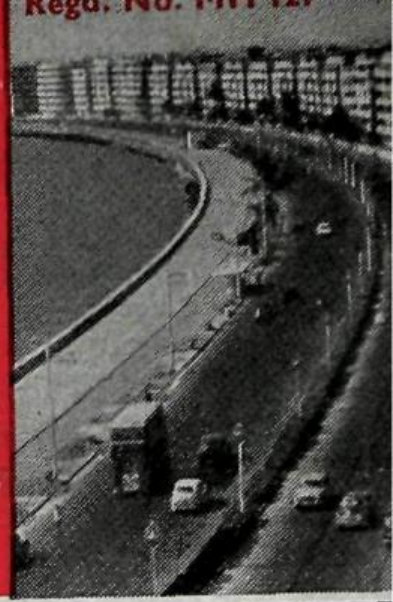




the indian roads and transport development association ltd

IRTDA

news Letter.



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16th MAY 1966

No. 9

ROAD TRANSPORT SUFFERS FROM GROSS OVERTAXATION RAILWAY ATTITUDE THROTTLES LONG-DISTANCE DEVELOPMENT ON ROADS

[MR. M. R. MASANI'S CALL IN PARLIAMENT FOR REMEDIAL MEASURES]

Speaking in the Lok Sabha on 4th April 1966 against the background of the strike of road operators in the Punjab to protest against the levy of additional taxes in that State, Mr. M. R. Masani, M.P., a former President of the I.R.T.D.A., complained that road transport remained the Cinderella of Indian industries and services. Referring to the gross overtaxation from which road transport suffered, he pointed out that according to the operators the present excessive levies rendered road transport incapable of functioning except at a loss.

Mr. Masani further objected to the attitude of the Railways in trying to use their monopoly to throttle long-distance development on roads and he called for the cancellation of two circulars issued by the Ministry of Transport in 1958 and 1959 recommending the subordination of road transport to railways on route lengths exceeding 300 miles.

Below are some extracts from the speech which was made by Mr. Masani while initiating a discussion on the Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Transport and Aviation:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I support my cut motions 11 to 15. In the short time that is available I shall try to touch on three separate topics—Road Transport, Tourism and Aviation.

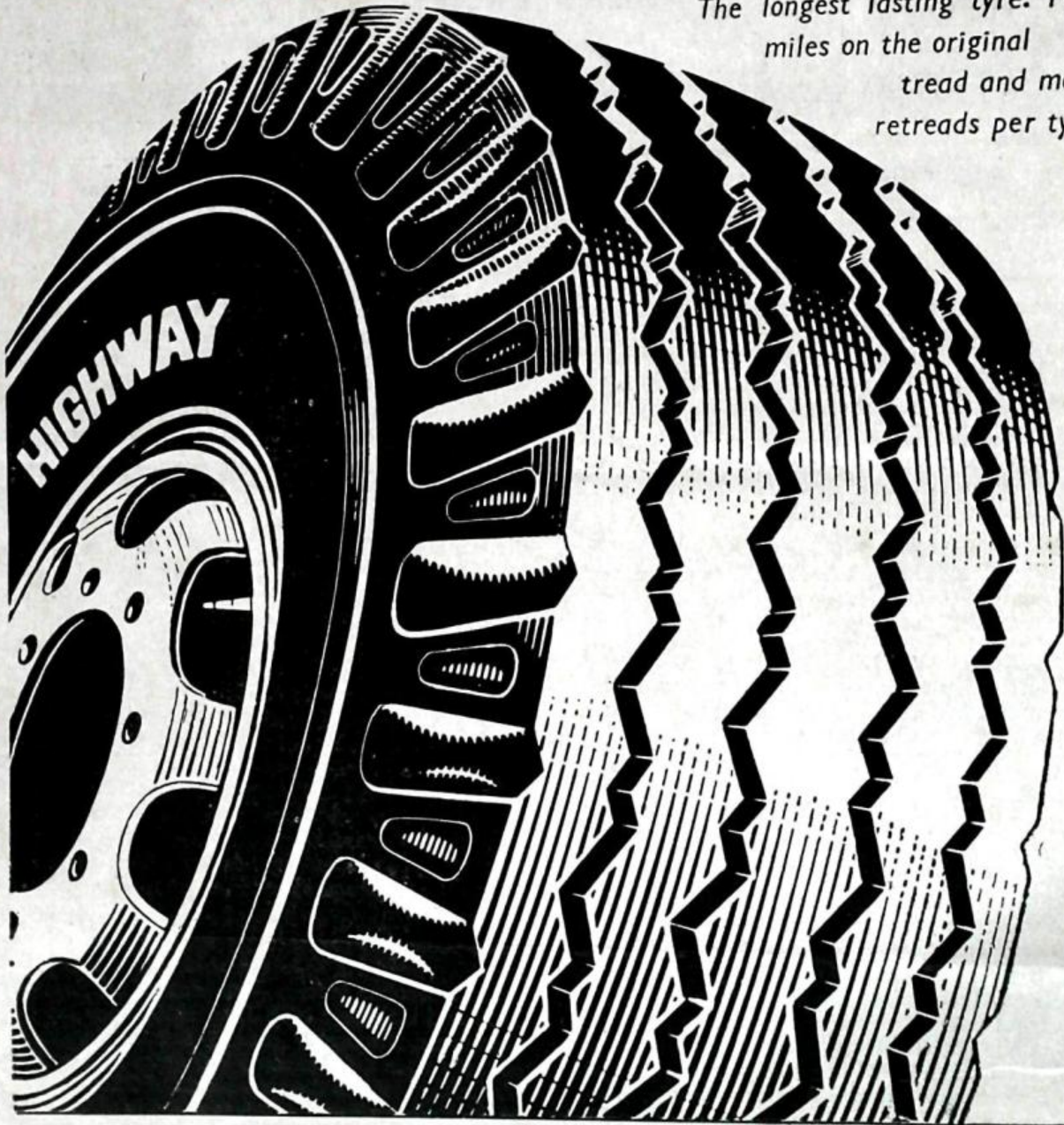
In so far as Road Transport is concerned, I have no time to go into the matter thoroughly except to say that it remains the Cinderella of Indian industries and services. There are two points on which I would particularly like to draw the attention of the hon. Minister. One is the gross overtaxation from which road transport suffers in this country. Taxation is discriminatory and it has reached such limits today that, if a truck has to go from Delhi to Calcutta or Bombay, taxation borne by the operator through various States exceeds the amount of the entire railway freight! Overtaxation on road transport has created today in the Punjab a very unfortunate situation where trucks have gone off the road, because it is no longer possible for road transport to function except at a loss. Thousands of trucks are lying idle there as a consequence of which valuable goods including foodstuffs which are to be transported are rotting. This is an unfortunate development to which one

cannot take objection. After all, if the truck operators make losses, there is no point in saying that they should carry on their business. The All India Motor Unions Congress has backed this development, and it is likely to spread to Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh on the 7th of April. Soon over the whole of Northern India road transport will come to a stop. I would urge the hon. Minister to invite the leaders of the All India Motor Unions Congress in Delhi to come and meet him and try to understand their difficulties. I hope that when he is satisfied about their case he would ask the Punjab Government to withdraw the additional levy of 50 per cent on goods tax which has brought about the stoppage of road transport in the North.

The attitude of the railways in trying to use their monopoly to throttle long-distance development on roads is objectionable. Even today there are two circulars in force—one is dated 9th September 1958 and the other 16th June 1959. They lay down that road transport cannot function inside the country over a distance of 300 miles or a radius of 150 miles without the permission of Their Majesties of the Railway Board! This is a highly objectionable position. Repeated assurances have been given in this House, including one by Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri before he became Prime Minister, that these circulars would be withdrawn. But even today these circulars are in force.

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If I may say so, this discrimination has gone on because of the weakness of my hon. friend's predecessors. They happened to be people who felt not strong enough to stand up against the Railway Minister and the Railway Board of their time. Today we have a happy combination of two developments. One is that we have got a strong Transport Minister at last, one who has got political strength and stature and one who can make his voice heard in the Cabinet. Therefore, he need not take these things lying down as did his predecessors, who had not got this much political stature. The other happy development is that our present Railway Minister is a friendly person, in every sense of the word. He is not only friendly with the hon. Minister of Transport but is also more friendly. . . .

Shri Shinkre: He is the Swatantra version within the Congress.

Mr. Masani: . . . towards Road Transport development. Only the other day, speaking at the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry on 13th March, Shri S. K. Patil stated:

Competition was also 'a matter of religion' with him. If national economy has suffered it was solely because of lack of competition. There was no question of favouring any particular sector.

The fact remains that, although the Railway Minister has given expression to these very enlightened sentiments, those circulars which the Transport Ministry have issued are still very much there. I urge that the hon. Minister should get together with his Railway colleague, hold him to his enlightened sentiments and get his co-operation in cancelling these two offensive circulars which are a relic of the past but which are holding back road transport development.

Tourism

Now, I come to the second topic, and that is Tourism. There, I have got three cut motions which I may briefly refer to. One is the failure of the Government to formulate a policy on tourism; the second is the desirability of recognising the tourist industry as an export industry, and the third is the need for the establishment of an autonomous authority for the promotion of tourism.

India is made for tourism; it is a country with a very high tourist potential. It has been estimated that in the next five years, if we can only run our tourist industry and our tourist promotion properly, this country can make Rs. 100 crores of foreign exchange. Unfortunately, today, only 1.5 per cent of the world's tourist traffic comes to our share, and what is worse, the growth rate of tourism in India, which was of the average of 20 per cent from 1955 to 1960 has, in the last five years, from 1961 to 1966, dropped to an average of only 10 per cent. Other countries are forging ahead much faster. The reason is that they have got a properly planned, integrated tourist policy.

Let me say that, when this hon. Minister took charge, this Government had no tourist policy worth

the name. It is a hand-to-mouth affair; a hit-and-miss affair; improvising all the time. There are two basic examples of where a tourist policy needs to be evolved.

The first is the recognition of the tourist industry as an export industry. Tourism is a paying "invisible export." It, like other exports, earns foreign currency, but nothing valuable goes out of the country. It is doubly valuable. We lose nothing in return for what we get. The job of the Government is to lay the infrastructure for the tourist industry; to provide highways and roads, airfields, tourist resorts, civic amenities. Secondly, the Government has to give incentives to the tourist industry so that it may advance. By the tourist industry, I mean the hotel industry, transport companies and travel agencies. This can be done in many ways. One is to give loans for the building of hotels; there is need for a Tourist Development Loan Fund. Another is to provide foreign exchange to hotels and restaurants for importing essential materials and paying cabaret artistes. Another thing is to give foreign exchange for doing publicity and advertising abroad to attract more tourism. Another method may be to give an import licence for air-conditioned cars, for teleprinter facilities and so on. Every dollar of foreign exchange so spent will give us hundreds of dollars of foreign exchange in return within a year or two.

Today, unfortunately, our rupee is at a discount; it is quoted in the free market in India and abroad at a dollar for Rs. 9 and a pound for Rs. 26 or Rs. 27. Now, the result of this black-marketing in currency which is going on in India is that only 25 per cent of the foreign exchange which is being earned from tourism comes through the banking channels to our country. 75 per cent leaks; it leaks in the form of export of travellers' cheques and high denomination currency notes. Anyone who knows anything about travel knows this. I have had guests in my own home in the last few months from abroad: distinguished, respectable people, who came, and with a shock told me: "What is happening? The taxi driver accosts us and asks: 'Sir or madam, would you like to buy rupees in the black market? We will give you twice of what you can get from the bank.'" When foreign visitors go round Connaught Place or Connaught Circus, they are accosted by people who ask: "May we give you rupees at half the price of what you get in the banks?" And we have to answer the foreigners apologetically by saying: "Unfortunately the rupee is at a discount but the Government is so wooden as not to face the fact."

Shri Joachim Alva: This happens in the corridors of many hotels abroad.

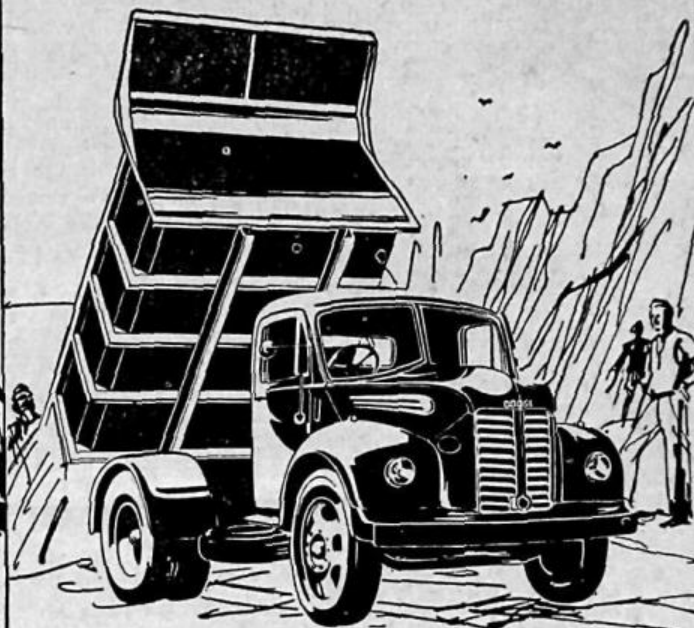
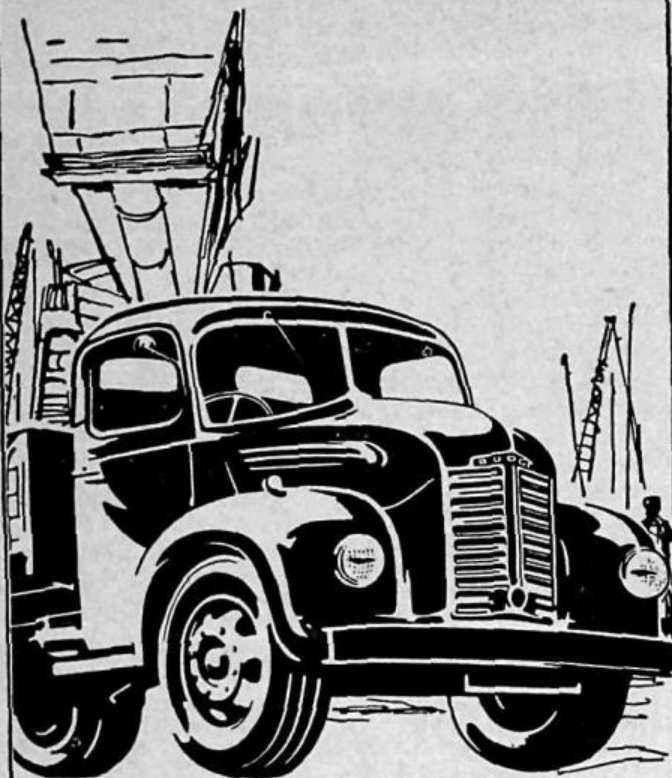
Mr. Masani: Now, there is a thing known as "the 8 o'clock knock on the door" in some of our well-known hotels, when, as Shri Alva says, some people come and ask, "May we oblige you in this manner?" Instead of the 2 o'clock knock on the door by the NKVD in Soviet Russia, it is the 8 o'clock knock on the door in the hotels of Delhi!

In Soviet Russia, where also the rouble has depreciated like the rupee—that seems to be a consequence of communism and socialism—they have faced this problem in a realistic manner. I received a letter from a friend from Moscow last November, in which he told me what was happening there and how they are facing this problem. He said:

"One new development in the Soviet Union since my last visit is the opening of a number of stores where everything from a bottle of vodka to a volga automobile may be purchased substantially below their cost in regular stores—for foreign currency. And the acceptable currencies are listed on the doors of the stores and

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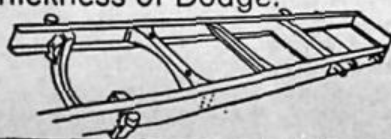
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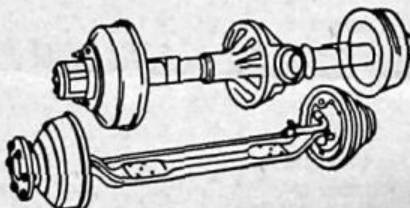
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include the U.S., Britain, all the Common Market and Scandinavian countries, but none of the Socialist bloc. In both Moscow and Leningrad foreign currency bars have been opened where drinks average about half a U.S. dollar and closing time is a good two hours later than any other similar institution in the city. Posyltorg, a mail order establishment, encourages residents of hard currency countries to give Russian relatives hard-to-get items like 'Moskva' refrigerators (350 roubles, two year wait) for 260 dollars, Volga cars which cost Soviet citizens 5,500 roubles and at least a year's wait for 2,700 dollars, delivery in ten days. These elaborate measures are calculated to bring in more scarce foreign currency so necessary to the Soviet economy. . . .

Why can't we do something like this here? If we do not want to have devaluation of the rupee, all right, but let us have selective devaluation. There are two ways of doing it. One is to have a "tourist rupee" by allowing the tourists to get twice of what others get for their dollar or pound. The other is that, since 80 per cent of what the tourist spends is on hotels, shops and cars or transportation, allow the hotels, that is, recognised hotels, shops and transport agencies to change travellers' cheques and dollars at the free market rate, by which they will make a loss but they will go to the bank and the country will get foreign exchange, and then, compensate those who are out of pocket in the way the French Government does. What they do in France is that, when the French perfumiers give a discount on travellers' cheques, the French Government give the perfumiers half of what they have lost. The other half of the loss may be

made good by giving them import entitlements. These are ways of doing it. If you study it and ask for expert advice, these things can be done.

Finally, I come to an autonomous authority. Today, you are trying to do all this through a small department in a big Ministry. Bureaucracy is no way of developing tourism. Almost all progressive countries have established autonomous authorities or corporations or associations with Government participation and help, but with no Government domination or interference. Let us do that here. The British have an example in this respect. They have the British Travel Association, a predominantly non-official body, but the Government gives 85 per cent of the funds and the tourist industry in Britain contributes 15 per cent. Let us invite our tourist industry here to contribute at least 10 per cent, if they cannot afford 15 per cent in this very early stage. Let the Government give 90 per cent; let them set up a mixed corporation where the Government may be represented, but where experts and those who are interested in tourism may predominate, so that this can function as an executive authority, but that corporation also or authority also should not go in for commercial operation. It should be to promote or foster tourism, as they do in other countries. Building a hotel and providing taxis is not the job of Government. This is the job of private enterprise which can do it best. These are some ways in which you can put tourism on its feet and make money which at present it does not. So far we have escaped disaster perhaps because those in charge of tourism have been dedicated to this cause but, later on, what is going to happen? Bureaucracy is no way of doing this job. . . .

WEIGHT LIMITS AND MULTIPLE TAXATION IN EASTERN REGION

I.R.T.D.A.'S EFFORTS TO SECURE RELAXATION

Relaxation of laden weight restrictions and adoption of the single-point tax system for vehicles plying on inter-State routes are among the subjects on which urgent representations have been made to the Governments of U.P., Bihar and West Bengal in recent weeks by the Calcutta Branch of the Indian Roads and Transport Development Association.

Mr. S. K. Ganguli, the Honorary Secretary of the Branch, visited Lucknow and Patna for discussions of various issues with the authorities concerned. Among the officials he interviewed are Shri Jagdish Prasad, Engineer-in-Chief, P.W.D., B. & R., Lucknow, Shri Iftikar Hussain, Transport Commissioner, Lucknow, Shri Srivastava, Additional Chief Engineer, Lucknow and Shri B. P. Dubey, Chief Engineer, P.W.D., Bihar.

The following basic problems affecting long-distance operators were submitted to the authorities during the discussions:

(a) Anomalies under Rule 131(A)-a of the U.P. Motor Vehicle Rules, regarding the ceiling on the axle load and the gross vehicle load particularly when trailer combinations with more than two axles are increasingly in use on National Highways.

(b) Anomalies under the U.P. M.V. Taxation Rules, wherein the operators, while being denied the benefit of axle load principle and consequently the authorised carrying capacity, are subjected to taxes on the gross vehicle weight limits of the originating State, e.g. West Bengal.

(c) Absence of adequate reciprocal tax exemption facilities for West Bengal vehicles.

(d) Need for establishment of liberalised Passenger Transport Services between West Bengal/

Bihar/U.P., pursuant to the August 1963 Bihar Tripartite Meeting, particularly in the context of the opening of the new road bridge over the Sone.

In regard to weight limits, it was pointed out by the I.R.T.D.A. and by representatives of vehicle manufacturers present during the discussions that the maximum utilisation of inter-State trunk routes is closely related to the economy of the country. In other words, if a vehicle is not allowed to carry the maximum load it is capable of, transport costs go up and eventually the selling prices of the goods carried are adversely affected. The following points were stressed in this connection:

1. Recognising the need for heavier transport vehicles in order to cut down the cost per ton-mile, the Government of India has sanctioned the manufacture of vehicles with a gross weight of upto 26 tons. When used as an articulated tractor-trailer combination unit, a gross train weight of 45 tons is permissible for some of the models.

2. Load restrictions, the world over, are today governed by the principle of axle loading which takes into account the distribution of the gross vehicle weight.

(a) In the range of vehicles to be manufactured in India the individual axle load does not exceed 10 tons.

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(b) The weight of any loaded commercial vehicle is transmitted to the road surface through the road wheels and therefore if the area of contact between the road wheel and the road surface is increased, the pressure per unit area will be proportionately less. Keeping this in mind engineers have increased the number of axles and road wheels in proportion to the load to be carried by each vehicle. For instance, a tractor-trailer combination unit which is rated at 18 tons gross train weight has three axles with 10 road wheels and a similar combination unit which has a gross train weight of 45 tons is equipped with 5 axles and 18 road wheels.

(c) A grossly overladen vehicle would cause more damage to the road surface than a vehicle which is designed to carry the same load. For instance, a five-tonner carrying 10 tons pay-load is a menace on the road whereas a 10-tonner carrying 10 tons will not only eliminate damage to the road surface but will also be a safe vehicle to handle. A grossly overladen vehicle will have to have overinflated tyres, reinforced springs etc. which result in a rigid bogey and consequent hammering action on the road surface.

(d) As a corollary to the above, load limits on a vehicle should be related to the specification and load-carrying capacity of the vehicle as designed by the manufacturers.

(e) The main reason for the load restriction is low capacity of the bridges. However, a majority of the bridges are class 'B' and these are rated at 25 tons load. The number of bridges involved and their capacity need to be studied. One method of safeguarding low-capacity bridges is to provide traffic control and speed breakers.

3. The relaxation of the present G.V.W. limits will not only reduce corruption at the lower levels and consequent harassment of operators but will yield a higher quantum of much-needed revenue to the Government.

The recommendations of the Association have been heartily endorsed by the Central Road Transport Corporation Ltd.—a goods transport undertaking of the Government of India. Supporting the Association's efforts, the Managing Director of the Corporation has stated in a letter to the Engineer-in-Chief of U.P. that due to restrictions in that State, the Corporation is facing difficulty in plying its vehicles through U.P. The Corporation feels that the restrictions now in force in the State need to be relaxed in view of the heavier types of vehicles in common use and the improved conditions of roads and culverts.

In its discussions with the Bihar Government also, the Indian Roads and Transport Development Association has urged that weak culverts and bridges, particularly on National Highway No. 2, should be identified and funds obtained from the Centre for strengthening them, pending replacement with new structures.

As regards tax reciprocity, it has been suggested in the course of discussions that 30 vehicles operating on the Calcutta-Delhi route should be allowed to pass through the corridor State of U.P. on the basis of single-point taxation.

In the interest of the healthy regional development of the road transport industry, which calls for economic operation of heavy transport, the I.R.T.D.A. has requested the authorities to give these problems their urgent personal attention.

IN THE INDIAN PARLIAMENT

QUESTIONS ON ROADS AND TRANSPORT

National Highway from Malda to Assam

Shri Vasudevan Nair, Shri Warior, and Shri Indrajit Gupta (Lok Sabha): Will the Minister of Transport, Aviation, Shipping and Tourism be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that only a small section of the National Highway from Malda to Darjeeling and Assam passes through the State of Bihar for which lorry owners from West Bengal are severely harassed by the Bihar Police posted at the check post;

(b) whether such a situation can be avoided by providing direct road link through the State of West Bengal; and

(c) if so, the steps being taken to provide such a link?

ANSWER

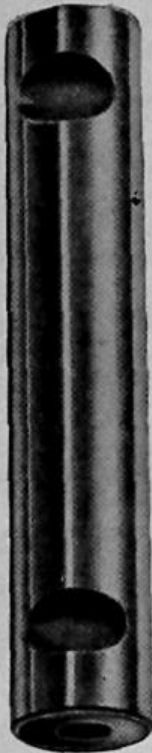
Minister of Transport, Aviation, Shipping and Tourism (Shri N. Sanjiva Reddy) on 1st March 1966:

(a) The route from Malda to Darjeeling is along National Highway No. 34 upto Dalkhola

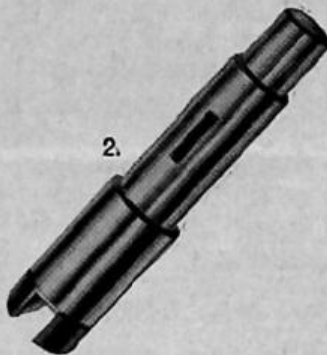
where it joins National Highway No. 31 which starts from Barhi in Bihar and goes to Gauhati via Barauni, Purnea, Dalkhola, Kishanganj, Siliguri and Cooch Behar. Siliguri to Darjeeling is a State road in West Bengal. In a length of about 5 miles between Dalkhola and Siliguri National Highway No. 31 passes through Kishanganj town which is in Bihar State. The Government of India is not aware of the extent of difficulty that the road traffic emanating from West Bengal experiences on this section of the road.

(b) and (c): National Highway routes are not aligned to keep within the boundaries of any one State as they are meant to serve the country across its length and breadth. A proposal has been made to construct a by-pass round Kishanganj as the section of National Highway No. 31 through the town is congested. A suggestion was received from the Government of West Bengal to align the by-pass so that it is entirely within West Bengal in which case no portion of National Highway No. 31 between Dalkhola and Siliguri will lie in Bihar. The provision

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of by-passes has ordinarily been given a low priority in the scheme of development of National Highways.

Punjab Roadways Services Between Punjab and Delhi

Shri Surendranath Dwivedy (Lok Sabha): Will the Minister of Transport, Aviation, Shipping and Tourism be pleased to state:

(a) whether any representation regarding illegal operation of the Punjab Roadways Services on the inter-State routes between the Punjab and Delhi has been made before the Inter-State Transport Corporation;

(b) whether it is a fact that the Punjab Roadways buses in some cases are carrying passengers from the Union Territory of Delhi for the destinations in the Punjab for which they have no valid authority countersigned by the Delhi Transport authority; and

(c) if so, the action taken for contravention of the provisions of the Motor Vehicles Act?

ANSWER

Minister of Transport, Aviation, Shipping and Tourism (Shri N. Sanjiva Reddy), on 8th March 1966:

(a), (b) and (c): Representations have been received in the office of the Inter-State Transport Commission in regard to extension of bus services by Punjab Roadways beyond the points for which their vehicles hold valid permits and counter-signatures for operation on inter-State routes between Delhi and Punjab, by having two permits for the same vehicle simultaneously. The question whether it is legally in order for the Punjab Roadways to extend their services in this manner is under the Commission's consideration.

Control of Floods in Brahmaputra

Shri P. R. Chakraverti and Shri K. N. Tiwary (Lok Sabha): Will the Minister of Transport, Aviation, Shipping and Tourism be pleased to state:

(a) whether the process of bottom panelling conceived by a French expert has been applied to Brahmaputra at Hatimura, 20 miles from Gauhati, with spectacular results;

(b) whether the technique, put into practice 12 months ago, has been found an effective agency to solve the problems of floods, erosion and silting;

(c) whether the scheme is being tried at Neamati to silt up the 35-mile Gohaingaon stream which caused devastating flood in Jorhat this year, and

(d) the other projects now proposed to be undertaken to check erosion?

ANSWER

Minister of Transport, Aviation, Shipping and Tourism (Shri N. Sanjiva Reddy), on 15th March 1966:

(a) and (b): The Bottom Panelling experiment carried out under the technical guidance of a French expert for improving navigational depth of the channel at Hatimura, has shown promising results. The technique used has proved effective for closing a secondary arm of the river and thereby diverting the flow of water through it into the main navigable channel. Its direct and indirect effects on bank erosion, floods, etc. are yet to be investigated.

(c) The Bottom Panelling experiment is also being tried at Neamati to close the Gosaigaon stream (Kokila Nallah) with the object of diverting more water into the Kamlabari channel.

(d) It is proposed to carry out bottom panelling experiments at Dibrugarh and Dhubri. As regards erosion, the usual measures such as construction of spurs, revetment and other bank protection measures will be continued. It is also proposed to try dredging at selected places for diverting the main current away from the bank.

Buckingham Canal Project

Shri R. Ramanathan Chettiar (Lok Sabha): Will the Minister of Transport, Aviation, Shipping and Tourism be pleased to state:

(a) the stage at which the execution of the Buckingham Canal Project in Madras stands;

(b) the reasons for the delay in implementing the recommendations made by the Gokhale Committee on Inland Water Transport in that regard; and

(c) when the project is likely to be taken up?

ANSWER

Minister of Transport, Aviation, Shipping and Tourism (Shri N. Sanjiva Reddy), on 22nd March 1966:

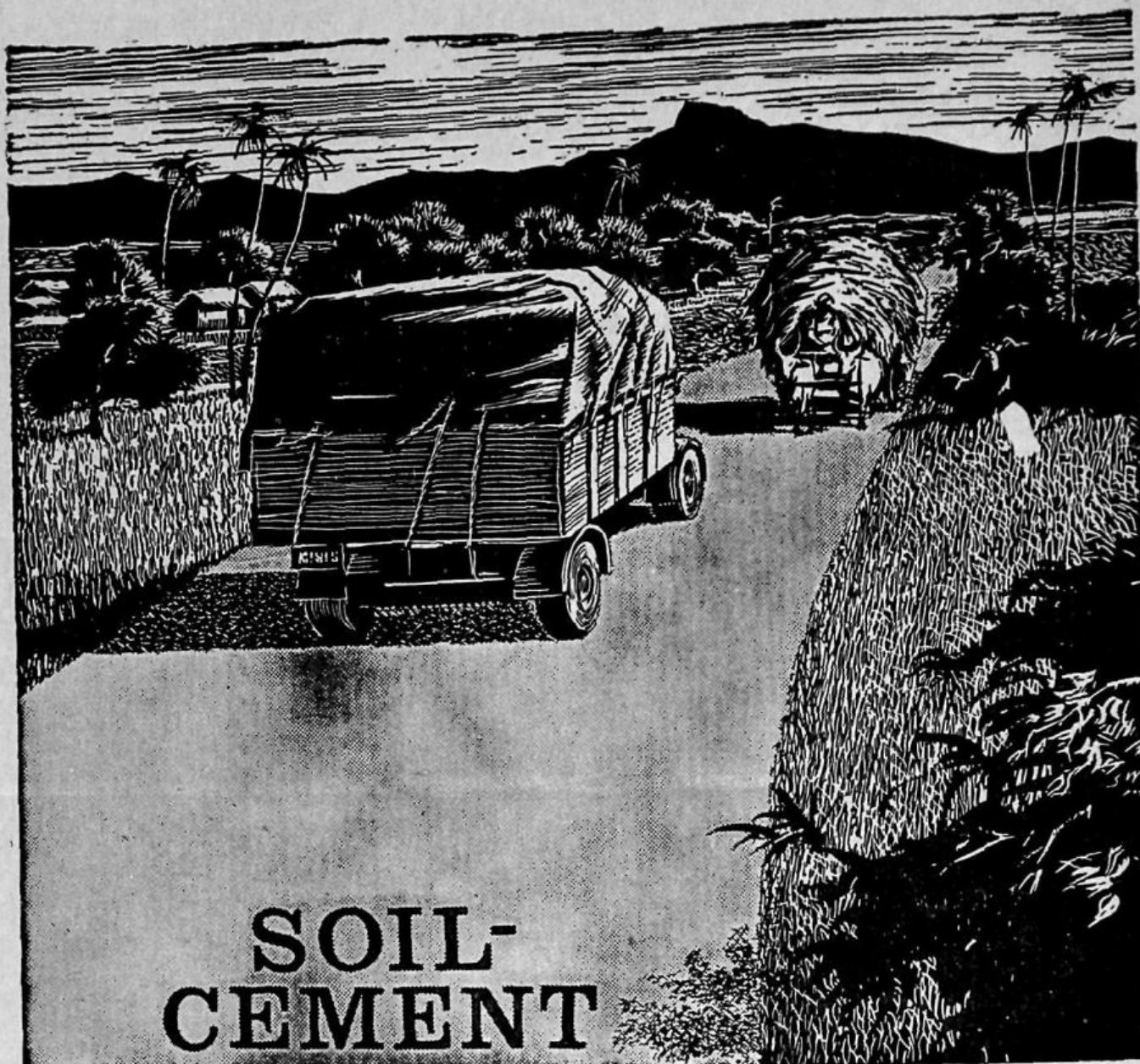
(a), (b) and (c): So far as the Buckingham Canal Project for improvement of the Canal within the city of Madras, which was sanctioned in 1961, is concerned, all the civil works except the construction of the wharf at Mylapore have been completed. The work of construction of the wharf at Mylapore is in progress. The dredger required has also been purchased and commissioned from January 1966. Some other schemes for improvement of the Canal are also under consideration of the State Government. These will be taken in hand after the schemes have been finalised and approved.

Unloading Facilities at Ports in Kerala

Shri A. K. Gopalan (Lok Sabha): Will the Minister of Transport, Aviation, Shipping and Tourism be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the facilities for unloading foodgrains in Kerala are not satisfactory;

(b) the number of tonnes of foodgrains which can daily be unloaded at the major port at Cochin and minor and intermediate ports in Kerala;



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(c) whether it is also a fact that out of eleven minor and intermediate ports, only five are used for unloading foodgrains; and

(d) if so, whether Government consider it necessary to make use of all the ports and develop the same, particularly the minor ports at Tellicherry, and Azhikkal, which can be developed into major ports?

ANSWER

The Minister of Transport, Aviation, Shipping and Tourism (Shri N. Sanjiva Reddy) on 22nd March 1966.

(a) The existing facilities in Kerala ports for unloading foodgrains are fairly satisfactory.

(b) At Cochin, which is a major port, bulk discharge of foodgrains on a single day has touched the peak figure of 4,000 tonnes, three steamers working simultaneously. On an average, the figure of discharge per day can be assumed at 1,100 to 1,400 tonnes. At the other minor ports in Kerala, viz. Calicut, Quilon, Alleppey and Trivandrum, where mostly bagged rice is received, the discharge per day on an average has been at the rate of 1,000 to 1,300 tons at Trivandrum, Alleppey and Quilon and about 1,300 tons at Calicut.

(c) Only five ports, viz. Cochin, Calicut, Quilon, Alleppey and Trivandrum are being utilised in Kerala for the import of foodgrains. At Cochin, sometimes, fertiliser is also imported.

(d) The question of utilising the port of Tellicherry was examined sometime back but the matter had to be deferred as this port could be utilised profitably only if there is going to be sizable imports of rice. No imports of foodgrains have been made so far through Tellicherry or Azhikkal ports.

In the context of the anticipated heavy imports, it is proposed to receive in Kerala ports about 1,10,000 tons of foodgrains per month during the non-monsoon period and about 60,000 tons per month during the monsoon period.

Narmada Bridge

Shri Jashvant Mehta (Lok Sabha): Will the Minister of Transport, Aviation, Shipping and Tourism be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have considered the representation of the Gujarat Chamber of Commerce for permitting gross vehicle weight on Narmada Bridge in Gujarat State on Ahmedabad-Bombay National Highway; and

(b) if so, the decision taken in the matter?

ANSWER

To be answered by Minister of Transport, Aviation, Shipping and Tourism (Shri N. Sanjiva Reddy), on 12th April 1966:

(a) and (b) Yes. The restriction of 19,000 lbs. laden weight imposed on vehicles using the bridge was raised to 24,000 lbs. subject to certain precautions being taken. The Gujarat Chamber of Commerce have again represented that the restriction of

24,000 lbs. might be further relaxed. The matter is under consideration in consultation with the Government of Gujarat.

West Coast Road in Kerala

Shri A. V. Raghavan (Lok Sabha): Will the Minister of Transport, Aviation, Shipping and Tourism be pleased to state:

(a) the progress made in completing the West Coast Road in Kerala;

(b) the reasons for the slow progress; and

(c) the steps taken to complete the works?

ANSWER

Minister of Transport, Aviation, Shipping and Tourism (Shri N. Sanjiva Reddy), on 12th April 1966.

(a), (b) and (c) The progress on the construction of the West Coast Road in Kerala is fairly satisfactory. Out of the total length of 198 miles of the road in Kerala, about 174 miles have been improved and black-topped. Thus only about 24 miles are yet to be improved and black-topped. Out of 27 major and minor bridges, 19 have been completed, seven are in good progress and the remaining one will be taken up during the Fourth Five-year Plan period. The entire work is expected to be completed in the Fourth Plan.

Transport Facilities for Hilly Tracts of Malabar Region

Shri A. V. Raghavan (Lok Sabha): Will the Minister of Transport, Aviation, Shipping and Tourism be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the difficulties of the people living in the hilly tracts of the Malabar region of Kerala for want of adequate transport facilities in the region;

(b) the number of *panchayats* in the Malabar region which are not accessible by the road during monsoon;

(c) the steps taken by Government to provide roads and bridges to these regions; and

(d) the amount set apart during the year 1966-67 for the purpose?

ANSWER

Minister of Transport, Aviation, Shipping and Tourism (Shri N. Sanjiva Reddy), on 12th April 1966.

(a) Yes, sir.

(b) Out of 376 *panchayats* in Malabar region about ten per cent, especially in the Irrikkur Block in the Cannanore District, are inaccessible during monsoon.

(c) Important *panchayat* roads are proposed to be taken over by the State Public Works Department from the local bodies concerned and new roads and bridges have also been proposed by them for construction under the State Fourth Five-year Plan.

(d) Approximately Rs. 80 lakhs for roads and bridges in Malabar.

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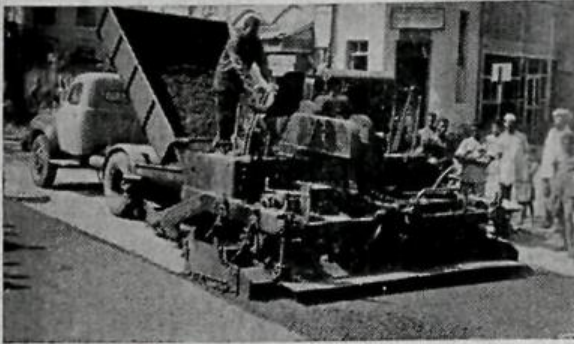
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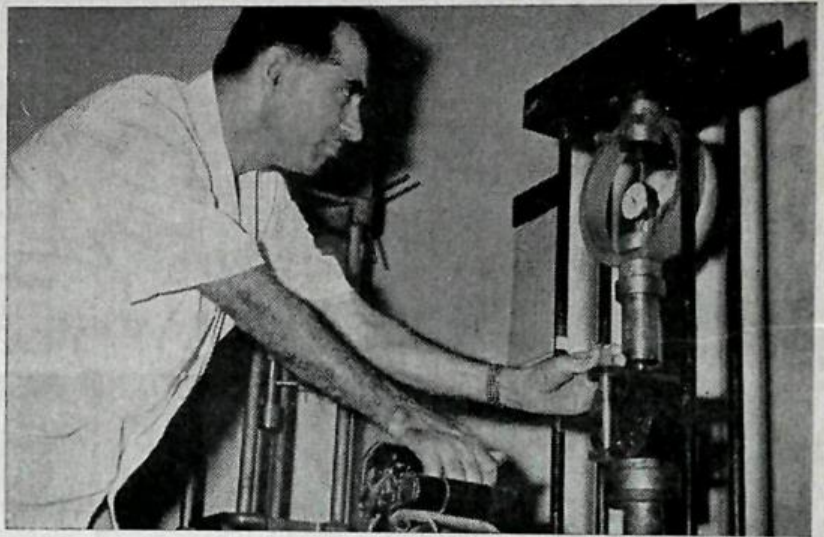
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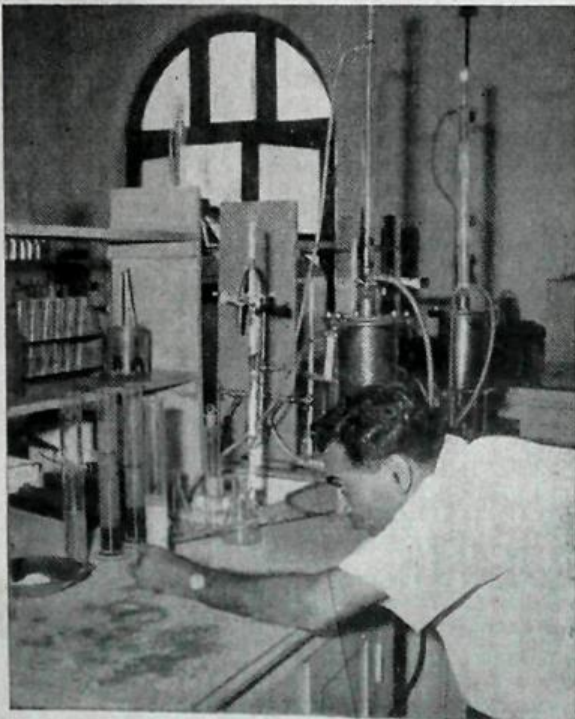
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