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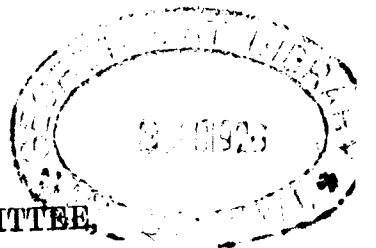
REPORT

OF THE

TELEGRAPH COMMITTEE (1920)

FROM

THE PRESIDENT AND MEMBERS OF THE
TELEGRAPH COMMITTEE.



To

THE SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA,
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE.

Dated Delhi, the 17th March 1919.

SIR,

With reference to the Resolution of the Government of India in the Commerce and Industry Department, No. 1050-D., dated the 13th February 1920, we have the honour to submit the following report regarding the enquiry we were directed to hold into the question of pay and conditions of service of the Telegraph Staff.

2. The terms of reference to us were to enquire:—

(1) What rates of pay and allowances are suitable for:—

- (a) General Service Telegraphists;
- (b) Local Service Telegraphists;
- (c) Women Telegraphists;
- (d) Clerical establishment in departmental telegraph offices;
- (e) Delivery establishment in departmental telegraph offices;

(2) If the pay of the supervisory staff, namely Deputy Superintendents, Telegraph Masters, Inspecting Telegraphists, and Technical Supervisors needs revision.

(3) If uniform rates of pay are fixed for the above classes of officials in whatever part of India they may be, is any revision in the present scale of house-rent allowances, which are granted in lieu of free quarters, necessary specially in the presidency towns or any other particular localities, and are house-rent allowances to be extended to other classes of *employees* who are not at present entitled to them?

(4) Whether any alteration is required in the present conditions of service or in the scales of free accommodation laid down for different classes of the staff referred to above.

(5) Whether any revision is necessary in the duty allowances now sanctioned for supervisory and other special work.

3. The grievances and claims of the staff are exhaustively stated in a Memorandum (a copy of which is enclosed) addressed to the Chairman of this Committee by the Indian Telegraph Association. Eliminating items such as those pertaining to pension and other matters, which are outside the scope of the terms of reference, the claims preferred are specified below:—

(a) That the pay of Telegraphists, Telegraph Masters, and Deputy Superintendents should be substantially enhanced.

(b) That local scale Telegraphists and Telegraph Masters should be abolished, the existing staff of the local scale being raised to the status and pay of the general scale.

(c) That the pay of woman workers should be increased.

(d) That the frequency of transfers, each of which results in pecuniary loss to the man transferred, is a cause of much felt hardship and should be checked.

(e) That Deputy Superintendents should rank as officers of the 1st class under the Travelling Allowance Rules.

(f) That promotion in the Subordinate Telegraph Service is excessively slow and should be accelerated.

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- (g) That the number of Telegraph Masters is short of the sanctioned strength, and that an increase of the number of Deputy Superintendents is necessary.
- (h) That the pay of clerks should be increased.
- (i) That the pay of munshis should be increased.
- (j) That delivery peons should be granted an increase of pay proportionate to that granted to other branches.
- (k) That house-rent allowance should be increased, and that telegraphists and Telegraph Masters of the "local" scale should be admitted to it.
- (l) That exaction from the staff of overtime work in excess of the prescribed hours is a severe hardship which is on the increase and should be discontinued.
- (m) That the remuneration paid for overtime is insufficient and should be increased.
- (n) That the duties are not arranged with any regard to the convenience of the staff, more especially in the matter of meal reliefs.
- (o) That the number of hours of duty per week be reduced from 50 to 42, and the hours of attendance altered in such manner as to curtail the period of evening and night duty.
- (p) That an allowance of Rs. 20 a month should be granted to all Telegraphists who have passed the technical examination for promotion to Telegraph Master.
- (q) That special and supervisory allowances ranging from Rs. 10 to Rs. 50 should be increased to the uniform rate of Rs. 50.
- (r) That the personal allowance of Rs. 50 sanctioned for Personal Assistants to Directors, Telegraph Engineering, should be raised to Rs. 100, that being the allowance sanctioned for Personal Assistants to Postmasters-General.
- (s) That the pay of civilian telegraphists employed in wireless offices should be assimilated to that of Royal Engineer mechanists who do the same work.
- (t) That special locality allowances should be sanctioned for unhealthy and expensive stations.
- (u) That Provident Fund benefits should be enhanced, presumably in the form of a bonus such as that which the rules of the Railway Provident Funds allow.

4. The pay of telegraphists on the general scale is Rs. 75 a month rising in 19 years to Rs. 200 a month. The initial pay has been twice increased in recent years, once in 1908 when on the recommendation of the Telegraph Committee of 1906-07 it was put up from Rs. 40 to Rs. 50 a month, and again in 1919, when a further substantial increase of Rs. 25 a month was sanctioned. The maximum pay is practically the same as it was in 1865, the only increase over the pay to which a telegraphist as such could rise since 1865 being one of Rs. 5 which was sanctioned in 1919. Telegraphists on the local scale draw pay of Rs. 50 a month in the first year rising to a maximum of Rs. 130 a month in the 19th year. In this case also the increase sanctioned has been for the most part of initial pay which was raised from Rs. 27 to Rs. 35 a month in 1902, and to Rs. 50 a month in 1919. The maximum has not been increased at all since 1875. The class of woman telegraphist was created in 1907 and the pay then sanctioned has not been very materially altered since; it is Rs. 50 rising to Rs. 100 a month in Calcutta, Rangoon, Bombay and Karachi and Rs. 40 to Rs. 90 a month at all other stations. The proposal of the Telegraph Association and of all the witnesses who have appeared to give evidence before us, is that the pay of the general service telegraphist should be increased to Rs. 100 rising by annual increments of Rs. 10 to Rs. 250 a month; that local service telegraphists should be graded on the same pay as general service telegraphists; and that for woman telegraphists the pay should be raised to Rs. 75 rising by annual increments of Rs. 5 to Rs. 150 a month.

5. The question of the pay of general scale telegraphists is of great importance as they form the bulk of the signalling establishment, and we have given it very careful consideration. Our unanimous conclusion is that the minimum pay which was very substantially increased only a year ago, need not be further

increased except to the extent approximately of the war allowance which we think should be absorbed. We propose accordingly that the minimum should be fixed at Rs. 80 a month. The claim to an enhanced maximum is more difficult to deal with. On the one hand it is urged that Rs. 200 a month is a sufficiently liberal pay for work which does not require a very high order of intelligence or a very highly trained degree of skill, but on the other hand there is the fact that the maximum pay which a telegraphist can earn as such has remained practically at what it was 55 years ago. On the whole we think there is no refuting the argument that, in view of the increases granted to all other branches of the public service and the rise in cost of living and of wages of both unskilled and skilled labour in all trades and professions, a standard of pay which was adequate in 1865 is inadequate now, and we accordingly propose that the recommendation of the Telegraph Association and the request of the staff as stated by the representatives nominated by them, should be complied with and the maximum pay of telegraphists raised from Rs. 200 to Rs. 250 a month. We could strengthen the argument by comparison of the case with concrete examples of increases recently sanctioned for other services, but it seems unnecessary to labour the point; it is undeniable that an increase of 25 per cent. on a rate of pay introduced more than half a century ago is moderate, and that unless pay is substantially increased the deterioration in quality of recruit which has already taken place must continue. We do not, however, agree that the maximum should be attained in 15 years, and we suggest as suitable a scale rising from Rs. 80 by annual increments of 5 to Rs. 100 a month, and thereafter Rs. 100 rising by annual increments of Rs. 10 to Rs. 250 a month. Further, we recommend that there should be an efficiency bar at Rs. 200, in order to preclude the further advancement of any telegraphist who is not expert or who by reason of character, conduct, or temperament, is deemed by the head of the Circle in which he is employed to be unfit to be permitted to rise to the maximum pay of his class. In the following statement the pay admissible year by year under the proposed scale is contrasted with that admissible under the present scale. The liberality of the former is apparent:—

Year of service.	Present.		Proposed.	
	Rs.		Rs.	
1	75		80	
2	75		85	
3	75		90	
4	80		95	
5	80		100	
6	85		110	
7	90		120	
8	95		130	
9	100		140	
10	110		150	
11	120		160	
12	130		170	
13	140		180	
14	150	Efficiency bar	190	
15	160		200	Efficiency bar.
16	170		210	
17	180		220	
18	190		230	
19	200		240	
20	200		250	

NOTE.—Under present scale a telegraphist of recognised skill and of good character can earn a double increment in the sixth year of his service. In view of the more liberal graduation of the proposed scale a corresponding concession under it is not considered necessary.

6. As regards the "local" scale, which not being really local, is termed the circle scale in this report, it has been strongly urged by the Telegraph Association and by all the delegates who have appeared to give evidence before us that the organization of the operative and supervising staff, that is to say, of telegraphists and telegraph masters, should be altered so as to bring under identical conditions, in respect of pay and allowances, all men who are employed on precisely the same work and are equally efficient. It is contended that telegraphists on the circle scale are no less efficient than those on the general scale; that men who do the same work should get the same pay; that there is no essential difference in the conditions of service; that transfers are no less frequent in the circle than in the general scale; that losses on transfer, which

spring mostly from the sale and repurchase of household requisites, rather than from actual travelling expenses, are no greater in the case of transfers outside a Circle than in that of transfers within a Circle, and that the two scales should be amalgamated, the circle merging in the general. We do not accept this reasoning unreservedly, but it is not without some force, and, in any case, from the point of view of the men of the circle scale, it is sufficiently cogent to cause a sense of unfair treatment to rankle. It would in the circumstances, we think, be advisable to abolish the circle scale and we recommend that this may be done. We are not prepared, however, to support the proposition that the members of that service should be absorbed *en bloc* in the general scale and be granted pay and allowances accordingly. Such a step would entail very heavy additional expenditure, much of it, in our opinion, unnecessary expenditure.

7. A local service is less expensive than a general service, but it must be local in fact and not only in name; a service in which transfers are the rule is not local. There is no reason why in the Telegraph Department a service which is really local, one which offers immunity from transfer out of a particular town or station, should not replace, partially at any rate, the service which we propose to abolish. Employment which offers life-long residence at home has its value, and we recommend that such a service should be formed not only in the interests of economy, but also in order to attract to the department men who will not join it at present solely because they will not leave home; there are many such men, both Anglo-Indian and Indian, in the large towns, and there is already in the department, in the woman telegraphist class, the nucleus of such a service. In other words our suggestion is that the department should be divided into two sections, that is the present general service and a section designated the station scale, which, unlike the present circle service, should be really local. The latter should, we think, consist of a small part of the present establishment of the general and circle services and the whole of the woman telegraphist staff employed in the towns in which the station service is formed. The present sanctioned strength of the staff of telegraphists, including women, is 3,268 including 129 women telegraphists, of which the number on the general scale is 1,925, on the circle scale 1,249, and in the Engineering Branch 94. It is proposed that the future organization shall consist of the two classes, general and station, the number in each class being placed, at the outset at any rate, at approximately $\frac{2}{3}$ general and $\frac{1}{3}$ station.

8. The circle scale would gradually disappear as the men now on it who are not absorbed either in the general scale or the proposed station scale, left the service, but it is necessary to provide for those who remain on the scale during the period of transition. We recommend in their case enhancement of pay on terms similar to those proposed for the general scale. The following statement shows the proposed scale and contrasts it with the existing scale:—

Year of service.	Present. Rs.	Proposed. Rs.
1	50	55
2	50	60
3	50	65
4	55	70
5	55	75
6	60	80
7	65	85
8	70	90
9	75	95
10	80	100
11	85	105
12	90	110
13	95	115
14	100	120
15	105	130
16	110	140
17	115	150
18	120	160
19	130	170
20	130	180

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9. For the proposed local (that is station) scale we suggest that telegraphists stationed in Calcutta, Rangoon, Bombay and Madras should be paid at more liberal rates than those in the mofussil. The scales proposed are, for the former, Rs. 70—5—160, and for the latter, Rs. 60—5—150 with efficiency bars in both cases at the tenth year of service. We also recommend that men and women on the station scale should be paid alike. It is generally admitted in the Department that women compare very favourably as telegraphists with men, and evidence has been produced before us which shows that the payments which women can make out of their present salaries to Young Women's Christian Associations and similar Institutions are not sufficient to cover the cost to the Institutions of their maintenance. It is true that whereas men can be, and are, required to work either by day or by night, women's hours of work are, and must continue to be, restricted to hours of daylight, but against this there is the fact that women, because they are only day workers, put in an average of longer attendance. The one may in fairness be put against the other, and women, who are of at least equal value to the Department, be placed on an equality with men as regards pay. Members of the station scale should be engaged for purely local service that is, they should not be subject to transfer, but all except the women should be required to undertake liability for field service or transfer in time of war or national emergency. During the period for which, on such transfer, they are employed away from their stations they should be allowed general scale pay and such other concession as may be sanctioned for men on the general scale working under similar conditions. The pay proposed for this service is consolidated and no local allowance, other than the Burma allowance drawn by the staff in Rangoon, or house-rent should be allowed to it. The saving on house-rent allowances to this staff, which will consist of 1-5th of the entire establishment, will be considerable and, moreover, the constitution of such a service, if it can be successfully established, will very greatly reduce the cost of the scheme for the construction of quarters which we have recommended elsewhere in this report. This reduction will be much larger than the proportion of 1-5th of the entire strength which the station scale represents, in that the places in which the accommodation required will be reduced are those at which quarters will cost most. The local scale should have its own leave reserve, distributed among the offices in which that service is formed, so as to prevent transfers of men of the general scale to replace absentees who belong to the local scale.

We recommend that local scales be sanctioned in the first instance for the following places with, approximately, the number of appointments quoted against each:—

Calcutta	190
Bombay	170
Rangoon	60
Madras	150
Agra	80
Lahore	50
	700

and that in addition a sprinkling of men and women totalling about 150 be engaged for station service at other places at which volunteers for station service are forthcoming. Telegraphists, male and female, employed on the station scale at such places should be paid at the rates proposed for the local scale at Agra and Lahore.

10. We express no opinion regarding the request of the Telegraph Association that civilian telegraphists employed in wireless stations should be paid at the same rate as military mechanists recruited in England. The whole subject of the organization of the wireless system in India is, we believe, under separate consideration, and the case of civilian telegraphists will doubtless be dealt with as part of any general scheme of re-organization which may be devised.

11. Transition from the present general to the proposed general and station scales should, we think, be effected on the following lines. The extra

men required for the enlarged general service should be drafted into it by transfer of qualified volunteers from the circle scale, and the initial recruitment for the station scale should similarly be effected by drafting into it volunteers from the general and circle scales, preference being given to the latter. The residue of the men now on the circle scale can be further absorbed in the general and station scales as vacancies occur.

12. This question of transfer is important and merits serious consideration. The undue frequency of transfers was stated by the Telegraph Committee of 1906-07 to have formed a cause of complaint by nearly every deputation of the establishment which appeared before them. Our experience has been much the same. Every witness, without exception, has complained of the hardship which transfers constitute. Such evidence as we have been able to collect indicates that transfers are much more frequent now than they were in 1906-07, and there is no doubt that they cause a severe strain on the slender resources of this large body of men. Of the witnesses who appeared before us several had been moved once a year on an average, and very few less than once in two years. The Committee of 1906-07 recognized the seriousness of this question even as facts then were, but they anticipated that remedy would be found in the circle scheme; that scheme has been in force for ten years, transfers are more frequent, and men on the circle scale complain no less than those on the general. The truth is the root cause of the evil is shortage of men, and until this cause is removed there cannot be any improvement. Offices, generally speaking, are working without a sufficient margin, and the administration carry on as best they can, strengthening one at the expense of another, and getting out of one difficulty by effecting a transfer only to find themselves face to face with another difficulty which can be overcome only by another transfer. These make-shift methods are unavoidable in emergencies, but as a regular feature of the permanent administration of a Department they are most objectionable; they harass the direction, enfeeble discipline and control, cause much unprofitable expenditure, and impoverish and demoralise the staff.

13. The Department is kept up to sanctioned strength and, this being so, the reason of the shortage only can be that the method of calculating the number of men required is incorrect. We have examined the question carefully and have come to the conclusion that the staff allowed is insufficient for the work. The basis of calculation for determining the number of telegraphists required is to assume that the sanctioned establishment of telegraphists in 1910 was right for the traffic of the year 1909-10, to allow one extra telegraphist for each 42,000 additional signalling operations per annum since then, and to add 12 per cent. to the result to form a leave reserve. This method seems unnecessarily complicated; 42,000 operations per telegraphist being the accepted basis, we do not understand why, in order to get the number required, it is considered necessary to go back to the year 1910 and calculate the addition required by taking the difference between the operations of that year and the estimated operations of the year for which the number of men is being fixed. Surely the obvious course is merely to divide the number of operations anticipated by 42,000: the result must give the number admissible, and also, if 42,000 is correct, the number required. This, however, is a minor matter. A much more important objection to the method of arriving at the required strength of the telegraphist establishment is that apparently it does not allow for any increase in the number of men required for non-operative work such as testing, watching repeaters, supervision of mechanical telegraphs, etc., which necessarily increases with the traffic. We understand that at present it is held that the quotient resulting from the division of the number of estimated signalling operations of the year by 42,000 represents the total number of telegraphists, both operative and non-operative, required. If this is so, there is undoubtedly a misapprehension which accounts largely for the shortage of staff. Mr. Newlands considered that the number of *operative* telegraphists required should be determined by taking the number of messages circulating hour by hour and allowing one operator for 20 messages per hour. Allowing for wastage caused by unavoidable overlapping of duties, the net outturn per operator per hour would, according to his standard, be between 18 and 19 messages. The present basis of calculation, if accepted as the means of arriving at the operative staff only, gives exactly the same result

inasmuch as 42,000 divided by 2,275, which is the number of hours an operator works in the year, is 18.46. It is improbable that it could ever have been intended that the staff should be fixed at a lower figure than that required for the outturn which Mr. Newlands accepted as a fair average, and we think therefore that there is no doubt that in calculating the number of telegraphists required the non-operating staff should be allowed for separately, and that in the fact that it is not so allowed is to be found the reason of the shortage which is in great part responsible for the prevailing discontent.

14. Careful examination of the case shows that for every 100 operating telegraphists added to the strength an addition of 24 non-operative telegraphists is necessary. A further objection to the present method of fixing the strength is that the leave reserve of 12 per cent. which is allowed is manifestly inadequate in that for absences due to privilege leave, casual leave and joining time alone, a reserve of about 17 per cent. is required, and the Department is one in which privilege and casual leave are, as a rule, taken to the full extent permissible. Leave on medical certificate also is fairly frequently taken. In the circumstances it is evident that a reserve of 20 or more per cent. is essential. An examination of actuals of a series of years bears this out, inasmuch as it shows that the actual average number of absentees per 100 operative telegraphists is 21. We accordingly suggest that the reserve be fixed at 20 per cent. of the number of telegraphists required for the work of the Department. Under these proposals the number of telegraphists to be sanctioned periodically would be determined as follows:—

- (a) Allow number of operative telegraphists obtained by dividing the estimated traffic of the year by 42,000.
- (b) To (a) add 24 per cent. on account of non-operative telegraphists.
- (c) Add, further, number of men required for engineering branch, i.e., at present 94.
- (d) And, lastly, add 20 per cent. of (a), (b) and (c) on account of leave reserve.

15. Applying this method to the estimated traffic of 1920-21, namely, 100,652,133 signalling operations, the number of telegraphists required for the Department would be:—

- (a) 2,396 operating telegraphists.
- (b) 575 non-operating telegraphists.
- (c) 94 Engineering branch.
- (d) 613 telegraphists forming the leave reserve.

Total . 3,678

The present strength being 3,268 this will mean a substantial increase to the cost of the Department, but it is unavoidable if grounds for legitimate complaint by the staff are to be removed and the Department is to be worked efficiently. Moreover, the enhanced bill for pay will be substantially counterbalanced by resulting savings under overtime and travelling allowances. As regards the latter we are unable to support the request that the travelling allowance rules for journeys on transfer should be amended so as to provide specially for the signalling establishment. It would be difficult to justify the differentiation of the subordinate telegraph service from other subordinate services, and the remedy for the loss which is caused by frequent transfers is to reduce transfers as much as possible and not, as it were, tacitly to admit that transfers in this case must necessarily continue to be of exceptional frequency.

16. Previous to the re-organization sanctioned in 1908 there were three grades of Telegraph Masters, the first on Rs. 275, the second on pay of grade as signaller plus an allowance of Rs. 50, and the third on pay of grade as signaller plus an allowance of Rs. 25 a month. The maximum pay of the three grades thus amounted respectively to Rs. 275, Rs. 245, and Rs. 220. As a result of the re-organization, first grade Telegraph Masters became Deputy

Superintendents on Rs. 250—15—325, and the other two grades were amalgamated into a single grade on Rs. 200—10—250. In the re-organization of 1919 the pay of Telegraph Masters was raised to Rs. 250—10—280. Here, also, as in the case of telegraphists, the maximum pay which a Telegraph Master can draw as such has remained to all intents and purposes unchanged for very many years. The pay asked for by the Telegraph Association and the members of the Subordinate Telegraph Service who have appeared before us as representatives of the service is Rs. 275—10—325. We are unanimously of opinion that this should be sanctioned, and that the pay of Telegraph Masters of the present circle scale should, in accordance with the established custom of the Department, be correspondingly increased. The present pay is Rs. 180—10—210. We recommend that it should be increased to Rs. 200—10—250. For the proposed local scale proper, that is to say, the station scale, we recommend—

- (1) For Calcutta, Bombay, Madras and Rangoon Rs. 200—10—250.
- (2) For Agra and Lahore, Rs. 180—10—230.

17. The grade of Deputy Superintendent was created as a result of the recommendations of the Telegraph Committee of 1906-07. Previous to 1908 the highest appointment open to the subordinate service on the traffic side was that of Sub-Assistant Superintendent, Traffic, on a fixed pay of Rs. 250. The re-organization of 1908 sanctioned the abolition of the grade of Sub-Assistant Superintendent, Traffic, and the creation of three classes of Deputy Superintendent, the pay of which was Rs. 400—25—500, Rs. 325—15—400 and Rs. 250—15—325. In the re-organization of 1919, Deputy Superintendents were regraded in two classes, namely, one on Rs. 400—20—500, and the other on Rs. 300—20—400. The Telegraph Association and the representatives of the subordinate staff ask that the pay of these two classes may be revised, the former being raised to Rs. 500—20—600 and the latter to Rs. 350—20—450. Having regard to the increases which, in consideration of the increased cost of living, have been given to officers of corresponding status in other services, we are unanimously of opinion that the request is not unreasonable and may be acceded to. It is also asked on behalf of Deputy Superintendents that they should be graded as officers of the first class under the travelling allowance rules. The increase of pay recommended for those in class I, if sanctioned, will of itself entitle them to first class travelling allowance. As regards those of class II we do not see our way to supporting the proposal to accord special treatment as we cannot see that there is any justification for the concession to Deputy Superintendents of more liberal travelling allowance than the Civil Service Regulations allow to officers of corresponding status in other Departments, *e.g.*, Deputy Collectors and Magistrates, Extra Assistant Commissioners, Deputy Superintendents of Police, etc.

18. There are grounds for the complaint of the staff that promotion of telegraphists is blocked, partly at any rate, in consequence of appointments of Telegraph Masters not having been made to the full extent permissible under the orders of the Government of India (letter No. 8505-118, dated the 16th November 1909), that the proportion of Telegraph Masters to operators, including signal-room clerks, shall be 1 to 9. Calculating the strength of Telegraph Masters on this basis the number required is 370. The present sanctioned strength being 335, an addition of 35 Telegraph Masters is necessary in order to raise the number of these subordinate supervising officers to the strength recognized by Government as that which the efficiency of the Department requires. We recommend that this increase be sanctioned. Appointments to the post of Deputy Superintendent also have not kept pace with the needs of the Department, and the contention of the staff that their just aspirations are adversely affected by the failure of the administration to provide the full number of appointments in this class is not without justification. In the letter which is above referred to the Government of India ruled that when the annual traffic of an office lies between 400,000 and 600,000 messages the office should be in the charge of a Deputy Superintendent, 2nd class, and that when the annual traffic is between 600,000 and 1,200,000 the office should be in the charge of a Deputy Superintendent of the 1st class. The traffic of the offices specified below has reached the limit which justifies the

appointment to their charge of a Deputy Superintendent, the figure shown against each being the average of the three years 1916-17 to 1918-19:—

Rajkot	681,805
Tuticorin	598,870
Saidpur	587,455
Bhusaval	535,987
Bezvada	528,732
Sholapur	512,999
Bhavnagar	450,354

There is we understand no rule as to the criterion which should determine the number of Deputy Superintendents to be employed in the larger telegraph offices. There ought, we think, to be a recognized principle governing the number of Deputy Superintendents to which these are entitled in order to secure effective supervision. It has been suggested to us that 1 Deputy Superintendent to 12 Telegraph Masters would be a reasonable proportion to adopt as the working rule of the Department, and we commend this for the consideration of Government. If it is accepted, the number of Deputy Superintendents to be added to the Department, including the 7 specified above, will be 11.

19. The clerical establishment in the Signal offices consists of 1,020 clerks and 130 munshis. Up to a year ago these clerks were on fixed rates of pay and without definite grading. From 1st March 1919, the establishment was revised and the clerks are now, with modifications since introduced, graded as follows:—

		Rs.
Class I	4 on 150—10—250	
	11 " 150—5—200	
	13 " 100—5—150	
Class II	531 " 30—5—130	
	139 " 50	
Class III	214 " 40	
	108 " 30	
Class IV (Munshis.)	130 " 15—1—35	

The scheme appears to us to be defective in that:—

- (1) appointments in Class I overlap;
- (2) the Class II scale of pay assumes that every clerk who enters on Rs. 30 will, in course of time, be worth $4\frac{1}{2}$ times his starting pay, which is undoubtedly a fallacy;
- (3) the number of appointments in Class III is not distributed in such manner as to secure a reasonably equable flow of advancement;
- (4) the scale makes no distinction between places like Bombay, Calcutta and Karachi, and other stations where living is much cheaper; and
- (5) an organization which includes for the one establishment appointments on both grades on fixed pay and grades on incremental pay is most objectionable, especially if, as in the above, the grades overlap, the fixed pay grades overlapping the incremental grades, and the incremental grades overlapping each other.

20. Although the cost to Government of the revision of 1919 was theoretically considerable, the scheme failed to relieve congestion of promotion and consequently to remove discontent. Men who previously were on fixed rates of pay and were brought on to the Rs. 30—5—130 grade were allowed to count up to a maximum of 1 year of their service on the pay which at the time they were drawing. The scheme has resulted in an inrush of memorials, the strongest points of which are that men graded on the fixed rates of pay of Rs. 30, 40 and 50 have little or no prospect of promotion, that the order which restricts the previous service which may count for increments in the grade Rs. 30—5—130 to a maximum of 1 year is extremely hard on senior men who have served for several years on fixed pay without promotion; that the scheme did not give even to a moderate extent the immediate relief which in these days is so badly needed. We have given this matter very careful consideration and are satisfied that the complaints

which have been lodged against the revision of last year are reasonable. Our recommendations are :—

- (1) that the appointments in Class I be revised so as to raise the pay of the four senior clerical appointments from Rs. 150—10—250 to Rs. 220—10—270. Having regard to the duties and responsibilities of these charges and to the pay allowed for similar work in other Departments we feel sure that the pay we propose is moderate.
- (2) that the 11 appointments on Rs. 150—5—200 and 13 appointments on Rs. 100—5—150 be regraded as one class of 24 appointments on Rs. 150—10—200. Most of these men are employed in responsible positions, as head clerks, cashiers, pay clerks, establishment and accounts clerks, and for such men the pay recommended is moderate.
- (3) that Classes II and III, which consist of 531 appointments on Rs. 30—5—130 and 461 appointments on Rs. 30, 40 and 50 be regraded as two classes carrying pay as below :—

Mofassil.	Rangoon, Karachi, Calcutta, Bombay and Madras.
400 on Rs. 90—5—130	100—6—130—10—150.
592 on Rs. 35—5—85 with efficiency bar at 60	40—6—100 with efficiency bar at 70.

- (4) that the pay of Class IV be increased from Rs. 15—1—35 to Rs. 20—1—30—2—40 for the mofassil and Rs. 25—1—35—2—45 for Calcutta, Bombay, Madras, Rangoon and Karachi. These munshis are, as a rule, selected from among the more literate and intelligent of the task work delivery peons and as such a peon earns more than Rs. 15 a month in the mofassil and over Rs. 20 a month in the larger towns mentioned above, the scales proposed are only just sufficient to attract and retain them in contentment.
- (5) that initial pay in the incremental grades may be regulated on a somewhat more liberal basis than was allowed in the re-organization of last year. Immediate relief is what the men are crying for and sorely in need of. We suggest as a moderately liberal working rule that the starting pay to be allowed on absorption into one of the incremental grades now proposed shall be the minimum of that grade or, if actual pay on 28th February 1919 was in excess of the minimum, such actual pay *plus* one increment for every three years' service in the Department, subject to a maximum of 4 increments. To make the proposal clear the following examples are cited. A, a clerk whose pay on 28th February 1919 was Rs. 30 and who had 6 years' service to his credit would on absorption into the Rs. 35—5—85 grade start on Rs. 35 + 10 = Rs. 45; B, a clerk whose pay on 28th February 1919 was Rs. 50 and who had put in 10 years' service would start on Rs. 50 + 15 = 65. It is possible that this rule will not fit all cases and we suggest that any case in which it operates unfairly may be left to the discretion of the Director General to deal with on its merits by the grant of a personal allowance or otherwise.

21. We have not before us and cannot, in the time at our disposal, collect the data required to enable us to make proposals in regard to the pay of the delivery staff, or to advise in respect of the relative merits of the task-work system and the usual method of remuneration by fixed pay. But it has been prominently brought to our notice that this class of servant suffers serious disability in respect of his leave allowance. His subsistence allowance is very small, as little as Rs. 3 a month in many cases, and consequently the leave allowance to which under present conditions he is entitled is wholly inadequate. We recommend that this should be remedied by allowing leave allowances to be calculated on assumed rates of pay which might suitably be Rs. 16 for the Presidency Towns and Rs. 12 for other stations. We further recommend that

the subsistence allowances of the class may be revised, a reasonable increase being allowed in all cases in which there has been no alteration since 1914.

22. Of all the questions investigated by us none is of greater importance than that of house accommodation. The staff live partly in quarters provided by Government, but mostly in houses which they hire for themselves. It has been represented to us that there has been a serious rise in rents in recent years, more particularly in the last 6 years; that in the vicinity of the Telegraph offices where efficiency requires that the staff should live, quarters are procurable, if at all, only with great difficulty and at prohibitive cost; that this difficulty is increasing rapidly; that the rent which men now have to pay for inferior accommodation in insanitary localities and at long distances from the scene of their work is beyond their means. We have been much impressed by the evidence received in this respect coupled with the regulations pertaining to accommodation in Government quarters; men occupying hired houses appear for the most part to be living in great discomfort, amid squalid surroundings, in rooms which are too small for their needs, and for which they are paying rent quite disproportionate to their income. Several of those living in quarters owned by Government are better off only in so far that they pay no rent and live in a cleaner locality either on the premises or within easy reach of their work; otherwise their lot is almost as bad, the space allotted being insufficient for moderate comfort, for cleanliness, and even for common decency.

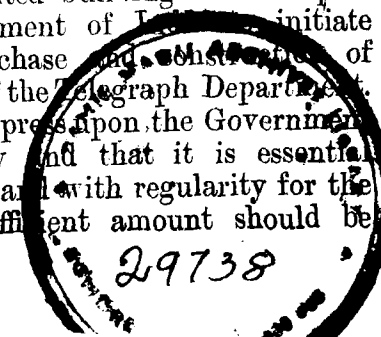
23. The Telegraph Committee of 1906-07 recommended that no fresh quarters should be rented or constructed except in places where the staff were unable to hire accommodation for themselves. It was probably not then, as it certainly now is, the case that there are few places at which the staff can hire suitable accommodation, it having been represented to us that even in towns such, for instance, as Patna, Agra, Cawnpore, Ajmere, Rawalpindi, Peshawar, Mandalay and many others where formerly there was no difficulty, men are now compelled to live two and three miles away from the telegraph office. In the circumstances we strongly recommend that the finding of the Committee of 1906-07 be reversed, and that the department undertake a programme of regular purchase and construction of quarters for the telegraph staff. Postponement of this step can only result in a large addition to cost and other difficulties when eventually the policy of purchase and construction is adopted, as sooner or later it must be. The policy accepted by Government in 1906-07 may or may not have been sound at the time, but there is no doubt that adherence to it now would be culpably short-sighted.

24. We have considered whether as an alternative the needs of the case could be equally well met by the grant of house-rent allowances on a more liberal scale than the scale now prescribed for those members of the staff who are not provided with free quarters, and are unanimously of opinion that they would not for the reasons :—

- (1) that no scale of allowance will enable the staff to obtain accommodation which is ceasing to be procurable at all; and
- (2) that enhancement of house-rent allowances has been shown to be merely a palliative, not a cure, each such enhancement being immediately followed by a corresponding raising of rents and money which is intended by Government to help its servants being appropriated by rack-renting landlords.

25. We feel sure that in this question of housing is to be found one of the principal causes of the present unrest and discontent in the Department and that the only permanent remedy is the substitution as soon as possible of quarters owned by Government for privately rented buildings. We repeat therefore that the time has come for the Government of India to initiate and pursue a comprehensive scheme for the purchase and construction of quarters for the operative and supervising staff of the Telegraph Department. Further, we should fail in our duty if we did not impress upon the Government that the matter is urgent and of increasing urgency and that it is essential that a substantial sum should be voted annually and with regularity for the purpose. If possible, a fixed recurring grant of sufficient amount should be

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sanctioned once for all in order to admit of a well-considered programme being worked to without let or hindrance.

26. The main complaint against Government owned quarters is that the space allowed is not enough. While we think that a room of 15 feet square with a bath room and a section of verandah is sufficient for an unmarried telegraphist, we regard as unworthy of a great Government a regulation which restricts the space allowable to a married telegraphist to one room. That a family of two, three, or possibly more, persons should be required to sleep, eat, and live in a single room of moderate size is indefensible, and certainly not in keeping with the spirit of the times, and we desire, therefore, to recommend strongly that the minimum free accommodation for married men of any class be increased to two rooms of not less than 220 square feet each, with suitable bath room and verandah space. We would go further and say that when the family of a married telegraphist consists of more than three persons, the Postmaster-General should be permitted to allot to him a three unit quarter if such is available, and that in such a case rent should not be charged for the additional accommodation. After giving the subject careful consideration and inspecting specimens of the quarters in Delhi we recommend the revision of the rules so as to allow accommodation on the following scale:—

House accommodation—General Service.

Designation.	Unit of 220 square feet.	Bath rooms.	Store room.
Unmarried telegraphist	1	1	1
Married telegraphist	2	2	1
Unmarried Tl-in-charge	3	2	1
Unmarried T. M.	4	2	1
Married Tl-in-charge			
Married T. M.			
All Deputy Superintendents			

In addition we recommend suitable verandah space in every case.

We were impressed with the defective character of the design of the quarters inspected by us in Delhi and consider that they admit of much improvement in the matter of comfort and convenience. We, therefore, suggest that every effort should be made to evolve a standard ground plan design for married and bachelor quarters providing the maximum convenience and comfort in arrangement, and further suggest for the consideration of Government that the opinion of the members of the Department themselves might be taken on a subject so closely affecting their interest.

27. The purchase and construction of quarters will take time and we recommend as a measure of immediate relief that during the transitory period, house-rent allowance be increased as shown below:—

House-rent Allowance—General Service.

Years of service and grade.	CLASS OF STATION.									
	I		II		III		IV		V	
	Single.	Married.	Single.	Married.	Single.	Married.	Single.	Married.	Single.	Married.
Telegraphists { 1 to 10	15	20	20	25	25	30	30	35	35	40
{ 11 to 15	20	25	25	30	30	35	35	40	40	45
{ 15 and over	25	30	30	35	35	40	40	45	45	50
T. Ms.	35	40	40	45	45	50	50	55	55	60
D. Ss.	40	45	45	50	50	55	55	60	60	65

In Class V we would put only Bombay and Calcutta where rents are unquestionably higher than in any other towns in India; in class IV we would place such towns as Rangoon, Karachi, Madras and Poona; in class III, Simla, Mussorie, Darjeeling and Quetta would probably be suitably graded; in class II might be placed Lahore, Agra, Lucknow, Allahabad and Ajmer and in class I places like Bareilly, Multan, Amritsar, Sukkur, Serajung, etc.

We offer these merely as suggestions based upon very general ideas but that actual grading should we think be determined by the Director General in consultation with heads of Circles.

28. Not the least of the causes which have contributed to the spirit of resentment which unhappily pervades the telegraph staff is the encroachment upon their leisure hours which the circumstances of recent years have forced upon the department. Since the outbreak of the late war traffic has continued to increase and though, as regards numbers the establishment has been as far as possible correspondingly increased, a depletion of working power resulting from the replacement of the best men withdrawn for service overseas, by men of inferior capacity has been unavoidable. The fact that between the years 1915-16 and 1918-19 expenditure on overtime allowances rose from about Rs. 60,000 to over Rs. 2,14,000 speaks for itself. Formerly overtime was almost entirely voluntary, now it is said to be largely obligatory. The Telegraph Association claim that the demand for overtime is on the increase, and that the strain on the staff is unduly severe, and the general tenour of the evidence we have heard indicates that feeling on the subject is strong and even bitter. The Association ask, and they have the entire support of the staff, that overtime work should be paid for at higher rates or, preferably, that it should be abolished. Abolition, of course, from the nature of the case is out of the question; in no other way than by overtime can demands caused by congestion, interruption and sudden influx of traffic be met. We agree, however, with the Telegraph Committee of 1906-07 in thinking that it is generally undesirable to order overtime, and that it should be restricted to as few occasions as possible. Improvement of supervision, which we suggest elsewhere in this report, ought to produce some effect, but the only real remedy we are convinced is the strengthening of the staff by providing an adequate reserve. While we feel that the money spent on overtime allowances would be better spent on increasing the working strength of the Telegraphist establishment and that what is wanted is not a higher scale of remuneration, but reduction to a minimum of overtime, we think that the application for enhancement of remuneration deserves some consideration. The working day of eight hours prescribed for the signalling staff is longer than that demanded of most Government establishments in India, and the holidays they enjoy are fewer. They have asked that their working hours should be reduced from 8, 7 and 6 to 7, 6 and 5 hours respectively for day, evening and night terms, and in regard to this we are unanimously of opinion that the present 50 hours per week should stand. This decision is in the interests of the work and efficiency of the Department, and we hope the Government of India will accept it, but it may reasonably be tempered by a moderate concession in respect of the rate of wages paid for overtime. The concessions we recommend are:—

- (1) that the present day and night rates for overtime duty performed by the Signalling Establishment should be increased by 25 per cent.,
- (2) that overtime in excess of an average of two hours on Sundays and the four Telegraph holidays should be paid for at double the revised rates,
- (3) that signal room clerks should be given the same rates as telegraphists,
- (4) that peons should be given a 25 per cent. rise on present rates,
- (5) that for overtime purposes the day should be reckoned as commencing at 6 hours and terminating at 20 hours.

There are two minor points connected with overtime which require attention. It would appear that there is a tendency in some offices to employ for

overtime work only junior men, the object being to keep down the overtime expenditure. This is not quite equitable in that it sometimes entails the rejection of seniors who are volunteers and the compulsory pressing in of juniors. Complaint has also been made that in many large offices meal reliefs are not arranged for with regularity. The evidence indicates that the complaint is not groundless, and as the matter is important we suggest that officers charged with the preparation of the Duty Charts of large offices should be instructed to pay special attention to the point, and that Inspecting Officers should satisfy themselves on each visit to an office that consideration in this respect is being shown to the men.

29. The number of special (supervisory and other duty) allowances sanctioned for the staff is very large and one of the requests of the Telegraph Association supported by the men's delegates is that the amount of these allowances should be increased all round. We have gone through the list carefully and considered the case of each separately and are of opinion that the allowances now granted are sufficient. The only recommendation we have to make is that the restriction on the allowance of Rs. 40 a month drawn by Inspecting Telegraphists in the Engineering Branch and by Supervisors in the Technical Branch should be removed. The continuance of the allowance is subject to the condition that grade pay *plus* the allowance must not exceed Rs. 300 a month. As the allowance is granted in consideration of certain disabilities which detachment from the Traffic Branch entails, it is not reasonable to decrease or withdraw it as pay increases; it should continue to be allowed so long as the reasons which justify it remain unaltered. Further proposals which have been placed before us in respect of allowances are—

(i) that the allowance of Rs. 50 sanctioned for Personal Assistants to Directors of Telegraph Engineering be raised from Rs. 50 to Rs. 100 a month which is the sanctioned allowance for Personal Assistants to Postmaster General,

(ii) that an allowance of Rs. 20 a month be granted to all telegraphists who have passed the examination for promotion to the grade of Telegraph Master.

We are unable to accept either of these proposals. The cases of Personal Assistants to Postmasters General and to Directors, Telegraph Engineering, are not parallel, neither the status nor the duties of the two classes of officers being similar.

As regards (ii) the examination in question is one which in their own interest Telegraphists must pass, passing carries its own reward in that it removes an obstacle to promotion, and there is no justification for the grant of an allowance as an additional inducement; it would be possible if such an allowance were sanctioned, for a clever junior telegraphist to draw it for years without the Department obtaining any tangible return for the expenditure.

30. The Telegraph Association, referring to the case of Railways as a precedent, ask that the benefits of the General Provident Fund may be extended specially in the case of telegraphists so as to admit of the grant to them of the annual bonus which Government contribute to the deposits of their railway employés. The cases of railway and telegraph servants are quite different, the former being non-pensionable, and the bonus being granted in lieu of pension. We cannot support the request.

31. A question which we have been unable to deal with is that of special locality allowances. These allowances cover a wide field and vary in different localities with reference to climatic and other considerations. Obviously it is not possible for a committee which is assembled for a few weeks to undertake the close examination without which allowances of this nature cannot possibly be revised. But we think that the Department could not be guided by any safer rule than one which regulates such allowances by the rules framed for each locality by the Local Government or the Government of India as the case may be. There is no reason that we know of for special treatment of the Telegraph Department in respect of allowances of this nature.

32. In recommending increases of pay for Deputy Superintendents, Telegraph Masters, Telegraphists and Clerks, we have assumed that war

allowance will be discontinued simultaneously with the introduction of the revised rates. In the case, however, of some clerks possibly, and munshis certainly, there will be instances in which the discontinuance abruptly of the whole of the war allowance would cause hardship and we therefore suggest the gradual withdrawal of the allowance from men whose pay as revised is less than Rs. 40 a month. For these men the rule might be that withdrawal shall be effected in two instalments, half with effect from the date of revision of pay, and the other half with effect from the date on which the next increment falls due. A special rule may be necessary for Bombay, where war allowance is more liberal than elsewhere.

33. It has been urged that, as in the case of increases of pay granted to the staff employed on Railways both State and Company worked, the revised rates of pay recommended by us should be allowed with retrospective effect. While we recognise that this proposal is against the rule and practice of the Government of India we think that, in view of the departure from that rule permitted not only in the case cited, but in several others in which pay of the services has recently been enhanced, and of the fact that the present proposals are in lieu of others which were introduced a year ago and have proved inadequate, it would be not unreasonable to allow, as with effect from the 1st of December 1919, any increases which may be sanctioned as an outcome of our recommendations.

34. The ultimate financial effect of the proposals in this report may be taken approximately at a net increase of expenditure of Rs. 30,41,000 per annum. This is made up of—

	Rs.	A.	P.
(1) On account of increase of pay of Telegraphists	14,82,000	0	0
(2) " " " Telegraph Masters	1,69,000	0	0
(3) " " " Deputy Superintendents	90,000	0	0
(4) " " " Clerks in signal offices	4,50,000	0	0
(5) " " " in house-rent allowances	5,00,000	0	0
(6) " " " in number of Telegraphists	7,64,000	0	0
(7) " " " Telegraph Masters	1,22,000	0	0
(8) " " " Deputy Superintendents	60,000	0	0
Total gross increase	=36,87,000	0	0
Deduct—			
(1) Saving on war allowances	3,25,000	0	0
(2) " overtime allowances	1,25,000	0	0
(3) " travelling allowances	1,50,000	0	0
Total savings	6,00,000	0	0 a year.
Net increase	=30,37,000	0	0 a year.

35. These figures leave out of account the saving which results to the Department from the employment of Military telegraphists. The number of men of this class at present actually employed is 123, but the sanctioned number is 358. Assuming that additional recruitment of soldier telegraphists will be resorted to in order to bring their strength up to sanction, the number of Civilian telegraphists to be added to the Department will be reduced by at least 200, the working power of a Military telegraphist being taken at about $\frac{2}{3}$ of that of a Civilian telegraphist, and the saving on the additional cost, as stated above, will be approximately Rs 2,50,000 a year. Thus the total additional cost may be taken at about Rs. 28,00,000 per annum. It is a large sum, but in the case of proposals which affect a staff of 5,000 or more men a small allowance per head per mensem easily runs into an expenditure of hundreds of thousands of rupees per annum. Moreover, it should not be

forgotten that a substantial share of the increase is on account of additional staff required to bring the working strength of the Department up to that which is necessary for the disposal of the work; that the volume of traffic which has been assumed as that for which it is necessary to provide staff is the maximum which the Department has ever been required to cope with; that the message receipts which this volume of traffic may be expected to yield is over Rs. 2,50,00,000 a year; and finally that our proposals are intended to be such as will place matters on a satisfactory footing for some years to come, our aim being to suggest such a standard of reform as cannot reasonably be followed by a recrudescence, after an interval of a year or two, of discontent and agitation.

36. In conclusion we desire to place on record our appreciation of the valuable help which has been given to us by Mr. J. N. Mukerji. Bringing to the work a unique knowledge of the history and constitution of the Department, he has made easy for us work which, without his assistance, we should have found it impossible to complete in the time at our disposal.

We have the honour to be,

SIR,

Your most obedient, humble Servants,

H. HESELTINE,

President.

NIGEL F. PATON.

W. SUTHERLAND.

J. H. ABBOTT.

H. BARTON.

N. R. RAO.

Members.

J. N. MUKERJI,

Secretary.

