent to each Head of Circle with a view to his seeing what he can do, consistently with the existing organisation, to improve the conditions of service of these people for whom I have a great deal of sympathy, and ask, if it is a fact—

[Sir Thomas Ryan.]

I think perhaps it is not quite accurate—that they do not themselves pay reasonably frequent personal visits to the R. M. S. offices and vans, that they should do so, because I think nothing but personal inspection will help to enable us to avoid all possible discomfort to the staff.

Mr. S. C. Mitra: Sir, my purpose having been served by drawing the attention of the Director-General to this matter, I beg leave of the House to withdraw my motion.

The cut motion was, by leave of the Assembly, withdrawn.

Protest against the appointment of the Postal Committee.

Mr. Muhammad Azhar Ali: Sir, I beg to move:

“That the demand under the head ‘Indian Posts and Telegraphs Department (including Working Expenses)’ be reduced by Rs. 100”

Sir, at this late hour, I do not want to say much about the Postal Committee. I will only say this that the Government of India are always anxious to appoint Committees and Commissions for which the tax-payer has to pay through the nose as it were, and the gain to the poor tax-payer is not commensurate with the expenditure incurred on these Committees. Sir, during recent years, beginning from the Ryan Committee, a large number of Committees have been appointed, and they have made recommendations. In the year 1932-33, the Telegraph Establishment Inquiry Committee was appointed which cost the tax-payer nearly Rs. 34,000, and that Committee recommended reduction of expenditure not in telegraph traffic, but on the postal side, to the extent of nearly 20 lakhs per annum. Most of the recommendations of the Posts and Telegraphs Retrenchment Advisory Sub-Committee were honoured by the Government more in the breach than in the observance, so far as the telegraph side was concerned, but, on the postal side, not only were their recommendations promptly carried out, but more drastic measures were adopted

The Honourable Sir Frank Noyce: Will the Honourable Member tell me what recommendations of the Committee he is referring to when he says they were honoured more in the breach than in the observance. Is he referring to the recommendations of the Varma Committee?

Mr. Muhammad Azhar Ali: No, Sir, I am not referring to the Varma Committee.

The Honourable Sir Frank Noyce: Then which Committee is he referring to?

Mr. Muhammad Azhar Ali: I was referring to the Sir Cowasji Jehangir Committee. As I was saying, Sir, drastic measures of retrenchment in the subordinate staff in the Post Office and R. M. S. were only adopted on the Department's own initiative without consulting any Committee or the Service Unions concerned. The expenditure on the postal side, which was four crores and eighty seven thousand in 1930-31, has been reduced in 1934-35 to four crores fifty lakhs sixty five thousand and three hundred rupees. The following comparative statement compiled from the Budget

figures for 1930-31 and 1934-35 will show the number of posts in the various cadres in the Post Office and Railway Mail Service that have been reduced:

| | 1930-31. | 1933-34. | No. Reduced |
|--|----------|----------|-------------|
| Postmasters, sorters, clerks, etc. | 25,015 | 23,117 | 1,898 |
| Postmen | 31,460 | 28,314 | 3,146 |
| Overseers, Menials, etc. | 16,271 | 13,617 | 2,654 |
| Inferior staff | 12,846 | 11,842 | 1,004 |
| Total | 85,592 | 76,890 | 8,702 |

It will thus appear that during the period under discussion as many as 8,702 posts, that is to say, more than ten per cent of the entire staff in the Post Office and R.M.S. have been reduced. Besides, about 150 selection grade posts have been brought under reduction.

Sir, not content with this, they have decided to appoint another Inquiry Committee "to investigate and overhaul the methods of work adopted in the postal branch of the Posts and Telegraphs Department and the manner in which the strength of the various kinds of personnel required in that branch is determined". This is really very funny. It was only in 1929 that the Government appointed a Committee which I may style as the "Bewoor-Mukerjee" Committee for that very purpose. Mr. G. V. Bewoor, I.C.S., then Postmaster General, who has now been appointed as the permanent Director-General of Posts and Telegraphs, for his unique ability and experience of Postal and R. M. S. work, in collaboration with another expert, Mr. Tara Pada Mukerjee, late General Secretary of the All-India (including Burma) Postal and R. M. S. Union, after a long and elaborate inquiry into the methods of work in the Post Office, Dead Letter Offices and the Railway Mail Service and the time-test which regulates the manner in which the strength of various kinds of personnel required is determined, submitted a unanimous Report on the Revision of the Time-Tests in the Post Office which was accepted by the Government. The recommendations made in the Report are, I find, based on most scientific principles and are a great advance on the previous time-tests which satisfied neither the administrative officers nor the staff. Are we to understand that the time-test, as revised by such undoubted experts, one of whom will be the head of the administration from the 1st April, 1934, has become antiquated within such a short time and needs overhauling, or do the Government mean to say that the report was inadequate and it was a blunder on their part to accept it? I state most emphatically, Sir, that the Committee is altogether unnecessary and will involve useless waste of the tax-payer's money. On the other hand, if there is a real need for such a Committee, it is for the re-organization of the Telegraph Engineering Branch which may be called a white elephant, but which has been left almost entirely untouched for reasons best known to Government.

[Mr. Muhammad Azhar Ali.]

Now, Sir, not being satisfied with the drastic surgical operations they have already performed on the postal side, they propose to appoint another surgical board to pursue the operations. This reminds me of a quack doctor who pulled out the teeth of a patient's friend who was hale and hearty. Sir, when these Committees are composed of officials and people of the Department alone, we on this side naturally take strong objections, but if Government had co-opted,—as they had done when the Secretary of the All-India Union was co-opted,—some non-officials, the public would have been satisfied. I do not see any reason why the tax-payer's money should be spent in this manner by appointing Departmental Committees after Committees. Therefore, my suggestion is that if Government are again thinking of appointing certain Committees, they ought to take the non-officials into their confidence. Because a few non-officials were put on the Sir Cowasji Jehangir Committee, the whole House had some confidence in their recommendations, and still we are trying to act up to those recommendations. In the same manner, I ask the Government, if they appoint such Departmental Committees, it will not do; on the other hand, if they will take a few non-officials into their confidence, it will satisfy the public and this side of the House. With these words, I place the motion before the House.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shaammukham Chetty): Cut motion moved:

“That the demand under the head ‘Indian Posts and Telegraphs Department (including Working Expenses)’ be reduced by Rs 100.”

The Honourable Sir Frank Noyce: Sir, my Honourable friend, Sir Thomas Ryan, and I have been subjected during the whole of today to a cross-fire from the Benches opposite. On the one hand, we have been subjected to criticism, because we have gone too far and too fast in the matter of retrenchment; on the other hand, we have been subjected to criticism, though, I must confess, that it has been less vocal than usual today,—may it be a presage of better times to come,—we have been subjected to the criticism that we have not economised enough. Sir, my friend, the Mover of this motion, has very cleverly combined both these criticisms, not in the speech which he just delivered, taken by itself, but in that speech combined with the one which he delivered yesterday, I think, in which he drew our attention to the magnificent results obtained by the British Post Office and asked why we could not imitate those results in this country.

Well, Sir, it is just because we want to do better that we are appointing the Committee to which he objects. I think it is correct to say that there has not yet been a Committee exactly of this kind. There have been Postal Committees which have investigated various aspects of postal organisation and postal methods of work, but there has been no Committee so far which has investigated the whole field, and it is because they feel that the methods of the Postal Department, whether you describe it as a public utility department or as a commercial department, require overhauling that the Government have appointed this Postal Enquiry Committee.

My Honourable friend, Mr. Azhar Ali, objects to the Committee on the ground that it is a waste of the tax-payer's money. He brought forward the extremely curious argument that the report of the Committee which went into telegraph matters cost Rs. 34,000 and that it made recommendations which, if accepted, would save Rs. 20 lakhs annually. I submit for

the consideration of this House that, if the results of the investigations of that Committee would save even one lakh a year, that would be a good investment for Rs. 34,000. It does seem to me an amazing argument to bring against the appointment of this Committee. What is at the back of my Honourable friend's mind is that this Committee may lead to more wholesale retrenchment. I think, I can reassure him to some extent on that point. It is not another Postal Retrenchment Committee. We have had our Postal Retrenchment Committee. There, again, if I heard my Honourable friend correctly, he made the extraordinary statement that Government had not accepted the recommendations of the Committee presided over by Sir Cowasji Jehangir. If that is so, I cannot but think that he must have been absent from this House for a considerable part of the day, for it has been stated from these Benches more than once that those recommendations were accepted practically in their entirety. But in any case my point is that this Committee is not of the kind presided over by Sir Cowasji Jehangir. I should describe it myself not as a Postal Enquiry Committee, or a Postal Retrenchment Committee, but as a Postal Efficiency Committee. Its object is to discover in what way the work of the Postal Department can be made more efficient. As we said in the memorandum which we put before the Standing Finance Committee, —and I would remind the House that the proposal to appoint this Committee has been approved by the Standing Finance Committee—we hope that its appointment will result in substantial economies. But I think it is fair to say that substantial economies do not necessarily mean substantial reduction in personnel; we hope that the results of this enquiry will lead to the utilisation of the personnel to the best advantage and be such as will enable us to reduce our postal rates substantially, and, by so doing, to secure an increased traffic which will absorb any personnel that may be thrown out of its present occupation by the adoption of more efficient methods.

My Honourable friend, Mr. Azhar Ali, has objected to the fact that no non-officials are being included on this Committee. It is a purely Departmental Committee, because the subjects that it will deal with are very technical indeed. I would suggest to any of my Honourable friends, who think that we ought to have appointed a non-official Committee or at any rate included non-officials on it, to read the report of the Varma Committee. I can assure them that they will need a wet towel round their heads if they wish to follow it. Matters of the kind dealt within it require a lifetime of experience to understand and they must be investigated by technical men.

Sir Cowasji Jehangir: I presume that the Rs. 60,000 represents really the pay of the officers who will be members of the Committee. It is a big sum of money if only officials are to be members of the Committee. I presume that the pay of the officials is included in that amount.

The Honourable Sir Frank Noyce: I am not quite sure whether I heard my Honourable friend correctly. I think I said that the cost of the Varma Committee was Rs. 34,000.

Sir Cowasji Jehangir: But the Honourable Member is asking for Rs. 60,000 for this new Committee.

The Honourable Sir Frank Noyce: It is a bigger Committee, and I am not quite sure how the numbers compare with those of the Varma Committee, but my Honourable friend will understand that the postal branch is a very much bigger one than the telegraph branch, and that it will take longer to make the investigation.

Sir Cowasji Jehangir: My Honourable friend has misunderstood me. Certain officials will serve on this Committee. Does this Rs. 60,000 include their pay, or will their pay be extra to this Rs. 60,000?

The Honourable Sir Frank Noyce: I beg your pardon. It does include their pay. They will have to be placed on special duty obviously for this purpose, and Rs. 60,000 covers the whole cost of their pay and all expenses connected with the Committee even to the printing of their report.

Mr. B. V. Jadhav: Will the work of this Committee be finished within one year?

The Honourable Sir Frank Noyce: We are allowing six months; we hope it may take less than six months; but it is possible it may take longer. In any case, the Government will urge upon the President of the Committee the necessity for completing the investigations within that period. As regards the results of the Committee's work, all I would add is that those, who, like my Honourable friend, Mr. Mitra, fear that it may lead to wholesale retrenchment, ought to be reassured by the statement that my Honourable friend, Sir Thomas Ryan, has made in regard to the manner in which he has dealt with the Varma Committee's report. The recommendations of that report have been examined by him in close consultation with the two Associations most affected by them which are in the best position to say how they would work, and I have no doubt whatever that Sir Thomas Ryan's successor—it is a matter of the deepest regret to me that Sir Thomas Ryan will not be here to deal with the report himself—I have no doubt that his successor will deal with the report of this Committee in the same manner in which he has dealt with the Varma Committee's Report.

Mr. B. V. Jadhav: May I know whether the Chairman of this Committee will be an officer who will soon retire?

The Honourable Sir Frank Noyce: On that point I would say that the personnel of the Committee will be made public in the course of the next few days and I trust that it will meet with the approval of this House. We have done our best to secure the best and the most experienced officers we can for this important work.

I think, Sir, that is all I need say. Before I sit down, I should just like to say a word, as this is the last opportunity probably that I shall have to speak this afternoon, about some remarks which fell from my Honourable friend, Mr. Mitra. He accused me of not being very well acquainted with the details of work of the most important Department in my charge. Well, I can only say that I have done the best I could during the last two years to learn all I could from almost daily consultations with Sir Thomas Ryan, and I can tell Mr. Mitra that I have learnt a tremendous lot from him

Mr. S. C. Mitra: I did not mean it seriously.

The Honourable Sir Frank Noyce: I was endeavouring to reply to my Honourable friend in the spirit in which his remarks were made. I should like to say that I have learnt a lot from him and that an examination of the many questions that he has put during the last two years has given me a thorough grounding in certain aspects of the work of the Department. I can only hope that I have convinced the House that the appointment of this Committee is desirable and that, from the point of view of Government and from that of the tax-payers, it should prove an extremely good investment.

Mr. Muhammad Azhar Ali: I am very much indebted to my Honourable friend, Sir Frank Noyce, for his remarks about me, but my object has been served in a way. We on this side of the House have come to know what we did not know before, that this Committee will have a nominated President and that there will be some official members and that the personnel will be announced hereafter. Then, also, about the expenditure, it has been stated that it will include the pay of the officers and that officers of the Department will be transferred to serve on it, but I have not heard anything from my Honourable friend about the non-officials about whom I said something in my remarks.

The Honourable Sir Frank Noyce: I regret that the Honourable Member did not hear my remarks. I endeavoured to explain as clearly as I could the reason why this Committee had to be a purely Departmental Committee, that reason being that it has to deal with highly technical matters for the examination of which it is necessary to have men who have had a lifelong acquaintance with the work of the Postal Department, which they will be called upon to investigate.

Mr. Muhammad Azhar Ali: If this Committee is to be a Departmental Committee, it is our good luck that we have learnt about it. The whole field of the post office working will be investigated by this Committee. We do not know whether somebody from Europe is to come as adviser on this technical Committee.

The Honourable Sir Frank Noyce: The Honourable Member is endeavouring to extract information from me. I have promised that the personnel of the Committee will be published in the course of the next few days, but I can assure him now that nobody is coming from Europe to be a member of it.

Mr. Muhammad Azhar Ali: In view of this statement, I beg leave of the House to withdraw my motion.

The cut motion was, by leave of the Assembly, withdrawn

Measures of Earthquake Relief for Postal and Railway Mail Service Staff in North Bihar.

Mr. D. K. Lahiri Chaudhury: Sir, I move:

“That the demand under the head ‘Indian Posts and Telegraphs Department (including Working Expenses)’ be reduced by Rs. 100.”

I want to discuss the measures of earthquake relief for Postal and Railway Mail Service staff in North Bihar. Sir, the time at my disposal is very short and I shall be very brief. The matter is very small, but it

[Mr. D. K. Lahiri Chaudhury.]

is of great importance. I think the House will realise that every help ought to be given to the people in Bihar, who have suffered a great loss in the recent devastating earthquake. I come to learn from the Honourable Member in charge that the Director-General has very generously contributed to the fund which has been started by the Postal and R.M.S. Union and instruction has already been issued to help the poor sufferers who serve in the Postal and Telegraph Department by a grant of three months' pay. That relief is not sufficient, but still something has been done. I would draw the attention of the Honourable Member to the fact that these poor people, who have lost their hearths and homes and lost their families and children, may not be able to pay this sum. I suggest that this three months' pay should be treated as a non-recoverable amount and that it should be treated as a bonus. It is some kind of loan now. In reply to a question by Mr. Mitra, the Army Secretary told this House, that, with the approval of the Governor General in Council, the salary cut was not applied in the case of some soldier clerks in the Army Department. I hope that that policy will be followed in the case of Bihar which has been devastated by the earthquake. This is the object of my motion.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shannukhan Chetty): Cut motion moved:

“That the demand under the head ‘Indian Posts and Telegraphs Department (including Working Expenses)’ be reduced by Rs. 100.”

Sir Thomas Ryan: The Honourable Member has rightly said that the lot of the persons affected by the earthquake in Bihar has the sympathy of all Members of this House—not least of Members on this side—and I am glad to be able to assure the House that every effort was made and is still being made by the superior staff in the Postal and Telegraph Department in Bihar and Orissa to see that everything possible for the relief of these people has been done. I am glad that I was able lately to have a conversation with the officer who was in charge of the Circle at the time of the earthquake disaster and shortly after, and he showed me a personal letter; perhaps I may be excused for quoting his private correspondence. It was a letter from the General Secretary of the All-India Postal and R.M.S. Union acknowledging in very handsome terms the efforts which he and his staff had made. The principle which we have followed in the matter of relief is to make sure that our staff are getting the same treatment that the Local Government are extending to their own staff. Whether the measures of relief which could be sanctioned were generous or otherwise is a matter of opinion. Obviously when a very large number of people are affected, various considerations come into play. I made it certain at least that my staff were getting the same measure of relief, even in anticipation of official sanction, as the Local Government officials.

Mr. Lahiri Chaudhury now suggests that some further, he thinks not a very great measure of further, consideration should be extended to them. I do not know exactly what reception that would get from the Finance Department which would obviously have to be consulted specifically before I could say that it could be agreed to or otherwise, but I think also it would be quite essential for us to make sure that it would not embarrass in any way the Local Government's efforts to give what might even

seem a small measure of further consideration to our staff: as obviously it would be inconvenient if we were treating our people in a way which they might not be able to afford in respect of their very much larger number of officials. But subject to those remarks, the suggestion that has been made will be taken into immediate consideration, and I shall find out whether it would in fact be likely to be regarded as embarrassing by the Local Government, and, if they say no, then I shall put the matter before the Head of my Department who, I have no doubt, will consult the Finance Department on the subject; and, if we fail to do exactly what Mr. Lahiri Chaudhury suggests, that will certainly not be due to any want of sympathy or consideration. These concessions have to be considered in relation to a very large number of people, and we have to consider the Local Government's views in respect of them. I do not know whether any purpose will be served by giving

Mr. D. K. Lahiri Chaudhury: The conditions of service of the servants of the Provincial Government and of the postal services should also be considered.

Sir Thomas Ryan: Of course various things can be said about the conditions of service. The special conditions of service of our staff employed in Bihar and Orissa were represented very strongly to me by the All-India Union, and it was represented that our men were working harder and more continuously than others.

Now, while I certainly have no desire to belittle the work of the Posts and Telegraphs staff, I doubt whether in the conditions, prevailing immediately after the earthquake, they could have been working even harder than the local medical staff, the police staff, and so on, but these comparisons are odious and I am sure that every one has been working his utmost. I doubt, Sir, whether I can usefully add to these remarks.

Mr. D. K. Lahiri Chaudhury: Sir, I beg leave of the House to withdraw my motion.

The cut motion was, by leave of the Assembly, withdrawn.

Wynad Allowances.

Mr. K. P. Thampan (West Coast and Nilgiris: Non-Muhammadan Rural): Sir, although there is only one minute for the guillotine, yet, in view of the importance of the subject, I wish to move my motion. I move:

“That the demand under the head ‘Indian Posts and Telegraphs Department (including Working Expenses)’ be reduced by Rs. 100.”

Sir, when I moved this cut last year, you will remember that the Honourable Member not only expressed his sympathy, but promised to give effect to my proposal if the financial consequences were not heavy. Sir, a year has rolled by since then and the promised effect has not yet been given. Sir, it is a very vital matter which affects the health and happiness of the postal services in the Wynad and, in the interests of that service, I urge that the earlier the proposals made are adopted, the better.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The question is:

“That the demand under the head ‘Indian Posts and Telegraphs Department (including Working Expenses)’ be reduced by Rs. 100.”

The motion was negatived.

(It being Five of the Clock.)

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 9,95,66,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1935, in respect of 'Indian Posts and Telegraphs Department (including Working Expenses)'."

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 25.—INTEREST ON DEBT AND REDUCTION OR AVOIDANCE OF DEBT.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 20,28,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1935, in respect of 'Interest on Debt and Reduction or Avoidance of Debt'."

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 26.—INTEREST ON MISCELLANEOUS OBLIGATIONS.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 56,55,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1935, in respect of 'Interest on Miscellaneous Obligations'."

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 27.—STAFF, HOUSEHOLD AND ALLOWANCES OF THE GOVERNOR GENERAL.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 4,31,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1935, in respect of 'Staff, Household and Allowances of the Governor General'."

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 29.—COUNCIL OF STATE.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The question is:

"That a sum not exceeding Rs. 1,05,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1935, in respect of 'Council of State'."

The motion was adopted.

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DEMAND NO. 30.—LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY AND LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
DEPARTMENT.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The question is:

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 6,86,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1935, in respect of ‘Legislative Assembly and Legislative Assembly Department’.”

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND NO. 31.—FOREIGN AND POLITICAL DEPARTMENT.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The question is:

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 8,01,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1935, in respect of ‘Foreign and Political Department’.”

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND NO. 32.—HOME DEPARTMENT.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The question is:

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 5,79,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1935, in respect of ‘Home Department’.”

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND NO. 33.—PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The question is:

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 1,62,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1935, in respect of ‘Public Service Commission’.”

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND NO. 34.—LEGISLATIVE DEPARTMENT.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The question is:

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 2,94,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1935, in respect of ‘Legislative Department’.”

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 35.—DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, HEALTH AND LANDS.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The question is:

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 5,77,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1935, in respect of ‘Department of Education, Health and Lands’.”

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 36.—FINANCE DEPARTMENT.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The question is:

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 9,38,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1935, in respect of ‘Finance Department’.”

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 38.—COMMERCE DEPARTMENT.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The question is:

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 3,65,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1935, in respect of ‘Commerce Department’.”

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 40.—DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIES AND LABOUR.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The question is:

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 4,77,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1935, in respect of ‘Department of Industries and Labour’.”

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 41.—CENTRAL BOARD OF REVENUE.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The question is:

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 1,89,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1935, in respect of ‘Central Board of Revenue’.”

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 42.—PAYMENTS TO PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENTS ON ACCOUNT OF ADMINISTRATION OF AGENCY SUBJECTS.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The question is:

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 1,50,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1935, in respect of ‘Payments to Provincial Governments on account of Administration of Agency Subjects’.”

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 43.—AUDIT.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The question is:

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 90,89,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1935, in respect of ‘Audit’.”

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 44.—ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The question is:

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 53,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1935, in respect of ‘Administration of Justice’.”

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 45.—POLICE.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The question is:

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 1,80,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1935, in respect of ‘Police’.”

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 46.—PORTS AND PILOTAGE.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The question is:

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 11,42,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1935, in respect of ‘Ports and Pilotage’.”

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 59.—AGRICULTURE.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The question is:

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 9,25,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1935, in respect of ‘Agriculture’.”

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 60.—IMPERIAL COUNCIL OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH DEPARTMENT.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The question is:

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 4,11,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1935, in respect of ‘Imperial Council of Agricultural Research Department’.”

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 61.—CIVIL VETERINARY SERVICES.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The question is:

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 6,79,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1935, in respect of ‘Civil Veterinary Services’.”

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 62.—INDUSTRIES.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The question is:

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 1,64,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1935, in respect of ‘Industries’.”

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 63.—AVIATION.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The question is:

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 13,90,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1935, in respect of ‘Aviation’.”

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 64.—COMMERCIAL INTELLIGENCE AND STATISTICS.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The question is:

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 5,02,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1935, in respect of ‘Commercial Intelligence and Statistics’.”

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 65.—CENSUS.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The question is:

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 3,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1935, in respect of ‘Census’.”

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 66.—EMIGRATION—INTERNAL.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The question is:

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 25,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1935, in respect of ‘Emigration—Internal’.”

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 67.—EMIGRATION—EXTERNAL.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The question is:

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 1,84,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1935, in respect of ‘Emigration—External’.”

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 68.—JOINT STOCK COMPANIES.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The question is:

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 1,15,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1935, in respect of ‘Joint Stock Companies’.”

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 69.—MISCELLANEOUS DEPARTMENTS.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The question is:

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 6,65,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1935, in respect of ‘Miscellaneous Departments’.”

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 70.—INDIAN STORES DEPARTMENT.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The question is:

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 5,69,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1935, in respect of ‘Indian Stores Department’.”

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 71.—CURRENCY.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The question is:

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 50,01,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1935, in respect of ‘Currency’.”

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 72.—MINT.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The question is:

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 13,90,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1935, in respect of ‘Mint’.”

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 73.—CIVIL WORKS.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The question is:

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 1,89,85,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1935, in respect of ‘Civil Works’.”

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 74.—SUPERANNUATION ALLOWANCES AND PENSIONS.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The question is:

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 1,00,09,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1935, in respect of ‘Superannuation Allowances and Pensions’.”

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 75.—STATIONERY AND PRINTING.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The question is:

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 33,43,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1935, in respect of ‘Stationery and Printing’.”

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND NO. 76.—MISCELLANEOUS.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The question is:

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 6,36,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1935, in respect of ‘Miscellaneous’.”

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND NO. 76-A.—EXPENDITURE ON RETRENCHED PERSONNEL CHARGED TO REVENUE.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The question is:

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 2,19,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1935, in respect of ‘Expenditure on Retrenched Personnel charged to Revenue’.”

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND NO. 76-B.—MISCELLANEOUS ADJUSTMENTS BETWEEN THE CENTRAL AND PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENTS.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The question is:

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 2,14,14,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1935, in respect of ‘Miscellaneous Adjustments between the Central and Provincial Governments’.”

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND NO. 77.—REFUNDS.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The question is:

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 1,05,04,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1935, in respect of ‘Refunds’.”

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND NO. 79.—BALUCHISTAN.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The question is:

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 26,76,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1935, in respect of ‘Baluchistan’.”

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 80.—DELHI.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The question is:

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 42,59,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1935, in respect of ‘Delhi.’”

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 81.—AJMER-MERWARA.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The question is:

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 13,79,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1935, in respect of ‘Ajmer-Merwara.’”

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 82.—ANDAMANS AND NICOBAR ISLANDS.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The question is:

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 29,07,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1935, in respect of ‘Andamans and Nicobar Islands.’”

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 83.—RAJPUTANA.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The question is:

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 4,12,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1935, in respect of ‘Rajputana.’”

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND No. 84.—CENTRAL INDIA.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The question is:

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 3,41,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1935, in respect of ‘Central India.’”

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND NO. 85.—HYDERABAD.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The question is:

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 41,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1935, in respect of ‘Hyderabad’.”

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND NO. 85-A.—ADEN.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The question is:

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 6,45,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1935, in respect of ‘Aden’.”

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND NO. 86.—EXPENDITURE IN ENGLAND—SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The question is:

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 21,87,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1935, in respect of ‘Expenditure in England—Secretary of State for India’.”

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND NO. 87.—EXPENDITURE IN ENGLAND—HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR INDIA.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The question is:

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 24,80,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1935, in respect of ‘Expenditure in England—High Commissioner for India’.”

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND NO. 88.—CAPITAL OUTLAY ON SECURITY PRINTING.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The question is:

“That a sum not exceeding Rs. 1,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charges which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1935, in respect of ‘Capital Outlay on Security Printing’.”

The motion was adopted.

DEMAND NO. 99.—LOANS AND ADVANCES BEARING INTEREST.

Mr. President (The Honourable Sir Shanmukham Chetty): The question is:

“That a sum not exceeding Rs 8,33,03,000 be granted to the Governor General in Council to defray the charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending the 31st day of March, 1935, in respect of Loans and Advances bearing Interest.”

The motion was adopted.

The Assembly then adjourned till eleven of the Clock on Monday, the 12th March, 1934.

