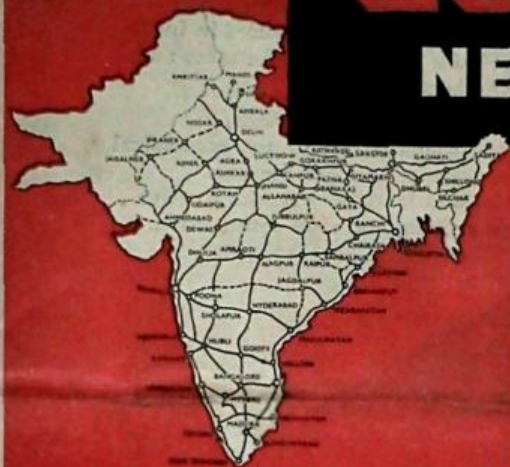




**THE INDIAN ROADS AND
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No. 8

DEVELOPMENT OF ROADS AND ROAD TRANSPORT IS NOT SATISFACTORY MR. MASANI SUGGESTS APPROACHING I.D.A. FOR LOAN FOR OUR NATIONAL HIGHWAYS

"The cause of roads and road transport seems to have received many a setback in the last twelve months. Whether one looks at the budget with its vindictive increase in the excise duties on diesel oil, or whether one looks at the Third Five-Year Plan, that conclusion, unfortunately, is difficult to resist." So said Mr. M. R. Masani, M.P., a former President of the I.R.T.D.A., in the Lok Sabha during the course of the discussion on the Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Transport and Communications. He pointed out that laying down roads and buying trucks would bring manifold return as compared to every rupee spent on laying railway track and making wagons, and urged the Ministry of Transport to bring these facts to the notice of the Planning Commission which shows a distinct bias against roads.

Here is the full text of Mr. Masani's speech followed by extracts from the remarks made by Dr. P. Subbarayan, the Minister of Transport and Communications and Shri Raj Bahadur, the Deputy Minister :—

"In speaking in support of my cut motions Nos. 1028, 1029 and 1030, I would like, with your permission, to focus the attention of the House on a matter of primary concern to the country falling within the purview of this Ministry. I refer to the development of roads and road transport.

"I must confess, though I hate to do so, that the results of the last year's working of this Ministry in regard to roads and road transport is not one on which

one can express any satisfaction or congratulate my hon. friend the Minister or his able associate.

"It was in August 1959, as the hon. Ministers will recall, that the Report of the Road Transport Reorganisation Committee was welcomed with rare unanimity by this House, a unanimity with which the Minister, my hon. friend's predecessor, Shri S. K. Patil, associated himself and on which he expressed great satisfaction. In the year and a half that has passed, however, one sees very little reflection in Government policy of that endorsement given by the Minister and the House to the various conclusions and recommendations of that Committee which cover the entire ground.

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"On the contrary, if I may say so, the cause of roads and roads transport seems to have received many a setback in the last twelve months. Whether one looks at the budget with its vindictive increase in the excise duties on diesel oil, or whether one looks at the Third Five-Year Plan, that conclusion, unfortunately, is difficult to resist. I hope the Ministers will take the House into confidence at some stage in regard to the action taken by the Government of India in implementing the recommendations of that Committee which they welcomed and point out what remains to be done and why it is not being done.

"The fact remains, however, that if we are going to talk in terms of a 'take-off' in our economic development, then the ground from which the take-off has to take place must be there, and among that ground the road surfaces of this country are among the most important. Now, let us just see how the record stands, because I do not want it to be felt that I have been severe in this assessment. The facts, however, go well beyond what I have said.

"We shall take roads and vehicles separately. In so far as the provision of roads is concerned, one would have thought that, as one Plan succeeded another, the recognition of the importance of roads would increase, and the proportion of the funds allocated



Mr. M. R. Masani.

to the provision of roads for opening up the country to economic development would have also progressed. But what are the facts? During the First Five-Year Plan, the allocation for roads was Rs. 156 crores out of Rs. 3,360 crores, or 4.6 per cent of the total allocation. In the Second Plan, we find that there are Rs. 248 crores out of Rs. 6,750 crores. The percentage has dropped to 3.7 per cent. And now comes the anticlimax in the Third Plan where, out of Rs. 10,200 crores, only Rs. 250 crores or so have been allocated, a miserable 2.5 per cent. So, 4.6 per cent drops to 3.7 per cent and now we come to the anticlimax of 2.5 per cent! This is the way in which the Ministry has been able, with the full support of this House, to obtain from the Planning Commission recognition for the importance of their function in our Government.

"Since the National Highways were taken over by the Central Government in 1947 and are the exclusive responsibility of the Central Government, let us see in what condition we find them. The President of the Indian Roads Congress, who also happens to be the Consulting Engineer in charge of road development in the Ministry of Transport itself, had the following description to give of the state of our National High-

ways, and I cannot do better than quote a member of the Ministry itself. He listed the following deficiencies:—

- '1. Eighty major bridges will remain unbuilt;
- '2. Four hundred miles of missing links will remain to be constructed;
- '3. One thousand miles of National Highways only have single-lane water-bound macadam surface;
- '4. 11,300 miles will have only a single-lane asphalted or cement concrete carriageway; about 2,300 miles only having a two-lane carriageway;
- '5. Hundreds of road-rail level crossings will remain to be replaced by over- or under-bridges; and
- '6. By-passes around most of the towns will remain to be built.'

"In other words, on an average, there is no bridge on a major river crossing, over 187 miles of our national highways, or 80 missing bridges in 15,000 miles. There is no connecting link on every 37 miles of our highways, that is, 400 links missing in 15,000 miles; and only 15 per cent of the track has been provided with a two-lane carriageway, that is, 2,300 miles out of 15,000 miles.

"I am sure the hon. Minister will not blame me if I say, because this refers not only to his tenure of office but that of his predecessors, that this is a shocking record after fourteen years of the Union Government's control of our national highways.

"To put these deficiencies aright, which I have just listed from the address of the Indian Roads Congress President, Rs. 200 crores are required. But the Planning Commission, which in this matter shows a distinct bias against roads which the Ministry has not been able to cure, has ensured that only Rs. 47½ crores are available. Rs. 153 crores remain unprovided for for these very essential purposes. May I suggest that the Minister consider approaching the International Development Association for a loan? Such a loan involves no foreign exchange for the country, because it can be repaid in Indian currency. The only foreign exchange component that is required for setting right these essential deficiencies is a small sum of Rs. 3 crores required for high tensile steel for bridges. All the rest can be done out of rupee finance. And as I said, the loan can be obtained from the International Development Association. These are very modest amounts. If you compare them with Rs. 400 crores which have been cheerfully found for the railways for electrification, new lines and line development—and that amount of Rs. 400 crores involves a major amount by way of foreign exchange—this is a measure of the stepmotherly treatment which has been given to roads so far, which, as I say, the Ministry has failed to correct in spite of getting the support of this House and of public opinion.

"When you turn from roads to vehicles, the record is almost as unsatisfactory. The production targets in the Second Plan for vehicles were: public passenger vehicles 22,500 and goods vehicles 69,000. But of these targets, 11,000 passenger vehicles and 27,000 goods vehicles are only replacements. So the net addition is 11,500 passenger vehicles and 40,000 goods vehicles, against an estimated requirement of 21,000 passenger vehicles and 74,000 goods vehicles. The shortfall, the gap, therefore, comes to 9,500 passenger vehicles and 34,000 goods vehicles. This sounds a very big figure, 34,000 trucks. It is a very big figure



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by way of a shortfall, but these 34,000 trucks equal the capacity of only 10 per cent of the railways' goods traffic of 50,000 million tons in 1959-60. In other words, even if the shortfall were made good, only 10 per cent of the traffic that the railways carried in 1959-60 could be diverted to roads.

"Now, I do not want to go into any repetition, but in the Report of the Road Transport Reorganisation Committee, at pages 42-43, it was shown conclusively how throughout the world technological change and development is moving away from the railways to air travel and to roads. The railways are ceasing to be a modern, up-to-date means of transportation of people and of goods. This is a world-wide trend. I shall give only one figure to recall to the House how decisive this trend is by pointing out that in Great Britain in 1938, the railways' share of the total inland goods traffic was 65 per cent. In 1948, 10 years later, it had dropped to 44 per cent, and the roads had taken over the balance. Or, to put it in another way, of the additional traffic generated during the past 20 years, two-thirds had gone to roads and only one-third had been taken over by the railways. In India, we lag sadly behind, as in many other respects. Today the position in India is just the reverse."

The Minister of Transport and Communications (Dr. P. Subbarayan): "I would like the hon. Member to consider how our railways are making a profit while the English railways are not."

Shri M. R. Masani: "Our railways are making a profit by subsidising themselves through uneconomically high rates and by giving very poor service, a record of which no railway need be very proud."

An Hon. Member: "They are even raising the rates."

Shri M. R. Masani: "Anyone can make profits when he has a monopoly and when he uses the police power of the State to hinder competition, as the railways have been hindering competition of the roads. I wish that the Transport Minister would stand up for roads and not be an apologist for the railways, as he is doing."

Dr. P. Subbarayan: "I am concerned with the whole Government."

Shri M. R. Masani: "The Government is a whole. But the Railway Minister shows very little consideration for his colleague of the 'Road' Ministry. There should be some reciprocity between the Railway Minister and the 'Road' Minister. (Interruption.) The Railway Minister rules the roost, while the Road Minister miserably trails behind apologising for his senior colleague. I think this state of affairs should cease and the Road Minister should develop a little more of the same toughness that the Railway Minister shows for his own side."

Dr. P. Subbarayan: "May I tell the hon. Member that we are working in co-operation?"

Shri M. R. Masani: "This idea of co-operation is very peculiar. The Railway Minister sits on the back of the Road Minister, just as the railways are riding on the back of the roads. It is time that this unequal relationship were replaced. I am stating what are the facts. I am placing these facts before the hon. Minister and I am trying to encourage him to show a little more 'guts' on behalf of that part of the transport services which are entrusted to his charge. It is not his job to go on apologising for the railways."

Shri M. B. Thakore (Patan): "He should support the Minister."

Shri Masani: "He does not seem to want our support. He wants to take shelter behind his senior colleague."

"The President of the Indian Roads Congress has pointed out that currently only 10 per cent of the total goods traffic is going by the roads which, as I pointed out, is the reverse of the process in Britain and other progressive countries and this, as I said, is due to the discriminating policy pursued by the Government, of fostering the interests of the railways which are their State monopoly, covering up the inefficiency of the railways and retarding the growth and development of roads by avoidance of free and fair competition. The attitude of the entire Government and that of the Planning Commission, as we have seen, is loaded in favour of the railway and against the roads and all forces of fair competition which will serve the country's interests are being retarded for the sake of a State monopoly."

"Even if the roads are defective and inadequate, even if they are miserable, we can put them to better use. In England there are 28 motor cars and 9 commercial vehicles per mile of surface road. In India, there are 1.82 motor cars and 1.64 commercial vehicles. Even if we do not build more roads, they are our national asset. Let us see to it that this national asset is utilised to the maximum capacity by putting on the roads enough vehicles to get the most value out of them, which we are not doing now."

"Sir, considering these factors and also the fact that road transport provides more employment and brings more revenue to the Government than the railways, I can only hope that the Government will give up its very shortsighted policy of hanging on to a wasting asset and, rather than incur losses in out-of-date and outmoded process of transport, will divert finances and funds to roads which are more up-to-date and technologically more satisfying. That is why my hon. friend can do a great deal by asserting himself *vis-a-vis* the Planning Commission, which, in this matter, has unfortunately followed the lead of the Railway Board. It is a pity that there is no sign yet that this is being done."

"It would be all very well if this was only an academic issue. But we have seen in the gross muddle that has been made about our coal supply and transport what a heavy price we have had to pay for the neglect of the roads. This is not a new problem."

Mr. Chairman: "His time is up."

Shri M. R. Masani: "I shall need a few more minutes to deal with the other two cut motions."

Shri T. B. Vittal Rao: "Road transport does not carry coal."

Shri M. R. Masani: "My hon. friend is a little out-of-date. The question of coal supply and transport is a century old one. It is not a new problem. There is a letter written on the 18th June 1857, that is, 104 years back, which still exists in the archives of a commercial institution where the coal agent at the mines replied to a letter from headquarters asking for more supplies by saying: 'You say, send coal; I say, send more wagons.' So, even in 1857, the shortage of wagons seems to have been coming in the way of getting coal to the factories where it was required. Now, after 104 years, the railways are as laggardly in their service to the coal industry as they were then."

"The Chairman of the Indian Mining Association in his speech at the Annual General Meeting on the 24th March 1961, drew attention to the fact that the

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roads have a great part to play in the transport of coal. I shall presently give figures to satisfy my hon. friend. He said: "The most substantial increases can be obtained by the greater use of road transport. This Association has been pressing for a number of years for an immediate programme of repairs to the connecting roads in the coalfield areas and the present crisis dictates that every priority must be given to this work." Then, he goes on to press for immediate attention to the Grand Trunk Road between the coalfields and Calcutta and to the Durgapur Expressway."

Shri Raghunath Singh (Varanasi): "One question I want to ask for clarification. What is the proportion of expenditure in carrying coal by railway and by road, which the hon. member is championing?"

Shri M. R. Masani: "Sir, the Road Transport Committee of the National Productivity Council gives the answer to the question which the hon. member is asking. The report published by the National Productivity Council, says that as against the current railway cost—including terminal charges—of 8 nP. per ton-mile on the broad-gauge and 12 nP. per ton-mile on the metre-gauge and 26 nP. per ton-mile on the narrow-gauge, a 12-ton truck on road will carry coal at a cost of 6½ nP. per ton-mile and a 15-ton truck can do so as cheaply as 5 nP. per ton-mile."

Shri Raghunath Singh: "Practically half."

Shri M. R. Masani: "Yes; that is the answer to my hon. friend—that the roads can carry coal cheaper than the railways. The old fallacy that railways are cheaper has been exploded once and for all. But the trucks must be heavy trucks and the roads must be such that they can carry heavy trucks. I cannot give half-truths. If you have light trucks, they will be more expensive than the railways. But if you provide adequate road surface which can carry 12 to 15 ton-trucks—better still, if you can carry articulated vehicles, the truck-trailer combinations of 21 trucks and more, it will be cheaper still."

Shri Narasimhan (Krishnagiri): "Will it not add to the cost of the roads, maintenance and other costs?"

Shri M. R. Masani: "No; it will be much cheaper. I cannot be side-tracked into this because it has been proved in the Report. I ask my hon. friend to read it fully. It will prove the amounts that can much better be invested on roads than in laying down railway track. But time does not permit me to go into all these details or any argument."

"What I am pointing out is that if you can have heavy trucks and truck-trailer combinations, even today you can carry coal from the coalfields of India to the producing centres for the steel plants in Durgapur and Jamshedpur and other places much cheaper than the railways are able to do."

Shri N. R. Muniswamy (Vellore): "What about the investment in the trucks?"

Shri M. R. Masani: "I am pointing out that by laying down roads and buying trucks this country will get manifold return as compared to every rupee spent on laying railway track and making wagons. Unless the Chairman gives me another half hour, I am not going to enter into all this. In this I am bowing to his decision today. If my hon. friend will kindly turn to the Report of which he has got a copy, he will find that this case has been completely argued in detail. What I am trying to argue is that my hon. friend should understand this fact, that it is not correct as some people seem to think that the roads cannot carry coal. The roads can carry coal much cheaper than the

Indian railways are doing. I say that if you have heavy trucks and roads that can carry heavy trucks, there is no need for a single railway line to be laid any more. If a comparable amount can be spent on the roads and articulated vehicles, this country will be much better rewarded."

"Take, for example, the cost of laying railway lines. It costs Rs. 10 lakhs per mile, whereas we can have the broadest roads that can carry these heavy vehicles built at the cost of Rs. 2.5 to Rs. 3 lakhs. Therefore, at one-third or one-fourth of the cost of laying these railway lines, you can prepare these highways along which heavy trucks can carry coal today."

"The President of the Indian Mining Association points out that 2,000 tons of coal can be carried even now if only the Government will spend money on the roads instead of concentrating on railways."

"So, I once again urge the Ministry of Road Transport to bring these facts to the notice of the Planning Commission, to try to educate them better than they are educated so that they may do their duty to the country—and the process of education is very much the prerogative of my two colleagues who are sitting on the bench opposite."

"One more point and I have done. That is in regard to the Neogy Committee. On the last occasion, on 10th August 1959, when I referred to the appointment which had then been made of the Neogy Committee, I paid a tribute, which I am sure all hon. members of the House would like to join in, to the honourable gentleman who was appointed the Chairman of the Committee, a former distinguished member of this House. At the same time I drew attention, and I am reading from my speech then—

"But the House has already commented on what it thinks of the composition of the rest of the Committee. The rest of the committee is made up of Secretaries to Government from various Ministries. It has been said by more than one speaker that it is loaded with officials and bureaucrats, and we cannot really expect much from Secretaries of Ministries who are not really concerned with the development of road transport but who go there to watch the respective interests of their own Ministries or zamindaris."

"Now, Sir, that fear which was expressed by other members, and which I had repeated in my speech in winding up the debate on the Report of the Road Transport Reorganisation Committee as its Chairman, has unfortunately come true in the past year and a half. After one year and a half, the Neogy Committee has come out with an interim report and the interim report is not a report at all; it is a questionnaire. It asks questions; it does not even try to answer them. It is to be said with regret that the questions are loaded, that the bias of the Neogy Committee comes out in the leading questions that it has sought to put. However, let us be grateful that only questions are put and no wrong conclusions arrived at."

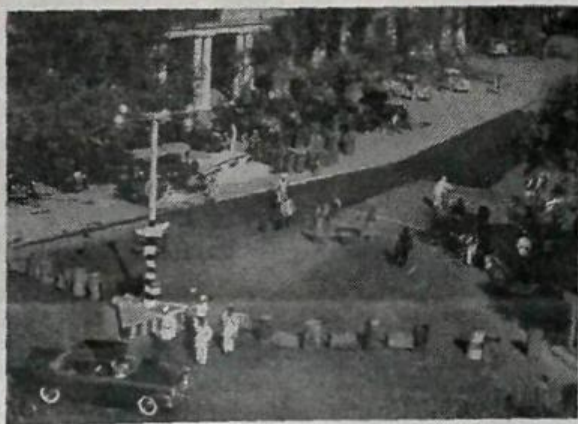
"But I am not today discussing the nature of the interim report. I would rather draw attention for a minute to the composition of that Committee. The trouble with the Committee is that, except for the Chairman, there is no second member who can really be expected to do justice to the work of the Committee. Secretaries to the Government, as we know, are busy people. They have the routine work and their own jobs to carry on and it is not fair to burden them with

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this extra burden to which they have shown by now their inability to attend or to give any attention. Apart from the fact that they are unable to apply their minds continuously to these problems which are of a major policy nature, the fact remains that officials are not suitable people to whom the evolving of policies should be entrusted. If the Government of India cannot make up their mind on policy in spite of the reports laid before them, let them appoint a policy-making committee, no doubt with Mr. Neogy as the Chairman, but let them give him colleagues from public life, from this House and the other House, who will make a team and who will sit together and rub their minds against each other.

"The difficulty has been that the Secretaries keep on changing and so the composition of the Committee has also been shifting. There have been numerous shifts in the year and a half that had already passed; there is no Neogy Committee but there is a series of Neogy Committees! A body of men who are not continuous in their personnel can hardly be expected to render any real service or to make any real report. I would therefore suggest to my hon. friend the hon. Minister that even at this stage, after this unfortunate experience, Government might reconsider the composition of this Committee. Let them replace the numerous Secretaries with two or three or four senior people from public life, either from this Parliament or outside, and then allow this new team to get on with the job. Otherwise, we may assume that when the Transport Ministry's demands come up before the House next year, we shall still be awaiting the report of the Neogy Committee."

The Minister of Transport and Communications, Dr. P. Subbarayan :—

"In the first place, as Mr. Masani is very anxious to go away, as he has got an engagement, I would deal with his remarks. He was quarrelling with the way allocations have been made for the railways and the road transport. I am sure Mr. Masani realises, as much as I do, that the railways are a national asset and therefore we should not do anything to injure the working of the railways. I do feel that road transport will have a future. As he has himself said, the building of railways is more costly than the building of roads. Therefore, wherever roads could be utilised, no railways need be built. Government will try their best to see that this policy is adopted. But at the same time, I would like to warn Mr. Masani, because he is a person who is so enamoured of the private sector, that there is the danger of the public sector coming into road transport as well.

"Most of the State Governments are in favour of road transport being nationalised because they feel it will add to their income, and as Mr. Masani realises, as much as I do, the revenues given to the States are not ample enough for their work and therefore they have got to think of increasing their revenues, and road transport is one of the things they are considering. As it is, we have stopped them from doing it till the end of the Third Plan. But at the same time there is this aspect and I am sure hon. members will keep this in mind.

"Mr. Masani remarked that we did not possess enough guts, as he called it, in this Department to get more allocations for our services. As my hon. colleague explained, it is not always possible in this world to get what you want. You can try no doubt and I can assure Mr. Masani that we have tried our best. But there are priorities in planning with which the

Government as a whole have agreed. Therefore, having agreed with the planning and the priorities given to it, we will try to abide by them and not press for things which are not easily available because we are dealing with limited amounts. As it is, there is a complaint that taxes are going up. If the plans are to be fulfilled properly, taxes have to go up. I can say in defence of my colleague, the Finance Minister, that he has tried to do his best to raise our finances within the ambit available to him and not put heavier burdens on the populace. As it is, he has given some idea of what he will be able to do when the Finance Bill is introduced and some of the taxes which hon. Members contended lay heavily on the poorer sections of the population he has said he will try to meet them half-way by the reductions he has announced during the course of his speech on the general discussion on the budget.

"As I have told Shri Masani, we shall try and do whatever we can in order to improve our roads. As he himself found, seven-tonners and trailers cannot go over the present bridges or surface we have now. Therefore what is needed is to strengthen the bridges and the improvement of the surfaces which we are trying to do. One hon. Member talked about the express ways and he rather objected to them because they will mean a lot of money. I think Shri Masani differs from him on this because if really quick traffic is to go on our roads, these express ways in congested areas are as necessary as the other roads."

Shri Raj Bahadur :—

"Now I will come to the question over which my hon. friend, Shri Masani, of course, in his usual eloquence, had something very hard to tell us. He said that the Government's policy has rather been one of indifference so far as road transport is concerned. He



Shri Raj Bahadur.

said that we had not allotted sufficient funds for road and for road transport. That may be true to some extent, that our expectations have not been wholly fulfilled. But again I will plead with him and with the House that in this matter we have got to take—not in the sense in which my hon. friend Shri Manabendra Shah used the word 'pragmatic', but 'pragmatic' means businesslike—a pragmatic approach, and we have to decide between ourselves as to which item we should give priority. Shall we give first priority to food, agriculture, irrigation, power, steel and all these matters? If after all that comes the question of education, what shall be our attitude about it? Then



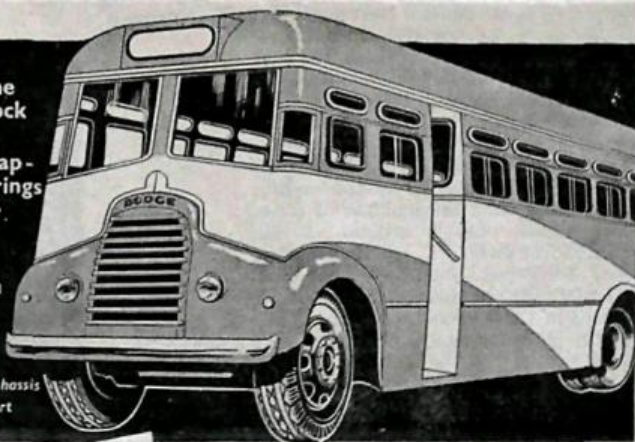
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there are social services, development and assistance to backward areas and backward classes, community development and all those things. I would put this question honestly to any hon. Member of this, which particular thing he would like to cut down in order to augment, increase or enhance the allotment for roads and road transport. If we answer that question successfully, perhaps all the criticisms that have been levelled against us that we have not been quite forceful, we have been rather complacent—the usual expressions—will all go. If by force they mean physical force, I would be found deficient or wanting. But that is not the thing.

"It is a question of availability of resources in the country. Shri Masani always succeeds in making a very good impression during his speech by the fine array of statistics and the figures and quotations that he manages to cull out. Of course, they are heartening and enlightening. His speeches are quite scintillating. I always like to hear his speeches."

Mr. Deputy Speaker: "Is the hon. Minister trying to disarm his opponent only by humility?"

Shri Raj Bahadur: "No. Our country has got only one-third mile of road per square mile. So far as our population is concerned, we can say it is less than one mile per 1,000 of population. We can also say that in the matter of vehicles we are so deficient that we have got only 450,000 to 500,000 vehicles as against 70 to 80 million in America. We have got only perhaps less than one vehicle per thousand population whereas Spain has 8, Ceylon 9, U.K. 100 and U.S.A. 400. All these are very impressive things. I do not deny for a moment that they are not there. I do not say that they should not mention the figures of U.S.A. which is rather a country equal to ours, but to compare a country like Spain, Ceylon or Malaya would not be quite correct. Apart from that, we cannot forget that we have been heirs to a particular set-up. All this want, all these deficiencies, all this backlog of development have come down to us as though we have inherited them. We must also realise that in the course of the last so many years we have tried to fight against this backlog and to do whatever has been possible."

"In this connection, sir, let me quote one or two figures for my own edification and also for the information of the House. Targets have been quoted over and over again. So far as roads are concerned, our Nagpur Plan was for 1.23 lakh miles of surfaced roads and 2.00 lakh miles of unsurfaced roads, i.e., 3.23 lakh miles."

"As against it, today we have 1.44 lakh miles of surfaced road and 2.54 lakh miles of unsurfaced road, which means we have exceeded the target of 3.31 lakh miles and have gone up to 3.98 lakh miles. Now, if we have done that two years before the twenty-year period has expired, that is not a bad performance."

Shri Radhelal Vyas: "But certain portions of the country are lagging far behind, for instance, Madhya Pradesh. I was not referring to all India figures."

Shri Raj Bahadur: "What I have stated here is about the figures that we have achieved and if particular areas have rather been unlucky, that is not entirely the fault of the Centre. My hon. friend, Shri Radhelal Vyas, if he asks me to take up the responsibility of building roads in Madhya Pradesh, that will be a very dangerous thing. If I were to do that, the entire Constitution has got to be scrapped."

Shri Radhelal Vyas: "I am speaking about the national highways."

Shri Raj Bahadur: "We have given to Madhya Pradesh its share. Out of the three national highways which we could take up, we have given one to Madhya Pradesh."

An Hon. Member: "What about Punjab?"

Shri Raj Bahadur: "So far as the performance of the national highways and the amount spent are concerned, my hon. friend, Shri Masani, quoted the President of the Indian Roads Congress, who is the Joint Secretary in the Roads Wing. All the quotations were perfectly all right and made in excellent spirit and I think we must congratulate him, because he simply told the country, the engineers of the country and the Governments of this country as to what the conditions are."

"After all, these 150 rivers have remained unbridged for generations and centuries. We did not have all these highways. We tried to create them. We can frankly say what the bridges that we have constructed are. But we shall not be able to take any new bridge in the Third Plan period. Today, this morning, a calling attention notice was there about a bridge in Broach. We cannot construct that bridge because it requires Rs. 2 crores and we have our hands full. We hope in the Third Plan period all the missing links in the national highways will be eliminated."

"So far as the particular question raised by Shri Radhelal Vyas is concerned, namely, the Gwalior-Jhansi section, I can only tell him that particular question has to be viewed from the point of view of Agra-Bombay national highway, national highway No. 3, and it passes through Agra-Gwalior-Dholpur-Shivpuri. Beyond that is the other one, Shivpuri-Jhansi-Sagar-Nagpur road. Now, the Jhansi-Gwalior road is the share of the State highways. I do not think that finance is available now and we shall be able to take it up. I do not think it is possible for us to take it up. But let me assure him that whenever funds are available, such missing links that can be joined will be duly considered."

Shri Radhelal Vyas: "Money can be diverted from some other minor items."

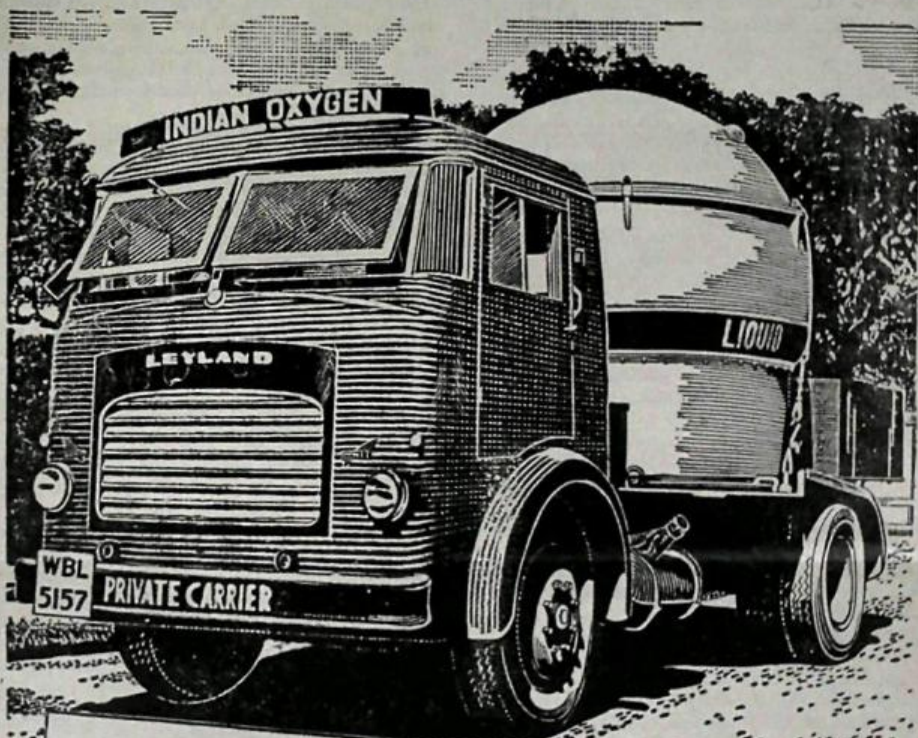
Shri Raj Bahadur: "I think that is hardly possible."

"So far as road allocation is concerned, if I may say so, things are not as bad as they were initially, to use the expression of my hon. friend, Shri Masani. In the First Plan, we had allocated Rs. 131.34 crores. In the Second Plan the allocation was Rs. 220 crores plus C.R.F. In the Third Plan, we are going to have an allocation of Rs. 300 crores—Rs. 44.5 crores for national highways and Sikkim, Rs. 30 crores for the aided schemes, inter-State roads and roads on hilly areas, to which a reference was made by Shri Manabendra Shah, Rs. 27.68 crores for Union Territories and Sikkim and Rs. 195 crores for the State sector. Now, I do not know what figures these will come to, so far as percentage is concerned."

"Apart from these, there is the question of border roads. Yesterday, my hon. friend, Shri Manabendra Shah, was rather worried about the fact that we are not giving him sufficient information. He was also worried about the fact that in the Border Roads Development Board the Minister of Transport and Communication is not represented. He wanted the Transport Minister to be the Vice-President of the Board instead of the Defence Minister. He was asking: why we should not take the country and the House into confidence and

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say what roads we are going to have and what are the alignments, where they will pass and all that.

"I would only put one question to him. He lives much nearer the border than I do. My house is about 500 miles or more from the border. His is much nearer. Can he for a moment tell us what is the alignment of the roads on the other side of the border near which he is living, or for that matter, of border roads anywhere in any country of the world? I do not think that that is known to any one of us or that that is generally known even to the people of the country. This is a matter on which I think I should stop here. I should not go further. It is enough if I say that the hon. Defence Minister is there because much of the construction work has to be supervised by him. It would be rather unfair on his part to say that we have been weak or complacent. We are not there because the Ministry of Transport is represented. Why? Because some assistance might have to be taken from the State Governments and the State Secretariats in matters of equipment, personnel, this thing or that. For that the Minister need not be there. The Secretary is sufficient. That is what it comes to. I hope that my hon. friend will be satisfied by the observations that I have made.

"So far as the question of vehicles is concerned, I would tell my hon. friend, Shri Masani, that the following figures might perhaps be a little interesting. In 1950-51 the number of buses was 34,411 and the number of trucks was 81,888 making a total of 116,299. In 1955-56 this number went up to 165,558—an increase of 49,329. In 1960-61 this figure is going to go up to 244,673—an increase of 78,115. The percentages can be calculated. They are not bad. The Third Plan targets will take us from a total of 516,507 to 800,000 vehicles. Against an increase of about 60 per cent from 1955-56 to 1960-61, there will be an increase of 100 per cent in the number of vehicles. As against an increase of 147,765 between 1955-56 and 1960-61 it will be 300,000. So it can be judged so far as the question of increase in the number of vehicles is concerned. So far as the expansion of the automobile industry is concerned, we have accepted the recommendations of the *Ad Hoc* Committee on automobile industry generally and it may be said that whatever could be done keeping in view the foreign exchange position in the country is being done.

"Road transport depends for its expansion on motor vehicles and on road. My hon. friend would agree with me about that. Let us recognise that it depends more on vehicles in our country than on roads because it has to be admitted that in our country the mileage of roads, whatever it is, keeping in view the number of vehicles is not fully utilised except in industrial or urban centres and urban approaches. We do not see much signs of congestion. What is the cause? The cause is that we have not got the sufficient number of vehicles. That industry is pulling up. If we want to increase road transport, we have to increase or expand the production of the automobile industry. There is the key to the promotion or development of the road transport industry. Let me know a single instance where a single truck, whatever be the difficulties in getting permits, etc., is lying idle or is waiting for some custom to be provided to it. There is not a single instance."

Sardar Iqbal Singh (Ferozepur): "It is due to the operators because they are hardworking."

Shri Raj Bahadur: "That gives the answer to the other objection which my hon. friend raised which

was about taxation. I am quite aware that the road transport industry is really contributing so far as the State and Central exchequers are concerned considerably. During the course of the Second Plan period it has been estimated that as much as Rs. 600 crores have been contributed by the road transport industry to the State and Central exchequers. It is estimated that during the Third Plan period it might go to Rs. 900 crores or Rs. 1,000 crores. We are contributing at the rate of Rs. 120 crores to the exchequers of the Centre and the States put together by way of taxes and other things. We also know that one truck or one bus has got to pay almost about one-fourth or less than that of its whole value in taxes. It may be Rs. 6,000 per truck—that is there. Despite all this, despite all the levies, what is the position? The position is that transport vehicles are in demand; transport permits are in demand; finances for purchase of transport vehicles are also in demand, so much in demand that they carry, perhaps, the highest rate of interest in the country, that no other industry could pay. In some cases private loans carry as much as 20 per cent, 30 per cent or even 40 per cent. So, with finance being so much in demand for this industry, with no vehicles lying idle, you cannot say that Government has been overlooking the interests of road transport.

"The question that arises is: how much can our roads hold, so far as the pressure is concerned, for expanding the automobile industry at a quicker pace. Could we just take the number of vehicles from 800,000 to 1,600,000 for the Third Plan?"

Shri Goray: "That means they are prospering in spite of you."

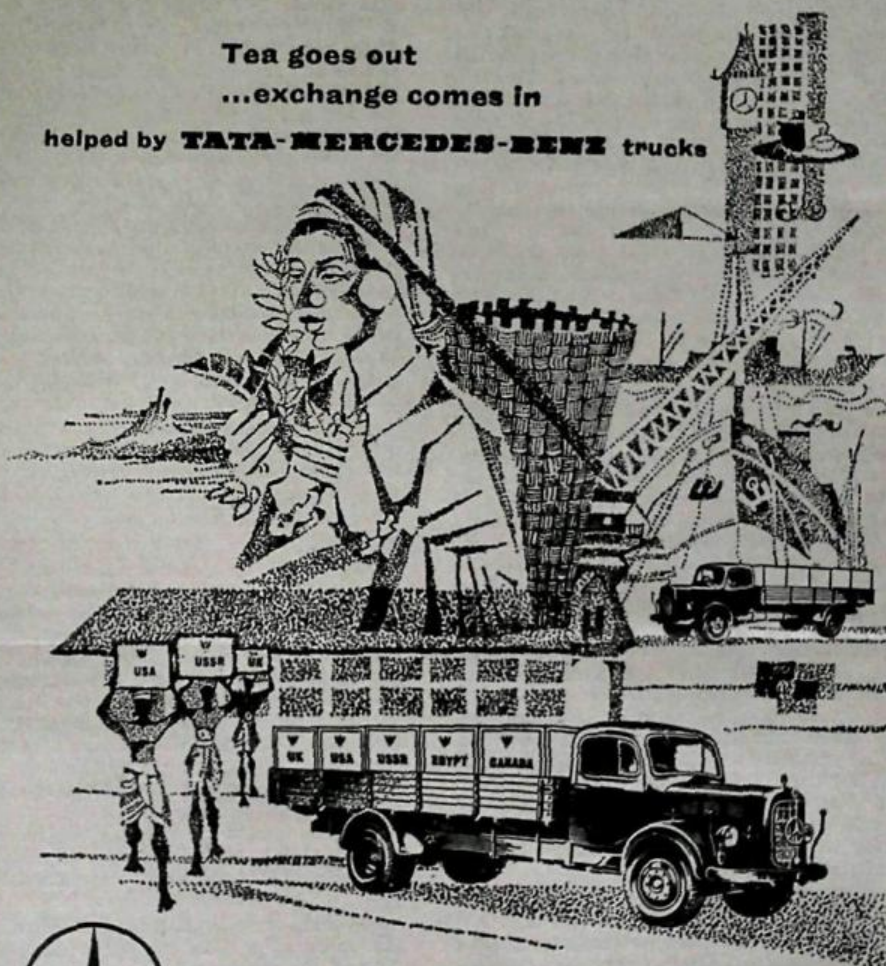
Shri Raj Bahadur: "Maybe. You may say that. But let us also realise that road transport industry is a young industry. If I may say so, compared to railways or bullock cart, motor transport is very very young. It might well be called an 'upstart.' An upstart's lot we know. An upstart will be viewed with suspicion. It has got to prove its merit. Nobody can deny its future. In times to come greater emphasis will have to be put on road transport and I quite agree that quite a substantial quantity of coal also can be moved. Perhaps, in the scheme that we have got now for the movement of coal this will have to be done. So far as ports of discharge are concerned, larger quantities of coal will have to be moved by road transport. Are our roads prepared for it?"

"Then there is the question of cost per ton-mile of road transport. That cost per ton-mile can be reduced only if the road surfaces are improved, and weak culverts and bridges strengthened so that they can bear the pressure of heavier trucks. I quite agree with my hon. friend Mr. Masani that we should allow larger and heavier trucks. Then we should have wider roads, with better road surfaces and stronger bridges and culverts. We are thus moving in a circle. If you want this you have to provide for that. If you provide for that you have to take it from somewhere."

Shri M. R. Masani: "May I put a question? The problem I put before him yesterday was this. When the Railway Board can get crores of rupees for putting up new lines at a cost of Rs. 10 lakhs per mile, why is the Transport Ministry not able to get money from the Planning Commission for laying broad roads at one-third or one-fourth the cost to render greater service to the country?"

Shri Raj Bahadur: "The railways have to do their allotted task. Their task is to carry bulk commodities and long-distance passengers. I am sure,

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even if Mr. Masani was put—I do not know whether it is possible—in charge, he will not scrap the railways. He will be the first person to protect their interests."

Shri M. R. Masani: "I will not build any more lines."

Shri Raj Bahadur: "I think the lines that are being laid are far behind the demand of all the Members of the House put together. Members themselves make so many demands. Every Member wants one line or another. Even I want a railway line in my place."

An Hon. Member: "The number of Members from his party is very few."

Sardar Iqbal Singh: "The hon. Minister just now said that our roads and bridges are not ready to take more traffic. I would ask one question. In the last ten years has any bridge been broken or any damage done to it due to overloading of any truck? Or is it an argument put forward by corrupt officers who do not want that the road transport should be encouraged?"

Shri Raj Bahadur: "I will take the hon. Member at his word. Is it not a fact that despite all the restrictions, a truck is loaded as much as the operator desires and he is getting away with it? How is the corrupt official concerned with this? If there be one, he would be interested in more roads coming up. He will be more interested in more works being undertaken, according to the hon. Member's philosophy. I do not, however, subscribe to that philosophy."

Shri D. C. Sharma: "Which philosophy do you subscribe to?"

Shri Raj Bahadur: "The hon. Member Mr. Sharma's philosophy, if there is one."

"Now, there is one question that was put by Shri Masani, and that was about his own Committee, the Committee named after him, the *ad hoc* Committee on Transport Reorganisation. We have expressed our gratefulness to him for all the work that he did on that committee, and we are not at all unmindful of the hard work that he and his colleagues have put in there and the valuable recommendations that they have made. We have done all that could be done with as much speed as was possible. No sooner his report came and was printed, we put it before the Transport Advisory Council. Their advice was that it should be sent to the State Governments for their views and comments. That was done. After that, it was put to the State Transport Commissioners/Controllers Conference. After that it was placed before the Central Road and Inland Water Transport Advisory Committee. They made their recommendations. Then the Transport Development Council considered it and came to certain conclusions. All the recommendations were accepted with slight modifications, except two. One was perhaps about liberalisation of permits. That was because the Neogy Committee was coming into being. The other one I do not recollect at the moment, but there were only two small questions. But on all major things, whatever we could do, was done, and I will only, in brief, refer to what has been done so far as the Central Government is concerned. So far as the State Governments are concerned, my hon. friend knows the position very well."

"The most important demand was in respect of consolidation of taxes, and double-point taxation being eliminated in favour of the single-point taxation. And on both I am happy to say that we have achieved a considerable measure of success. The principle of

consolidation of taxes has been recognised. It has been approved and recommended by the Transport Development Council. All State Governments are agreeing to it. They will take some time to pass through the necessary legislation."

Shri Khadilkar: "The hon. Minister replied to Shri Masani's points. What happens to the inter-State transport licences, because that is another bottleneck? The hon. Minister has not referred to that."

Shri Raj Bahadur: "As I said, at present the arrangement is that the States concerned come to some settlement, and I can say that the Inter-State Transport Commission has also been functioning quite effectively. Wherever there was no agreement they have tried to bring about an agreement; and in many cases disputes have been settled, the number of permits to be issued by either State this side or that side, and enrolment, and all that, and good progress has been made. But the question is how far, so far as investment is concerned, there could be expansion of the road transport industry or road. So far as the number of permits without any restriction is concerned, that is a question which has to be answered by the Neogy Committee in its final report."

"On that I will again come back to the Masani Committee report and refer to the more important things. He said that a larger allocation of foreign exchange should be made to ensure an adequate supply of vehicles. That has been done, and it is reflected in the figures which have been fixed in the target for the Third Plan. The other thing was that the Transport Wing in the Union Ministry of Transport and Communications should be strengthened. We have a Joint Secretary, and in keeping with the demand or partially with the demand that Road and Transport should be under the same officer, the Joint Secretary (Roads Wing), who is also the Chief Consulting Engineer (Roads Wing), is in charge of the Transport Section. He is assisted by a Deputy Secretary and two Under Secretaries. In that way we have tried to implement it."

"The next was about the Reserve Bank issuing directives to the State Bank and scheduled banks to advance money on a hire-purchase basis. In this matter the Transport Development Council advised the State Governments to set up Transport Finance Corporations. We are now trying to prepare the necessary scheme for that on the lines of one which the Andhra State Government has already tried to evolve. Then comes the question of development rebate. This was not possible. Development rebate is not on items that are produced; it is on the plant or on the machinery or the industry as such which produces the things. Development rebate can perhaps be allowed to the textile mills, but it cannot be given on tax on motor cars."

Shri M. R. Masani: "What about ships?"

Shri Raj Bahadur: "There is development rebate on ships also."

Shri M. R. Masani: "Why not pass it on to trucks also?"

Shri Raj Bahadur: "Then, I come to moratorium on nationalisation. So far as the moratorium on nationalisation is concerned, as regards goods transport, it is already there up to the end of the Third Plan, but further consideration will have to be stayed until the Neogy Committee submits its report."

Shri Braj Raj Singh: "If Shri M. R. Masani comes into power by then, he will make it permanent."

Mr. Deputy Speaker: "Order, order. If the hon. Minister continues to look at me, there would be less of interruptions."

Shri Raj Bahadur: "All right."

"I would not like to say much about the Neogy Committee. It is not for me to make any comments on the interim report, because I hope that the House will offer its comments, and the concerned people and the people in the industry will also make their comments. I can only say that the task assigned to the Neogy Committee was an extremely difficult one, a task which has not yet been solved, I think, in any other country also in a satisfactory manner, namely to lay down the exact proportions or the ratios in which each form of transport, rail, road and shipping will have to be developed, and how much should be invested on roads, how much on railways and how much on shipping. So, that is not an easy thing. They have got to formulate the principles on which a national transport policy has to be evolved. Naturally, therefore, they have only come forward with this sort of questionnaire; even if it is a questionnaire and we may not call it an interim report, still, they have not gone out of the way. Let us see what they have got to say and what answer they have got to give to the main question about what we shall do to meet the requirements of the growing economy of our country and what role each form of transport shall play in that particular context. I hope that when the time comes, they will give a proper answer to these questions."

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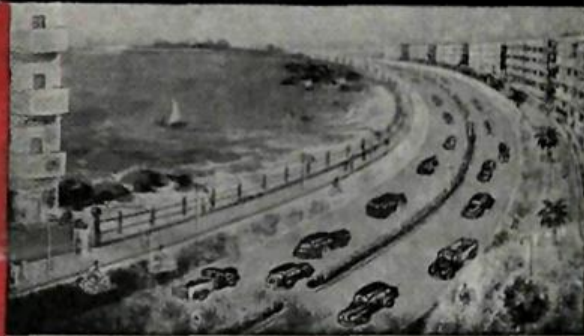
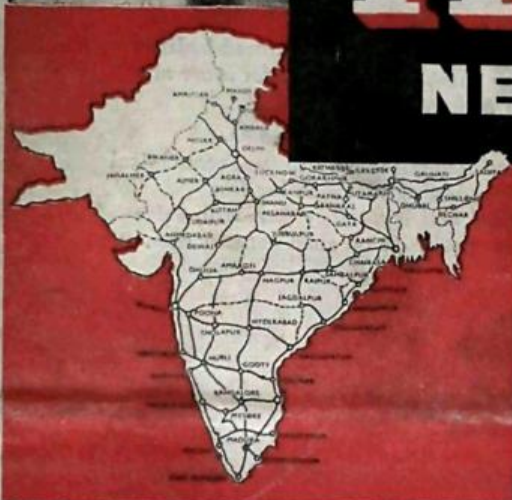
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IRTD NEWS LETTER



Vol. XXX

30th APRIL 1961

No. 8

DEVELOPMENT OF ROADS AND ROAD TRANSPORT IS NOT SATISFACTORY MR. MASANI SUGGESTS APPROACHING I.D.A. FOR LOAN FOR OUR NATIONAL HIGHWAYS

"The cause of roads and road transport seems to have received many a setback in the last twelve months. Whether one looks at the budget with its vindictive increase in the excise duties on diesel oil, or whether one looks at the Third Five-Year Plan, that conclusion, unfortunately, is difficult to resist." So said Mr. M. R. Masani, M.P., a former President of the I.R.T.D.A., in the Lok Sabha during the course of the discussion on the Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Transport and Communications. He pointed out that laying down roads and buying trucks would bring manifold return as compared to every rupee spent on laying railway track and making wagons, and urged the Ministry of Transport to bring these facts to the notice of the Planning Commission which shows a distinct bias against roads.

Here is the full text of Mr. Masani's speech followed by extracts from the remarks made by Dr. P. Subbarayan, the Minister of Transport and Communications and Shri Raj Bahadur, the Deputy Minister :—

"In speaking in support of my cut motions Nos. 1028, 1029 and 1030, I would like, with your permission, to focus the attention of the House on a matter of primary concern to the country falling within the purview of this Ministry. I refer to the development of roads and road transport.

"I must confess, though I hate to do so, that the results of the last year's working of this Ministry in regard to roads and road transport is not one on which

one can express any satisfaction or congratulate my hon. friend the Minister or his able associate.

"It was in August 1959, as the hon. Ministers will recall, that the Report of the Road Transport Reorganisation Committee was welcomed with rare unanimity by this House, a unanimity with which the Minister, my hon. friend's predecessor, Shri S. K. Patil, associated himself and on which he expressed great satisfaction. In the year and a half that has passed, however, one sees very little reflection in Government policy of that endorsement given by the Minister and the House to the various conclusions and recommendations of that Committee which cover the entire ground.

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"On the contrary, if I may say so, the cause of roads and roads transport seems to have received many a setback in the last twelve months. Whether one looks at the budget with its vindictive increase in the excise duties on diesel oil, or whether one looks at the Third Five-Year Plan, that conclusion, unfortunately, is difficult to resist. I hope the Ministers will take the House into confidence at some stage in regard to the action taken by the Government of India in implementing the recommendations of that Committee which they welcomed and point out what remains to be done and why it is not being done.

"The fact remains, however, that if we are going to talk in terms of a 'take-off' in our economic development, then the ground from which the take-off has to take place must be there, and among that ground the road surfaces of this country are among the most important. Now, let us just see how the record stands, because I do not want it to be felt that I have been severe in this assessment. The facts, however, go well beyond what I have said.

"We shall take roads and vehicles separately. In so far as the provision of roads is concerned, one would have thought that, as one Plan succeeded another, the recognition of the importance of roads would increase, and the proportion of the funds allocated



Mr. M. R. Masani.

to the provision of roads for opening up the country to economic development would have also progressed. But what are the facts? During the First Five-Year Plan, the allocation for roads was Rs. 156 crores out of Rs. 3,360 crores, or 4.6 per cent of the total allocation. In the Second Plan, we find that there are Rs. 248 crores out of Rs. 6,750 crores. The percentage has dropped to 3.7 per cent. And now comes the anticlimax in the Third Plan where, out of Rs. 10,200 crores, only Rs. 250 crores or so have been allocated, a miserable 2.5 per cent. So, 4.6 per cent drops to 3.7 per cent and now we come to the anticlimax of 2.5 per cent! This is the way in which the Ministry has been able, with the full support of this House, to obtain from the Planning Commission recognition for the importance of their function in our Government.

"Since the National Highways were taken over by the Central Government in 1947 and are the exclusive responsibility of the Central Government, let us see in what condition we find them. The President of the Indian Roads Congress, who also happens to be the Consulting Engineer in charge of road development in the Ministry of Transport itself, had the following description to give of the state of our National High-

ways, and I cannot do better than quote a member of the Ministry itself. He listed the following deficiencies:—

- '1. Eighty major bridges will remain unbuilt;
- '2. Four hundred miles of missing links will remain to be constructed;
- '3. One thousand miles of National Highways only have single-lane water-bound macadam surface;
- '4. 11,300 miles will have only a single-lane asphalted or cement concrete carriageway; about 2,300 miles only having a two-lane carriageway;
- '5. Hundreds of road-rail level crossings will remain to be replaced by over- or under-bridges; and
- '6. By-passes around most of the towns will remain to be built.'

"In other words, on an average, there is no bridge on a major river crossing, over 187 miles of our national highways, or 80 missing bridges in 15,000 miles. There is no connecting link on every 37 miles of our highways, that is, 400 links missing in 15,000 miles; and only 15 per cent of the track has been provided with a two-lane carriageway, that is, 2,300 miles out of 15,000 miles.

"I am sure the hon. Minister will not blame me if I say, because this refers not only to his tenure of office but that of his predecessors, that this is a shocking record after fourteen years of the Union Government's control of our national highways.

"To put these deficiencies aright, which I have just listed from the address of the Indian Roads Congress President, Rs. 200 crores are required. But the Planning Commission, which in this matter shows a distinct bias against roads which the Ministry has not been able to cure, has ensured that only Rs. 47½ crores are available. Rs. 153 crores remain unprovided for for these very essential purposes. May I suggest that the Minister consider approaching the International Development Association for a loan? Such a loan involves no foreign exchange for the country, because it can be repaid in Indian currency. The only foreign exchange component that is required for setting right these essential deficiencies is a small sum of Rs. 3 crores required for high tensile steel for bridges. All the rest can be done out of rupee finance. And as I said, the loan can be obtained from the International Development Association. These are very modest amounts. If you compare them with Rs. 400 crores which have been cheerfully found for the railways for electrification, new lines and line development—and that amount of Rs. 400 crores involves a major amount by way of foreign exchange—this is a measure of the stepmotherly treatment which has been given to roads so far, which, as I say, the Ministry has failed to correct in spite of getting the support of this House and of public opinion.

"When you turn from roads to vehicles, the record is almost as unsatisfactory. The production targets in the Second Plan for vehicles were: public passenger vehicles 22,500 and goods vehicles 69,000. But of these targets, 11,000 passenger vehicles and 27,000 goods vehicles are only replacements. So the net addition is 11,500 passenger vehicles and 40,000 goods vehicles, against an estimated requirement of 21,000 passenger vehicles and 74,000 goods vehicles. The shortfall, the gap, therefore, comes to 9,500 passenger vehicles and 34,000 goods vehicles. This sounds a very big figure, 34,000 trucks. It is a very big figure



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by way of a shortfall, but these 34,000 trucks equal the capacity of only 10 per cent of the railways' goods traffic of 50,000 million tons in 1959-60. In other words, even if the shortfall were made good, only 10 per cent of the traffic that the railways carried in 1959-60 could be diverted to roads.

"Now, I do not want to go into any repetition, but in the Report of the Road Transport Reorganisation Committee, at pages 42-43, it was shown conclusively how throughout the world technological change and development is moving away from the railways to air travel and to roads. The railways are ceasing to be a modern, up-to-date means of transportation of people and of goods. This is a world-wide trend. I shall give only one figure to recall to the House how decisive this trend is by pointing out that in Great Britain in 1938, the railways' share of the total inland goods traffic was 65 per cent. In 1948, 10 years later, it had dropped to 44 per cent, and the roads had taken over the balance. Or, to put it in another way, of the additional traffic generated during the past 20 years, two-thirds had gone to roads and only one-third had been taken over by the railways. In India, we lag sadly behind, as in many other respects. Today the position in India is just the reverse."

The Minister of Transport and Communications (Dr. P. Subbarayan): "I would like the hon. Member to consider how our railways are making a profit while the English railways are not."

Shri M. R. Masani: "Our railways are making a profit by subsidising themselves through uneconomically high rates and by giving very poor service, a record of which no railway need be very proud."

An Hon. Member: "They are even raising the rates."

Shri M. R. Masani: "Anyone can make profits when he has a monopoly and when he uses the police power of the State to hinder competition, as the railways have been hindering competition of the roads. I wish that the Transport Minister would stand up for roads and not be an apologist for the railways, as he is doing."

Dr. P. Subbarayan: "I am concerned with the whole Government."

Shri M. R. Masani: "The Government is a whole. But the Railway Minister shows very little consideration for his colleague of the 'Road' Ministry. There should be some reciprocity between the Railway Minister and the 'Road' Minister. (Interruption.) The Railway Minister rules the roost, while the Road Minister miserably trails behind apologising for his senior colleague. I think this state of affairs should cease and the Road Minister should develop a little more of the same toughness that the Railway Minister shows for his own side."

Dr. P. Subbarayan: "May I tell the hon. Member that we are working in co-operation?"

Shri M. R. Masani: "This idea of co-operation is very peculiar. The Railway Minister sits on the back of the Road Minister, just as the railways are riding on the back of the roads. It is time that this unequal relationship were replaced. I am stating what are the facts. I am placing these facts before the hon. Minister and I am trying to encourage him to show a little more 'guts' on behalf of that part of the transport services which are entrusted to his charge. It is not his job to go on apologising for the railways."

Shri M. B. Thakore (Patan): "He should support the Minister."

Shri Masani: "He does not seem to want our support. He wants to take shelter behind his senior colleague."

"The President of the Indian Roads Congress has pointed out that currently only 10 per cent of the total goods traffic is going by the roads which, as I pointed out, is the reverse of the process in Britain and other progressive countries and this, as I said, is due to the discriminating policy pursued by the Government, of fostering the interests of the railways which are their State monopoly, covering up the inefficiency of the railways and retarding the growth and development of roads by avoidance of free and fair competition. The attitude of the entire Government and that of the Planning Commission, as we have seen, is loaded in favour of the railway and against the roads and all forces of fair competition which will serve the country's interests are being retarded for the sake of a State monopoly."

"Even if the roads are defective and inadequate, even if they are miserable, we can put them to better use. In England there are 28 motor cars and 9 commercial vehicles per mile of surface road. In India, there are 1.82 motor cars and 1.64 commercial vehicles. Even if we do not build more roads, they are our national asset. Let us see to it that this national asset is utilised to the maximum capacity by putting on the roads enough vehicles to get the most value out of them, which we are not doing now."

"Sir, considering these factors and also the fact that road transport provides more employment and brings more revenue to the Government than the railways, I can only hope that the Government will give up its very shortsighted policy of hanging on to a wasting asset and, rather than incur losses in out-of-date and outmoded process of transport, will divert finances and funds to roads which are more up-to-date and technologically more satisfying. That is why my hon. friend can do a great deal by asserting himself *vis-a-vis* the Planning Commission, which, in this matter, has unfortunately followed the lead of the Railway Board. It is a pity that there is no sign yet that this is being done."

"It would be all very well if this was only an academic issue. But we have seen in the gross muddle that has been made about our coal supply and transport what a heavy price we have had to pay for the neglect of the roads. This is not a new problem."

Mr. Chairman: "His time is up."

Shri M. B. Masani: "I shall need a few more minutes to deal with the other two cut motions."

Shri T. B. Vittal Rao: "Road transport does not carry coal."

Shri M. R. Masani: "My hon. friend is a little out-of-date. The question of coal supply and transport is a century old one. It is not a new problem. There is a letter written on the 18th June 1857, that is, 104 years back, which still exists in the archives of a commercial institution where the coal agent at the mines replied to a letter from headquarters asking for more supplies by saying: 'You say, send coal; I say, send more wagons.' So, even in 1857, the shortage of wagons seems to have been coming in the way of getting coal to the factories where it was required. Now, after 104 years, the railways are as laggardly in their service to the coal industry as they were then."

"The Chairman of the Indian Mining Association in his speech at the Annual General Meeting on the 24th March 1961, drew attention to the fact that the

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roads have a great part to play in the transport of coal. I shall presently give figures to satisfy my hon. friend. He said: 'The most substantial increases can be obtained by the greater use of road transport. This Association has been pressing for a number of years for an immediate programme of repairs to the connecting roads in the coalfield areas and the present crisis dictates that every priority must be given to this work.' Then, he goes on to press for immediate attention to the Grand Trunk Road between the coalfields and Calcutta and to the Durgapur Expressway."

Shri Raghunath Singh (Varanasi): "One question I want to ask for clarification. What is the proportion of expenditure in carrying coal by railway and by road, which the hon. member is championing?"

Shri M. R. Masani: "Sir, the Road Transport Committee of the National Productivity Council gives the answer to the question which the hon. member is asking. The report published by the National Productivity Council, says that as against the current railway cost—including terminal charges—of 8 nP. per ton-mile on the broad-gauge and 12 nP. per ton-mile on the metre-gauge and 26 nP. per ton-mile on the narrow-gauge, a 12-ton truck on road will carry coal at a cost of 6½ nP. per ton-mile and a 15-ton truck can do so as cheaply as 5 nP. per ton-mile."

Shri Raghunath Singh: "Practically half."

Shri M. R. Masani: "Yes; that is the answer to my hon. friend—that the roads can carry coal cheaper than the railways. The old fallacy that railways are cheaper has been exploded once and for all. But the trucks must be heavy trucks and the roads must be such that they can carry heavy trucks. I cannot give half-truths. If you have light trucks, they will be more expensive than the railways. But if you provide adequate road surface which can carry 12 to 15 ton-trucks—better still, if you can carry articulated vehicles, the truck-trailer combinations of 21 trucks and more, it will be cheaper still."

Shri Narasimhan (Krishnagiri): "Will it not add to the cost of the roads, maintenance and other costs?"

Shri M. R. Masani: "No; it will be much cheaper. I cannot be side-tracked into this because it has been proved in the Report. I ask my hon. friend to read it fully. It will prove the amounts that can much better be invested on roads than in laying down railway track. But time does not permit me to go into all these details or any argument."

"What I am pointing out is that if you can have heavy trucks and truck-trailer combinations, even today you can carry coal from the coalfields of India to the producing centres for the steel plants in Durgapur and Jamshedpur and other places much cheaper than the railways are able to do."

Shri N. R. Muniswamy (Vellore): "What about the investment in the trucks?"

Shri M. R. Masani: "I am pointing out that by laying down roads and buying trucks this country will get manifold return as compared to every rupee spent on laying railway track and making wagons. Unless the Chairman gives me another half hour, I am not going to enter into all this. In this I am bowing to his decision today. If my hon. friend will kindly turn to the Report of which he has got a copy, he will find that this case has been completely argued in detail. What I am trying to argue is that my hon. friend should understand this fact, that it is not correct as some people seem to think that the roads cannot carry coal. The roads can carry coal much cheaper than the

Indian railways are doing. I say that if you have heavy trucks and roads that can carry heavy trucks, there is no need for a single railway line to be laid any more. If a comparable amount can be spent on the roads and articulated vehicles, this country will be much better rewarded."

"Take, for example, the cost of laying railway lines. It costs Rs. 10 lakhs per mile, whereas we can have the broadest roads that can carry these heavy vehicles built at the cost of Rs. 2.5 to Rs. 3 lakhs. Therefore, at one-third or one-fourth of the cost of laying these railway lines, you can prepare these highways along which heavy trucks can carry coal today."

"The President of the Indian Mining Association points out that 2,000 tons of coal can be carried even now if only the Government will spend money on the roads instead of concentrating on railways."

"So, I once again urge the Ministry of Road Transport to bring these facts to the notice of the Planning Commission, to try to educate them better than they are educated so that they may do their duty to the country—and the process of education is very much the prerogative of my two colleagues who are sitting on the bench opposite."

"One more point and I have done. That is in regard to the Neogy Committee. On the last occasion, on 10th August 1959, when I referred to the appointment which had then been made of the Neogy Committee, I paid a tribute, which I am sure all hon. members of the House would like to join in, to the honourable gentleman who was appointed the Chairman of the Committee, a former distinguished member of this House. At the same time I drew attention, and I am reading from my speech then—

"But the House has already commented on what it thinks of the composition of the rest of the Committee. The rest of the committee is made up of Secretaries to Government from various Ministries. It has been said by more than one speaker that it is loaded with officials and bureaucrats, and we cannot really expect much from Secretaries of Ministries who are not really concerned with the development of road transport but who go there to watch the respective interests of their own Ministries or zamindaria."

"Now, Sir, that fear which was expressed by other members, and which I had repeated in my speech in winding up the debate on the Report of the Road Transport Reorganisation Committee as its Chairman, has unfortunately come true in the past year and a half. After one year and a half, the Neogy Committee has come out with an interim report and the interim report is not a report at all; it is a questionnaire. It asks questions; it does not even try to answer them. It is to be said with regret that the questions are loaded, that the bias of the Neogy Committee comes out in the leading questions that it has sought to put. However, let us be grateful that only questions are put and no wrong conclusions arrived at."

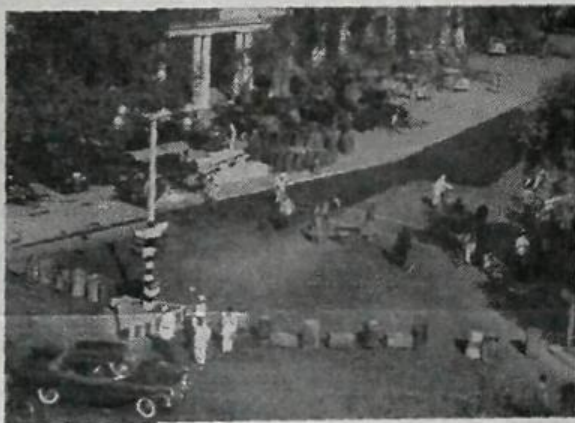
"But I am not today discussing the nature of the interim report. I would rather draw attention for a minute to the composition of that Committee. The trouble with the Committee is that, except for the Chairman, there is no second member who can really be expected to do justice to the work of the Committee. Secretaries to the Government, as we know, are busy people. They have the routine work and their own jobs to carry on and it is not fair to burden them with

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this extra burden to which they have shown by now their inability to attend or to give any attention. Apart from the fact that they are unable to apply their minds continuously to these problems which are of a major policy nature, the fact remains that officials are not suitable people to whom the evolving of policies should be entrusted. If the Government of India cannot make up their mind on policy in spite of the reports laid before them, let them appoint a policy-making committee, no doubt with Mr. Neogy as the Chairman, but let them give him colleagues from public life, from this House and the other House, who will make a team and who will sit together and rub their minds against each other.

"The difficulty has been that the Secretaries keep on changing and so the composition of the Committee has also been shifting. There have been numerous shifts in the year and a half that had already passed; there is no Neogy Committee but there is a series of Neogy Committees! A body of men who are not continuous in their personnel can hardly be expected to render any real service or to make any real report. I would therefore suggest to my hon. friend the hon. Minister that even at this stage, after this unfortunate experience, Government might reconsider the composition of this Committee. Let them replace the numerous Secretaries with two or three or four senior people from public life, either from this Parliament or outside, and then allow this new team to get on with the job. Otherwise, we may assume that when the Transport Ministry's demands come up before the House next year, we shall still be awaiting the report of the Neogy Committee."

**The Minister of Transport and Communications,
Dr. P. Subbarayan :—**

"In the first place, as Mr. Masani is very anxious to go away, as he has got an engagement, I would deal with his remarks. He was quarrelling with the way allocations have been made for the railways and the road transport. I am sure Mr. Masani realises, as much as I do, that the railways are a national asset and therefore we should not do anything to injure the working of the railways. I do feel that road transport will have a future. As he has himself said, the building of railways is more costly than the building of roads. Therefore, wherever roads could be utilised, no railways need be built. Government will try their best to see that this policy is adopted. But at the same time, I would like to warn Mr. Masani, because he is a person who is so enamoured of the private sector, that there is the danger of the public sector coming into road transport as well.

"Most of the State Governments are in favour of road transport being nationalised because they feel it will add to their income, and as Mr. Masani realises, as much as I do, the revenues given to the States are not ample enough for their work and therefore they have got to think of increasing their revenues, and road transport is one of the things they are considering. As it is, we have stopped them from doing it till the end of the Third Plan. But at the same time there is this aspect and I am sure hon. members will keep this in mind.

"Mr. Masani remarked that we did not possess enough guts, as he called it, in this Department to get more allocations for our services. As my hon. colleague explained, it is not always possible in this world to get what you want. You can try no doubt and I can assure Mr. Masani that we have tried our best. But there are priorities in planning with which the

Government as a whole have agreed. Therefore, having agreed with the planning and the priorities given to it, we will try to abide by them and not press for things which are not easily available because we are dealing with limited amounts. As it is, there is a complaint that taxes are going up. If the plans are to be fulfilled properly, taxes have to go up. I can say in defence of my colleague, the Finance Minister, that he has tried to do his best to raise our finances within the ambit available to him and not put heavier burdens on the populace. As it is, he has given some idea of what he will be able to do when the Finance Bill is introduced and some of the taxes which hon. Members contended lay heavily on the poorer sections of the population he has said he will try to meet them half-way by the reductions he has announced during the course of his speech on the general discussion on the budget.

"As I have told Shri Masani, we shall try and do whatever we can in order to improve our roads. As he himself found, seven-tonners and trailers cannot go over the present bridges or surface we have now. Therefore what is needed is to strengthen the bridges and the improvement of the surfaces which we are trying to do. One hon. Member talked about the express ways and he rather objected to them because they will mean a lot of money. I think Shri Masani differs from him on this because if really quick traffic is to go on our roads, these express ways in congested areas are as necessary as the other roads."

Shri Raj Bahadur :—

"Now I will come to the question over which my hon. friend, Shri Masani, of course, in his usual eloquence, had something very hard to tell us. He said that the Government's policy has rather been one of indifference so far as road transport is concerned. He



Shri Raj Bahadur.

said that we had not allotted sufficient funds for road and for road transport. That may be true to some extent, that our expectations have not been wholly fulfilled. But again I will plead with him and with the House that in this matter we have got to take—not in the sense in which my hon. friend Shri Manabendra Shah used the word 'pragmatic', but 'pragmatic' means businesslike—a pragmatic approach, and we have to decide between ourselves as to which item we should give priority. Shall we give first priority to food, agriculture, irrigation, power, steel and all these matters? If after all that comes the question of education, what shall be our attitude about it? Then



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there are social services, development and assistance to backward areas and backward classes, community development and all those things. I would put this question honestly to any hon. Member of this, which particular thing he would like to cut down in order to augment, increase or enhance the allotment for roads and road transport. If we answer that question successfully, perhaps all the criticisms that have been levelled against us that we have not been quite forceful, we have been rather complacent—the usual expressions—will all go. If by force they mean physical force, I would be found deficient or wanting. But that is not the thing.

"It is a question of availability of resources in the country. Shri Masani always succeeds in making a very good impression during his speech by the fine array of statistics and the figures and quotations that he manages to cull out. Of course, they are heartening and enlightening. His speeches are quite scintillating. I always like to hear his speeches."

Mr. Deputy Speaker: "Is the hon. Minister trying to disarm his opponent only by humility?"

Shri Raj Bahadur: "No. Our country has got only one-third mile of road per square mile. So far as our population is concerned, we can say it is less than one mile per 1,000 of population. We can also say that in the matter of vehicles we are so deficient that we have got only 450,000 to 500,000 vehicles as against 70 to 80 million in America. We have got only perhaps less than one vehicle per thousand population whereas Spain has 8, Ceylon 9, U.K. 100 and U.S.A. 400. All these are very very impressive things. I do not deny for a moment that they are not there. I do not say that they should not mention the figures of U.S.A. which is rather a country equal to ours, but to compare a country like Spain, Ceylon or Malaya would not be quite correct. Apart from that, we cannot forget that we have been heirs to a particular set-up. All this want, all these deficiencies, all this backlog of development have come down to us as though we have inherited them. We must also realise that in the course of the last so many years we have tried to fight against this backlog and to do whatever has been possible."

"In this connection, sir, let me quote one or two figures for my own edification and also for the information of the House. Targets have been quoted over and over again. So far as roads are concerned, our Nagpur Plan was for 1.23 lakh miles of surfaced roads and 2.00 lakh miles of unsurfaced roads, i.e., 3.23 lakh miles."

"As against it, today we have 1.44 lakh miles of surfaced road and 2.54 lakh miles of unsurfaced road, which means we have exceeded the target of 3.31 lakh miles and have gone up to 3.98 lakh miles. Now, if we have done that two years before the twenty-year period has expired, that is not a bad performance."

Shri Radhelal Vyas: "But certain portions of the country are lagging far behind, for instance, Madhya Pradesh. I was not referring to all India figures."

Shri Raj Bahadur: "What I have stated here is about the figures that we have achieved and if particular areas have rather been unlucky, that is not entirely the fault of the Centre. My hon. friend, Shri Radhelal Vyas, if he asks me to take up the responsibility of building roads in Madhya Pradesh, that will be a very dangerous thing. If I were to do that, the entire Constitution has got to be scrapped."

Shri Radhelal Vyas: "I am speaking about the national highways."

Shri Raj Bahadur: "We have given to Madhya Pradesh its share. Out of the three national highways which we could take up, we have given one to Madhya Pradesh."

An Hon. Member: "What about Punjab?"

Shri Raj Bahadur: "So far as the performance of the national highways and the amount spent are concerned, my hon. friend, Shri Masani, quoted the President of the Indian Roads Congress, who is the Joint Secretary in the Roads Wing. All the quotations were perfectly all right and made in excellent spirit and I think we must congratulate him, because he simply told the country, the engineers of the country and the Governments of this country as to what the conditions are."

"After all, these 150 rivers have remained unbridged for generations and centuries. We did not have all these highways. We tried to create them. We can frankly say what the bridges that we have constructed are. But we shall not be able to take any new bridge in the Third Plan period. Today, this morning, a calling attention notice was there about a bridge in Broach. We cannot construct that bridge because it requires Rs. 2 crores and we have our hands full. We hope in the Third Plan period all the missing links in the national highways will be eliminated."

"So far as the particular question raised by Shri Radhelal Vyas is concerned, namely, the Gwalior-Jhansi section, I can only tell him that particular question has to be viewed from the point of view of Agra-Bombay national highway, national highway No. 3, and it passes through Agra-Gwalior-Dholpur-Shivpuri. Beyond that is the other one, Shivpuri-Jhansi-Sagar-Nagpur road. Now, the Jhansi-Gwalior road is the share of the State highways. I do not think that finance is available now and we shall be able to take it up. I do not think it is possible for us to take it up. But let me assure him that whenever funds are available, such missing links that can be joined will be duly considered."

Shri Radhelal Vyas: "Money can be diverted from some other minor items."

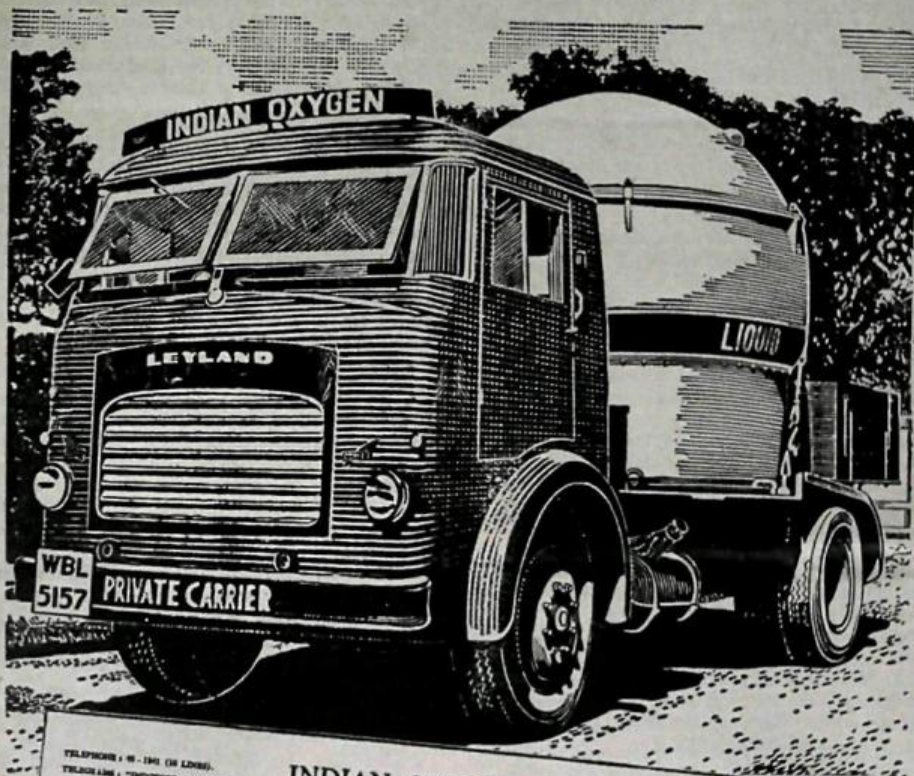
Shri Raj Bahadur: "I think that is hardly possible."

"So far as road allocation is concerned, if I may say so, things are not as bad as they were initially, to use the expression of my hon. friend, Shri Masani. In the First Plan, we had allocated Rs. 131.34 crores. In the Second Plan the allocation was Rs. 220 crores plus C.R.F. In the Third Plan, we are going to have an allocation of Rs. 300 crores—Rs. 44.5 crores for national highways and Sikkim, Rs. 30 crores for the aided schemes, inter-State roads and roads on hilly areas, to which a reference was made by Shri Manabendra Shah, Rs. 27.68 crores for Union Territories and Sikkim and Rs. 195 crores for the State sector. Now, I do not know what figures these will come to, so far as percentage is concerned."

"Apart from these, there is the question of border roads. Yesterday, my hon. friend, Shri Manabendra Shah, was rather worried about the fact that we are not giving him sufficient information. He was also worried about the fact that in the Border Roads Development Board the Minister of Transport and Communication is not represented. He wanted the Transport Minister to be the Vice-President of the Board instead of the Defence Minister. He was asking: why we should not take the country and the House into confidence and

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say what roads we are going to have and what are the alignments, where they will pass and all that.

"I would only put one question to him. He lives much nearer the border than I do. My house is about 500 miles or more from the border. His is much nearer. Can he for a moment tell us what is the alignment of the roads on the other side of the border near which he is living, or for that matter, of border roads anywhere in any country of the world? I do not think that that is known to any one of us or that that is generally known even to the people of the country. This is a matter on which I think I should stop here. I should not go further. It is enough if I say that the hon. Defence Minister is there because much of the construction work has to be supervised by him. It would be rather unfair on his part to say that we have been weak or complacent. We are not there because the Ministry of Transport is represented. Why? Because some assistance might have to be taken from the State Governments and the State Secretariats in matters of equipment, personnel, this thing or that. For that the Minister need not be there. The Secretary is sufficient. That is what it comes to. I hope that my hon. friend will be satisfied by the observations that I have made.

"So far as the question of vehicles is concerned, I would tell my hon. friend, Shri Masani, that the following figures might perhaps be a little interesting. In 1950-51 the number of buses was 34,411 and the number of trucks was 81,888 making a total of 116,299. In 1955-56 this number went up to 165,558—an increase of 49,329. In 1960-61 this figure is going to go up to 244,673—an increase of 78,115. The percentages can be calculated. They are not bad. The Third Plan targets will take us from a total of 516,507 to 800,000 vehicles. Against an increase of about 60 per cent from 1955-56 to 1960-61, there will be an increase of 100 per cent in the number of vehicles. As against an increase of 147,765 between 1955-56 and 1960-61 it will be 300,000. So it can be judged so far as the question of increase in the number of vehicles is concerned. So far as the expansion of the automobile industry is concerned, we have accepted the recommendations of the *Ad Hoc* Committee on automobile industry generally and it may be said that whatever could be done keeping in view the foreign exchange position in the country is being done.

"Road transport depends for its expansion on motor vehicles and on road. My hon. friend would agree with me about that. Let us recognise that it depends more on vehicles in our country than on roads because it has to be admitted that in our country the mileage of roads, whatever it is, keeping in view the number of vehicles is not fully utilised except in industrial or urban centres and urban approaches. We do not see much signs of congestion. What is the cause? The cause is that we have not got the sufficient number of vehicles. That industry is pulling up. If we want to increase road transport, we have to increase or expand the production of the automobile industry. There is the key to the promotion or development of the road transport industry. Let me know a single instance where a single truck, whatever be the difficulties in getting permits, etc., is lying idle or is waiting for some custom to be provided to it. There is not a single instance."

Sardar Iqbal Singh (Ferozepur): "It is due to the operators because they are hardworking."

Shri Raj Bahadur: "That gives the answer to the other objection which my hon. friend raised which

was about taxation. I am quite aware that the road transport industry is really contributing so far as the State and Central exchequers are concerned considerably. During the course of the Second Plan period it has been estimated that as much as Rs. 600 crores have been contributed by the road transport industry to the State and Central exchequers. It is estimated that during the Third Plan period it might go to Rs. 900 crores or Rs. 1,000 crores. We are contributing at the rate of Rs. 120 crores to the exchequers of the Centre and the States put together by way of taxes and other things. We also know that one truck or one bus has got to pay almost about one-fourth or less than that of its whole value in taxes. It may be Rs. 6,000 per truck—that is there. Despite all this, despite all the levies, what is the position? The position is that transport vehicles are in demand; transport permits are in demand; finances for purchase of transport vehicles are also in demand, so much in demand that they carry, perhaps, the highest rate of interest in the country, that no other industry could pay. In some cases private loans carry as much as 20 per cent, 30 per cent or even 40 per cent. So, with finance being so much in demand for this industry, with no vehicles lying idle, you cannot say that Government has been overlooking the interests of road transport.

"The question that arises is: how much can our roads hold, so far as the pressure is concerned, for expanding the automobile industry at a quicker pace. Could we just take the number of vehicles from 800,000 to 1,600,000 for the Third Plan?

Shri Goray: "That means they are prospering in spite of you."

Shri Raj Bahadur: "Maybe. You may say that. But let us also realise that road transport industry is a young industry. If I may say so, compared to railways or bullock cart, motor transport is very very young. It might well be called an 'upstart.' An upstart's lot we know. An upstart will be viewed with suspicion. It has got to prove its merit. Nobody can deny its future. In times to come greater emphasis will have to be put on road transport and I quite agree that quite a substantial quantity of coal also can be moved. Perhaps, in the scheme that we have got now for the movement of coal this will have to be done. So far as ports of discharge are concerned, larger quantities of coal will have to be moved by road transport. Are our roads prepared for it?

"Then there is the question of cost per ton-mile of road transport. That cost per ton-mile can be reduced only if the road surfaces are improved, and weak culverts and bridges strengthened so that they can bear the pressure of heavier trucks. I quite agree with my hon. friend Mr. Masani that we should allow larger and heavier trucks. Then we should have wider roads, with better road surfaces and stronger bridges and culverts. We are thus moving in a circle. If you want this you have to provide for that. If you provide for that you have to take it from somewhere."

Shri M. R. Masani: "May I put a question? The problem I put before him yesterday was this. When the Railway Board can get crores of rupees for putting up new lines at a cost of Rs. 10 lakhs per mile, why is the Transport Ministry not able to get money from the Planning Commission for laying broad roads at one-third or one-fourth the cost to render greater service to the country?"

Shri Raj Bahadur: "The railways have to do their allotted task. Their task is to carry bulk commodities and long-distance passengers. I am sure,

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even if Mr. Masani was put—I do not know whether it is possible—in charge, he will not scrap the railways. He will be the first person to protect their interests."

Shri M. R. Masani: "I will not build any more lines."

Shri Raj Bahadur: "I think the lines that are being laid are far behind the demand of all the Members of the House put together. Members themselves make so many demands. Every Member wants one line or another. Even I want a railway line in my place."

An Hon. Member: "The number of Members from his party is very few."

Sardar Iqbal Singh: "The hon. Minister just now said that our roads and bridges are not ready to take more traffic. I would ask one question. In the last ten years has any bridge been broken or any damage done to it due to overloading of any truck? Or is it an argument put forward by corrupt officers who do not want that the road transport should be encouraged?"

Shri Raj Bahadur: "I will take the hon. Member at his word. Is it not a fact that despite all the restrictions, a truck is loaded as much as the operator desires and he is getting away with it? How is the corrupt official concerned with this? If there be one, he would be interested in more roads coming up. He will be more interested in more works being undertaken, according to the hon. Member's philosophy. I do not, however, subscribe to that philosophy."

Shri D. C. Sharma: "Which philosophy do you subscribe to?"

Shri Raj Bahadur: "The hon. Member Mr. Sharma's philosophy, if there is one."

"Now, there is one question that was put by Shri Masani, and that was about his own Committee, the Committee named after him, the *ad hoc* Committee on Transport Reorganisation. We have expressed our gratefulness to him for all the work that he did on that committee, and we are not at all unmindful of the hard work that he and his colleagues have put in there and the valuable recommendations that they have made. We have done all that could be done with as much speed as was possible. No sooner his report came and was printed, we put it before the Transport Advisory Council. Their advice was that it should be sent to the State Governments for their views and comments. That was done. After that, it was put to the State Transport Commissioners/Controllers Conference. After that it was placed before the Central Road and Inland Water Transport Advisory Committee. They made their recommendations. Then the Transport Development Council considered it and came to certain conclusions. All the recommendations were accepted with slight modifications, except two. One was perhaps about liberalisation of permits. That was because the Neogy Committee was coming into being. The other one I do not recollect at the moment, but there were only two small questions. But on all major things, whatever we could do, was done, and I will only, in brief, refer to what has been done so far as the Central Government is concerned. So far as the State Governments are concerned, my hon. friend knows the position very well."

"The most important demand was in respect of consolidation of taxes, and double-point taxation being eliminated in favour of the single-point taxation. And on both I am happy to say that we have achieved a considerable measure of success. The principle of

consolidation of taxes has been recognised. It has been approved and recommended by the Transport Development Council. All State Governments are agreeing to it. They will take some time to pass through the necessary legislation."

Shri Khadilkar: "The hon. Minister replied to Shri Masani's points. What happens to the inter-State transport licences, because that is another bottleneck? The hon. Minister has not referred to that."

Shri Raj Bahadur: "As I said, at present the arrangement is that the States concerned come to some settlement, and I can say that the Inter-State Transport Commission has also been functioning quite effectively. Wherever there was no agreement they have tried to bring about an agreement; and in many cases disputes have been settled, the number of permits to be issued by either State this side or that side, and enrolment, and all that, and good progress has been made. But the question is how far, so far as investment is concerned, there could be expansion of the road transport industry or road. So far as the number of permits without any restriction is concerned, that is a question which has to be answered by the Neogy Committee in its final report."

"On that I will again come back to the Masani Committee report and refer to the more important things. He said that a larger allocation of foreign exchange should be made to ensure an adequate supply of vehicles. That has been done, and it is reflected in the figures which have been fixed in the target for the Third Plan. The other thing was that the Transport Wing in the Union Ministry of Transport and Communications should be strengthened. We have a Joint Secretary, and in keeping with the demand or partially with the demand that Road and Transport should be under the same officer, the Joint Secretary (Roads Wing), who is also the Chief Consulting Engineer (Roads Wing), is in charge of the Transport Section. He is assisted by a Deputy Secretary and two Under Secretaries. In that way we have tried to implement it."

"The next was about the Reserve Bank issuing directives to the State Bank and scheduled banks to advance money on a hire-purchase basis. In this matter the Transport Development Council advised the State Governments to set up Transport Finance Corporations. We are now trying to prepare the necessary scheme for that on the lines of one which the Andhra State Government has already tried to evolve. Then comes the question of development rebate. This was not possible. Development rebate is not on items that are produced; it is on the plant or on the machinery or the industry as such which produces the things. Development rebate can perhaps be allowed to the textile mills, but it cannot be given on tax on motor cars."

Shri M. R. Masani: "What about ships?"

Shri Raj Bahadur: "There is development rebate on ships also."

Shri M. R. Masani: "Why not pass it on to trucks also?"

Shri Raj Bahadur: "Then, I come to moratorium on nationalisation. So far as the moratorium on nationalisation is concerned, as regards goods transport, it is already there up to the end of the Third Plan, but further consideration will have to be stayed until the Neogy Committee submits its report."

Shri Braj Raj Singh: "If Shri M. R. Masani comes into power by then, he will make it permanent."

Mr. Deputy Speaker: "Order, order. If the hon. Minister continues to look at me, there would be less of interruptions."

Shri Raj Bahadur: "All right."

"I would not like to say much about the Neogy Committee. It is not for me to make any comments on the interim report, because I hope that the House will offer its comments, and the concerned people and the people in the industry will also make their comments. I can only say that the task assigned to the Neogy Committee was an extremely difficult one, a task which has not yet been solved, I think, in any other country also in a satisfactory manner, namely to lay down the exact proportions or the ratios in which each form of transport, rail, road and shipping will have to be developed, and how much should be invested on roads, how much on railways and how much on shipping. So, that is not an easy thing. They have got to formulate the principles on which a national transport policy has to be evolved. Naturally, therefore, they have only come forward with this sort of questionnaire; even if it is a questionnaire and we may not call it an interim report, still, they have not gone out of the way. Let us see what they have got to say and what answer they have got to give to the main question about what we shall do to meet the requirements of the growing economy of our country and what role each form of transport shall play in that particular context. I hope that when the time comes, they will give a proper answer to these questions."

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