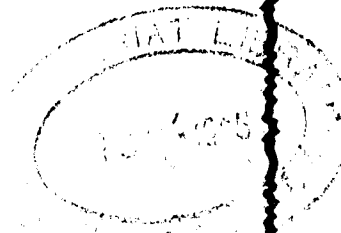


GOVERNMENT OF INDIA



**Report by the
Posts and Telegraphs
Department Committee
1924-25**

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GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
POSTS AND TELEGRAPHS DEPARTMENT
COMMITTEE, 1924-25.

Report.

CHAPTER I.

Introductory.

The Posts and Telegraphs Committee was appointed in October 1924—

“ to investigate possible methods of economy in the Posts and Telegraphs Department, more particularly to report whether economy can be effected without loss of efficiency by internal re-arrangement of the methods of working and redistribution of duties ; but the Committee shall not examine questions entailing any general revision of pay ”.

2. Before stating the result of their investigations and making their recommendations, it seems desirable for the Committee to refer to the circumstances in which their appointment was considered necessary, and to explain the light in which they have considered the matters under reference.

3. A decision had been taken to ‘ commercialise ’ the accounts of the Posts and Telegraphs Department, that is, so to recast the form of the accounts that they should shew the true cost of working the department, with due regard to such indirect charges as provision for interest on capital, for depreciation of equipment, for contingent liabilities such as pensions, as well as for actual out of pocket expenditure on the carriage of mails, the payment of salaries, and other current charges ; while they should shew, on the other side, the true earnings of the department, inclusive not only of cash receipts from the public, but also of payments to be made by other Government departments (*e.g.*, payments by the Army on account of work done in disbursing army pensions, by the Finance Department on account of savings bank work, and so forth).

4. A preliminary review of the ultimate results of the adoption of such a system of accounts indicated that the Department was probably working at a loss rather than at a profit, or, at best, that its income barely sufficed to cover its expenditure. The principal factors which contributed to this result were two ; a heavy addition to the expense side of the account, due to the substitution of a provision for full depreciation liability instead of the actual payments* for renewals ; and the substi-

* These have tended to be lower than they should have been, *i.e.*, to some extent renewals are in arrears : it is to prevent the recurrence of this in future that provision has been made in the commercial accounting system for debit to be made to working expenses on account of full depreciation.

tution of full provision for current pensionary liabilities for the (much smaller) actual sums paid as pensions.*

5. While it thus became evident that the department was, at most, hardly paying its way, it was clear, at the same time, that the charges levied for services rendered to the public were already high—they had indeed been the subject of a good deal of public criticism—and there could be little hope of any increase of revenue to counterbalance the cost of administration.

6. In these circumstances the Government of India decided, in consultation with the Director-General, Posts and Telegraphs Department, that a special enquiry should be instituted into the methods of working the department. Attention was drawn to the fact that conditions in recent years—particularly the war and its effects—had hitherto rendered it impracticable for a comprehensive examination to be made of the results of the amalgamation of the Postal and the Telegraph Departments, effected in 1914; and it was hoped that such an examination might reveal possibilities of improved organisation and consequent economies on a considerable scale. Such an examination could manifestly best be made by a small departmental body, the members of which would already be fully conversant with all particulars of the existing organisation. The Posts and Telegraphs Committee was accordingly appointed.

7. The 'commercialisation' of the accounts of the department—in itself a measure eminently desirable, both in the interests of the tax-payer, and of those responsible for the economical and efficient organisation of the service—has, in some cases, given rise to misunderstandings. Thus it has been inferred that the commercialisation of the accounts must result in limiting the scope and activities of the department to what may be called "*commercial propositions*". Such an assumption, however, goes too far. The Department is not, and cannot possibly be, unreservedly commercial in its policy and methods. Its aim must, of course, be to correlate, as far as reasonably practicable, its expenditure and commitments with the income it derives from the services rendered. But this is not the be-all and end-all of its existence. As a public utility service, the activities of which are not less valuable to the education, peace and progress of the community as a whole, than to its commercial interests, it is inevitable that it cannot confine itself to such projects only as offer an adequate cash return, but must undertake duties and responsibilities the value of which to the community at large contributes no adequate cash equivalent to the income of the department.

8. When the rendering of a service is for the sole benefit of a particular body or individual, it is the general practice of the department to require that body or individual to indemnify it against loss—and this is manifestly right in the interests of the general tax-payer; but there are many cases in which the cost of the service cannot be so directly apportioned and must perforce fall upon the department. The Wireless Branch may be regarded as an instance; this is not at present a *commercial proposition*, but it is a branch of the department, the maintenance and development of which the progress of civilisation has imposed

* The difference is attributable to the fact that the numbers and the pay of the staff are constantly increasing, so that at any given time the pensions actually being disbursed are much smaller than the liabilities which are being incurred.

upon the country. Similarly, the telegraph service between Calcutta and certain stations on the river Hooghly is not directly remunerative to the Department but, nevertheless, is essential in the general interests of shipping, customs administration, and commerce.

9. It may well happen, therefore, that, when all is said and done, the Posts and Telegraphs Department may prove to be one which cannot completely pay its way, or return a commercial dividend on the capital invested. If so, India will only be in the same position as many other countries in which the general finances have to come to the aid of the corresponding departments.

10. Recognising this fact the Committee do not propose that economies should be effected which would have the effect of impairing services which are properly expected of the department, even if these be not directly remunerative.

11. On the other hand the Committee deal in their following observations with many questions whose bearing upon the issue of economy is only indirect. Efficiency and economy must go hand in hand and the Committee understand that it is within the scope of their duty to make recommendations as to measures which by improving efficiency will indirectly promote economy.

12. Very briefly outlined the Indian Posts and Telegraphs Department comprises, under the central control of the Director-General, the following principal branches:—

Postal and Telegraph Traffic.—All India (including Burma) is divided into eight major circles; each under a postmaster-general, and one minor circle (Sind and Baluchistan) under a deputy postmaster-general. Each circle is sub-divided into a number of "divisions", in charge of superintendents of post offices.

Telegraph Engineering.—There are five engineering circles, each in charge of a director of telegraph engineering. Each circle is sub-divided into a number of engineering divisions in charge of divisional engineers.

Railway Mail Service.—There are three circles in India in charge of three deputy postmasters-general, Railway Mail Service (so called—there is no postmaster-general, Railway Mail Service) under the central control of the head (Director-General's) office.

Wireless Telegraph Branch.—A separate organisation, responsible for both engineering and traffic work, controlled by a director of Wireless who is responsible directly to the Director-General.

In certain cases the foregoing organisation and separation of branches have been modified; thus in Burma the posts of postmaster-general and director of engineering and the charge of the Railway Mail Service vest in the same individual, below whom, however, the separation of branches already indicated exists as elsewhere.

In Sind and Baluchistan the head of the minor circle is in charge of all postal and engineering work.

13. Prior to 1914 the postal and telegraph departments were quite distinct from each other, the only point of contact being in the combined post and telegraph offices in which, then as now, the postal signallers constituted a joint staff working under the control of the postal authorities. The principal feature in which the administrative system now differs from that of pre-amalgamation days is the transfer of control and responsibility for telegraph traffic to the postal side. The wireless work was under the ordinary Engineering Branch until 1920 when it was made a separate charge, as described above, under an independent director.

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CHAPTER II.

Amalgamation of the Posts and Telegraphs Departments.

14. The proposal that the posts and telegraphs departments should be amalgamated was first made in 1872, but no action was then taken, nor was any enquiry into the advantages of amalgamation instituted. In 1903, however, the question was again raised in the report of a committee of the secretaries of the Government of India considering the formation of a separate Commerce and Industry department. The suggestion appears to have been adopted by the committee from a memorandum submitted by Mr. H. M. Kisch of the postal department and the arguments adduced by the committee in favour of its adoption were :—

- (1) that it would be following the lead already given by the United Kingdom, our own colonies, and most other civilised countries ;
- (2) that it would lead to a great development of telegraph business by facilitating the opening of combined post and telegraph offices which would, no doubt, add materially to the business done by the regular telegraph offices. It was represented that under the existing system the opening of every combined office gave rise to a complicated correspondence between the postal and telegraph officials and caused a great deal of trouble, and it was stated that the work of the Director-General of the Post Office would probably not be increased by combining the two departments under his control ; and
- (3) that it would enable large economies to be effected in supervision since the existing system, under which a telegraph superintendent has to visit an ordinary postal telegraph office in order to inspect a single instrument and to check the working of the least important branch of the office, would be replaced by inspections by officers acquainted with both postal business and telegraph technique, who would inspect the entire business of the office.

15. This suggestion was examined a year later by a small committee presided over by the Hon'ble Mr. Hewett, member in charge of the Commerce and Industry Department, and after considering the views advanced by the directors-general of the two departments, the committee reported early in 1905 to the effect that the simple amalgamation of the two departments, as they existed, under a common head, would be of little benefit, having regard to the fact that both would in future be under the same member of Council, but that they considered that a much stronger case might be made out for a fusion of the two departments, by which the ordinary administration of the posts and telegraphs would be amalgamated throughout India. While recording the opinion that a fusion of the two departments might conduce to economy and efficiency, the committee considered that no definite pronouncement could be made regarding the advisability of introducing a sweeping change of this nature until a scheme for the amalgamation of the departments had been elaborated, and until the financial effect of this scheme had been ascertained

with approximate accuracy. Further, that before the preparation of a detailed scheme of this nature could be undertaken, it was essential that information should be obtained regarding the method adopted in working the combined postal and telegraph systems in the United Kingdom and in certain of the more important countries on the continent.

16. As a result of this report, Mr. Stewart-Wilson was placed on special duty in Europe for the purpose of enquiring into the postal and telegraph systems in force in the United Kingdom, Germany, Switzerland and France. Mr. Stewart-Wilson submitted his report to the Government of India in November 1905, followed by a further note in March of the next year. In 1906-07 a committee under Sir Lewis Tupper was constituted to enquire into the organisation of the telegraph department but the question of the amalgamation of the post and telegraph departments was not referred to them. The only items of this reference which had any connection with the former department being a suggested enquiry into :—

- (1) what measures should be taken to promote closer and more intimate relations between the post office and the telegraph department in the matter of combined offices and what principle should govern—

- (a) the opening of new departmental offices, and
- (b) the combining of offices already separate ; and

- (2) whether the accounts and audit system of the telegraph department should be amalgamated with that of the post office.

17. The recommendations of the Government of India on the report of this committee were submitted to the Secretary of State in July 1909 and, in his despatch, dated December 3rd, 1909, the Secretary of State, in sanctioning these proposals, expressed the desire that the Government of India “ should keep steadily in view the advantages to the country which are likely to result from the complete amalgamation of the two great public departments of posts and telegraphs, from the point of view of administration, public convenience and commerce ”.

18. Certain measures had already been taken in the organisation of the two departments which tended towards a unification of the administrative methods of both, and greatly facilitated their ultimate amalgamation, though at the time of the adoption of these methods there was, apparently, no conscious recognition of this tendency. These steps may briefly be mentioned. They were :—

- (a) the organisation of combined postal and telegraph offices. These offices were first started in 1884-85 ;
- (b) the union of both the departments under a single department of the Government of India under one Hon'ble Member in charge. This was effected by the creation of the Commerce and Industry Department in 1905 ;
- (c) the orders of the 21st of October 1908 regarding the administration of combined offices with special reference to the decision that junior postal superintendents should undergo a course of training in telegraphy in order that their control of combined offices might be strengthened. In the

same letter special emphasis was laid on “ the extreme importance of co-operation and united action between the departments ” ;

- (d) the combination in 1910 of the audit of the Posts and Telegraphs under the Accountant General, Post Office and Telegraphs, as a result of the re-arrangement in 1905 on the recommendations of the Telegraph Committee ;
- (e) the re-organisation of the telegraph department in 1910 and the adoption of a circle system, which up to that time had been a feature of the post office administration. This meant the creation of important administrative posts subordinate to that of the Director-General of Telegraphs and cleared the way for the delegation proposals which were subsequently adopted ; and
- (f) the decentralisation of work in the telegraph department. Various delegations were made in order to increase the responsibility of circle directors, largely on the analogy already existing in the post office.

19. As a result of the recommendations contained in the Secretary of State's despatch of the 3rd December 1909, it was definitely decided to proceed with the proposal for the amalgamation of the two departments, the plan of action followed being to unite the two departments under one administrative head, and to introduce an experimental amalgamation in order to test the feasibility of the scheme. In 1911 accordingly, Sir Charles Stewart-Wilson was appointed the first Director-General of the Posts and Telegraphs Department and an experimental amalgamation of the two departments was introduced in the Bombay and Central circles. As a result of this experiment, and of his experience as Director-General of the two departments, Sir Charles Stewart-Wilson submitted his final recommendations in November 1912. These, in fact, amounted to a reduction of the telegraph department to an engineering and technical department, and a transfer to the post office of the remaining functions of the telegraph department comprised in the description of “ traffic,” both departments being under one head—the Director-General of Posts and Telegraphs. The scheme provided for the reduction of 28 superior appointments in the telegraph department, and was estimated to result in an annual saving of 4 lakhs of rupees. It was accepted, with some modifications, by the Government of India and recommended to the Secretary of State for sanction in a despatch, dated 30th October 1913. To this the Secretary of State's reply was received in February 1914 and the introduction of the scheme was sanctioned from April 1st, 1914.

20. The despatch to the Secretary of State contained the following general observations on the scheme recommended :—

“ The actual combination of post and telegraph functions has not been carried lower down the scale than postmaster-general, and it would be more correct to describe this scheme as one of re-distribution of staff and duties than as one of actual amalgamation. A considerable degree of fusion has already taken place, inasmuch as nearly all combined offices (which represent the larger and constantly increasing proportion of telegraph offices throughout the country) are under the control of postal officials. We do not anticipate that any further

fusion can take place for many years to come. The scheme exhibits in a striking manner the fundamental distinction between engineering and traffic work, and even the differences between the postal and telegraph traffic are so pronounced that there is no prospect at present of the two sets of duties being performed by a common establishment. These considerations do not, however, in our opinion, lessen the advantages which, we confidently expect, will ensue upon the introduction of the scheme. The experimental amalgamation introduced last year in the Bombay and Central circles (upon the lines of which the present proposals proceed) has been favourably received by the public and the officers engaged in the engineering and traffic. Each of these branches of work receives under the new system its due share of attention. The existence of a staff specially devoted to engineering encourages the introduction and application of scientific methods and inventions. We have no doubt, in short, that the administration of the telegraph department will become more efficient and the public finance be thus benefited by the introduction of the proposed scheme."

21. There can be no doubt that during the war which followed so closely the inauguration of the new system, the transfer of the control of telegraph traffic to postmasters-general was an important factor in facilitating the replacement by postal signallers of departmental telegraphists deputed for field service. The services of between two and three hundred departmental telegraphists were transferred to the military department and these men were replaced largely by postal signallers. Such a re-organisation and re-distribution of forces would no doubt have been possible under the old system, but must have resulted in considerable correspondence between the postal and telegraph departments. Owing to the amalgamation which brought the departmental telegraph signallers and the postal signallers under one and the same control, necessary re-adjustments were made promptly and without difficulty.

22. Further, the amalgamation has reduced causes of friction between the postal and telegraph services and has greatly improved the effective control of combined post and telegraph offices. The important part played by these offices in dealing with the total telegraph traffic of the country may be judged from the figures contained in the last Annual Report of Posts and Telegraphs of India for the year 1924. This report shows that 19 million telegrams paid and free (but excluding service messages) were transmitted during the year. Of this total 10 million messages were sent from combined offices, and 9 million from departmental offices. Combined offices also delivered $8\frac{1}{2}$ million messages and thus handled, either at the despatch or delivery stage, $18\frac{1}{2}$ million telegrams. The transmission of the 19 million messages entailed 87 million signalling operations. If it be assumed that no operations other than initial despatch and final receipt for delivery are performed by any combined offices, then the departmental offices performed $68\frac{1}{2}$ million operations ($87-18\frac{1}{2}$ millions) and the combined offices $18\frac{1}{2}$ millions, that is, combined offices disposed of more than $1\frac{1}{5}$ th of the total telegraph traffic of the country, and more than half of that traffic at the stage where the department deals directly with the public and receives payment for its services.

23. In so far, then, as the amalgamation has made possible a better control and the more efficient co-ordination of the activities of the departmental and combined telegraph offices, the result has been all to the good, but it must also be admitted that it has brought with it certain drawbacks. While on the one hand it has abolished the distinct and separate organisation of the traffic branch of the telegraph department and the post office and has unified the control of both, it has, there can be no doubt, introduced some cleavage between the two telegraph branches of traffic and engineering. These interbranch differences are probably less acute than the differences which used to exist between the two distinct departments, and tend to be minimised by the fact that the objects of the telegraph engineer and the telegraph traffic expert are in essentials the same—rapid transmission of traffic; and by the personal equation. Many of the traffic officers began their career in the department as engineers and are still liable at any time to go back to engineering, and this bond of common associations has prevented differences growing to any real magnitude.

24. The separation of the traffic and engineering branches is not peculiar to the Posts and Telegraphs Department. It is a feature of the railway organisation of this country, and of the telegraph organisation of many countries in Europe, and there is little evidence to show that the separation of these two branches in India, and the consequent differences between the personnel of the two branches, which may from time to time occur, have in any way prejudiced the efficiency of the telegraph service as a whole. In the year 1913-14, the last year of the old system of separate postal and telegraph departments, the working expenses of the telegraph department amounted to .833 of a rupee on each telegraph message, for a total traffic of $16\frac{1}{2}$ million paid messages. In the year 1923-24 these working expenses averaged Rs. 1.201 per message on 19 million messages—an increase of roughly 44 per cent. Even when full weight is given to the fact that the increase in total traffic in the latter year should have operated to reduce the average cost per message, such possible economy was far more than counterbalanced by the large increases in the pay of the departmental signalling staff which took place in January and December 1919 and of the engineering staff, in August 1919, December 1919 and January 1920 and by the greater cost of engineering material since the war. Thus though the cost per message has increased, the increase is more than accounted for by the general rise in wages and cost of material, and if these are discounted, the present figures show that there has been a relative improvement in the efficiency and economy of the administration. A number of witnesses who have appeared before the Committee have expressed the opinion that the separation of traffic from engineering in 1914 was a mistake, and, that so far from there being any increase in efficiency, there has been an actual loss of ground. Apart, however, from this general expression of opinion there is no concrete evidence in support of this view, and the figures just quoted seem to indicate that it is erroneous.

25. It is unfortunate that comparative statistics are lacking which would enable a definite conclusion to be drawn as to the relative efficiency of the traffic working before and since the amalgamation. We have seen a few figures shewing a comparison for a number of departmental offices of the numbers of messages despatched or sent out for delivery within periods of 10, 20 and 40 minutes of handing in or receipt, respectively.

These figures, derived from the tablet check returns—not, we are given to understand, a very reliable basis—certainly suggest that in 1923-24 messages were disposed of on the whole rather less promptly at the initial and final stages than was the case in 1913-14. They do not, however, afford any information as to the average total time of transit, and it is in this intermediate stage that much of the delays to telegrams normally occur. It is clearly unsafe therefore to rely confidently upon such evidence. Moreover there appears to be force in the contention of those who favour the existing system and ascribe any falling off in traffic efficiency, at least in part, to a deterioration of line maintenance. Here again we are hampered by the absence of comparable statistics. It has been pointed out to us that the figures which are available show a larger average number and duration of line faults in 1923-24 as compared with 1913-14 ; but the figures have not been worked out on the same basis and probably exaggerate the case. Many even of the engineer officers, however, have testified that maintenance has fallen off and this being so, we feel that it is difficult to furnish at the present stage a convincing reply to those officers of the traffic branch who assure us that if the line conditions were up to the old standard there would be no ground for complaints of traffic inefficiency. The line conditions should be improved by the re-introduction of the sub-divisional system and by the measures at present in progress to strengthen the engineering supervising staff. This should remove all ground for complaint against the condition of the lines, and we consider that should it thereafter prove that traffic is not transmitted with reasonable celerity then the case for the reversion of traffic control to officers of the engineering staff would be more convincing.

26. In the circumstances the Committee feel that they are unable to present to Government any strong case for a re-consideration of the position in the direction of separating the telegraph traffic branch of the department from the control of postal postmasters-general in order to re-unite it with the engineering branch and place both under the control of an engineering officer. The Committee have not allowed the existence of “ vested ” interests to prevent them from recommending the adoption of measures of reform where these are manifestly demanded by the facts, as, for instance, in the case of the leave rules or the revision of the ratio of general and local service telegraphists ; the extent to which such interests must be recognised and to which they may legitimately supersede manifest service requirements, must be a question for the consideration of those to whom this report is addressed ; but in the present instance they feel that a convincing case cannot be made out for a reversal of the existing administrative system, which would gravely prejudice the prospects of promotion to superior posts of members of the subordinate traffic staff—prospects upon the creation of which particular stress was laid ten years ago when the existing arrangements were introduced.

27. On the other hand to take the final step towards the complete amalgamation of the post and telegraph departments and re-unite traffic and engineering by placing both under the head of a combined postal and telegraph circle offers attractions as completing the amalgamation introduced in 1914. Such a system would reproduce in the circle that complete unity of control over all branches of the department which at present exists only in the directorate. It has been objected to on the ground that it would place the control of a technical expert in the hands

of a non-technical administrator, but as the directorate is already organised on this principle, which is recognised as working efficiently in other important branches of the public service, this objection is not in itself a vital one. The Committee have given such a scheme long and careful consideration but are not prepared to recommend its adoption, as the practical difficulties which would be met with in applying such a system to post and telegraph departmental organisation in India seem to them to be insuperable. Their considered opinion is therefore that the internal organisation of the Posts and Telegraphs Department should continue on the lines of the amalgamation of 1914, and that no further steps towards a complete fusion of the branches of the department are at present practicable.

CHAPTER III.

The Post Office and Railway Mail Service.

The Post Office.

28. Local control and supervision in the postal department depends for its performance and efficiency on two classes of postal officers—postal superintendents and first class postmasters. These two classes directly control and supervise the work of the post offices in rural and urban areas, respectively. Apart from the 19 postal superintendents working in the railway mail service, there are at present 152 postal superintendents with a reserve of 10. These 152 superintendents supply the heads of 127 postal divisions and 25 personal assistants to the heads of postal circles. Apart from the post offices at Calcutta, Madras, Bombay, Rangoon and Lahore, the postmasterships of which are special appointments carrying special rates of pay, there are 38 head post offices in charge of first class postmasters, whose pay is on a time scale of Rs. 350—650.

29. The administrative and executive charges of these 38 officers are confined to the head offices and the town sub and branch offices subordinate to them. The charges are self-contained and are entirely independent of the local postal superintendents, who have no direct control over the first class postmasters and exercise no supervision over their work; except in so far as they are required to verify their office accounts twice a year. The first class head post office with its town sub and branch offices is a complete unit, and the postmaster in charge carries on his duties under the control of the postmaster-general to whom alone he is responsible. His staff belongs exclusively to him, and is entirely distinct from, and independent of, the staff of the postal division controlled by the postal superintendent. Apart, however, from these 38 first class head offices, the rest of the postal organisation (excluding the railway mail service) is directly administered and controlled by superintendents of post offices, who are themselves responsible to the postmasters-general. Divisional charges include a number of head offices located in the larger towns but, where these are not first class head offices, the postmasters in charge of them take their orders direct from the postal superintendents, and the staff attached to such offices is a part of the divisional staff and liable to be posted by the postal superintendent to any post office in the division.

30. This system differs from that followed by the British post office, where the functions of control and supervision, which in India are exercised either by a first class postmaster or a postal superintendent, are unified in a system of "postmaster-surveyorships". These postmaster-surveyors, while exercising, as regards their own office, all those functions which, in India, are performed by a first class postmaster, stand in relation to all post offices in the area of which the head post office is the centre, in

the same position as does the postal superintendent in India to the post offices within his division.

31. The adoption of such a scheme for India has, at first sight, considerable attractions. It would, in the first place, put an end to a system by which a first class postmaster is in charge of the offices in a single town, while the offices in the rural area, which are for the purpose of accounts subordinate to that head post office, are directly controlled by another officer. Also it would appear to offer a prospect of large economies in that its general adoption would result in a very large reduction in, if not the total abolition of, the existing cadre of superintendents of post offices.

32. These considerations resulted in the scheme being tried for the Poona head post office and postal division. The first class postmaster of the Poona post office was placed in charge of those offices in the Poona district which previously formed the charge of the postal superintendent of the Poona division. The experiment began on July 1st, 1923, and was abandoned as unsatisfactory on January 1st, 1925.

33. In spite of the failure of this particular experiment the wholesale adoption of the scheme for India has been warmly advocated by several witnesses who have appeared before the Committee, notably by representatives of associations representing the subordinate ranks of the postal service. These witnesses obviously regarded the postal superintendent as a mere post office and forwarding agency, or, even worse, as a duplicator of work, whose intrusion between the lower ranks of the postal administration and the circle office is an actual hindrance to postal efficiency.

34. The scheme, however, does appear to offer possibilities of economy which entitle it to close consideration, and the Committee have carefully weighed its advantages and disadvantages. The advocacy of the scheme has been very strong in the Bombay circle where the Poona experiment was made, and detailed suggestions as to how it might be applied to the whole of the Bombay postal circle have been received by the Committee.

35. The existing postal organisation of that circle may therefore be examined, and a rough computation made as to the actual cash savings that are likely to result from the adoption of a system of postmaster-surveyorships for that circle on the lines suggested to the Committee by the advocates of such a policy. Outside Bombay itself there are at present two head offices of which the postmasters are on a scale of pay of Rs. 350—650; four head offices on a scale of Rs. 250—350, seven on a scale of Rs. 175—225, and one on a scale of Rs. 145—170. Similarly there are 13 divisional charges under postal superintendents and one postal superintendent in reserve, i.e., there are 14 postal superintendents in all. The scheme submitted to the Committee proposes the re-grouping of the administrative units of the Bombay circle, and the formation of 32 head offices in charge of postmaster-surveyors, to borrow the British post office term, with the proviso that no incumbent of these 32 posts shall be on a scale of pay less than Rs. 250—350.

36. Taking the average pay of the appointments to be created or abolished on the adoption of such a scheme as a basis of our calculations,
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the financial result will be as follows :—

Posts created.

32 appointments of postmaster-surveyors on Rs. 250—250, average pay Rs. 316 2/3; monthly cost Rs. 10,133 1/3.

Posts abolished.

14 postal superintendentships on Rs. 250—700, average pay Rs. 461, monthly savings—Rs. 6,454.

2 posts of first class postmasters on Rs. 350—650, average pay Rs. 517, monthly savings—

Rs. 1,034.

4 posts of postmasters on Rs. 250—350, average pay Rs. 350 2/3, monthly savings—

Rs. 1,266 2/3.

7 posts of postmasters on Rs. 175—225, average pay Rs. 208 1/3, monthly savings—

Rs. 1,458 1/3.

1 post of postmaster on Rs. 145—170, average pay Rs. 161 2/3, monthly savings—

Rs. 161 2/3.

4 time scale clerical appointments on Rs. 35—120, average pay Rs. 71 2/3, monthly savings—

Rs. 286 2/3.

Total posts created 32 at a monthly cost of Rs. 10,133 1/3.

Total posts abolished 32 at a monthly saving of Rs. 10,661 2/3.

These figures show a monthly saving of Rs. 528; but the full cost of the scheme has not appeared in the above statement. For instance, the 32 postmaster-surveyorships are all calculated for on a scale of pay of Rs. 250—350 but as the framers of the scheme postulate that “the pay of the head postmasters shall in no case be less than Rs. 250—350”, it is a fair inference that they contemplate to pay to some, at least, of the 32 postmaster-surveyors considerably more than this. They also suggest that “at the larger head offices, such as Poona, Ahmedabad and others, whom some of the personal duties of the head postmasters may be delegated” and again, that “the deputy postmaster in each head office should be granted a duty allowance of from Rs. 50—75 per month to perform the personal duties of the head postmaster, during his absence on inspection tours” and again, that “the question of suitably increasing the pay of the sub-divisional inspectors compatible with the increase of responsibility will have to be simultaneously reviewed”.

37. If all these additional items of expenditure are taken into account it seems that the scheme offers small hope of economy in the pay and allowances of staff. The calculations omit any reference to the clerical staff of the superintendents' offices. In a superintendent's office there are

usually three or four clerks. If the latter figure is adopted, this will give 52 clerks for the 13 divisional superintendents' offices of the Bombay circle, outside Bombay, and these 52 clerical appointments will not be required if the scheme is accepted. On the other hand the scheme definitely postulates that each of the head postmasters (postmaster-surveyors) will require one extra clerk for his assistance. This will absorb 32 of these 52 clerical appointments. Further it seems extremely probable that the larger of the postmaster-surveyorships will require more than one extra clerk. The result would be that all the clerical appointments set free by the abolition of the superintendents' offices would be required in the offices of the postmaster-surveyors and it does not appear that there will be any saving under this head. There will, however, undoubtedly, be a saving in the rent at present paid for 13 divisional office buildings, which at an average rent of Rs. 60 per mensem each, cost Rs. 9,360 per year.

38. Should the scheme offer increased efficiency this saving would strengthen the case for its adoption, but it is not, in itself, sufficient to warrant the abandonment of an organisation of long standing in favour of an innovation which, when tried, has proved a failure. The Committee are, however, far from convinced that increased efficiency would result. It is urged against the existing system that the sub-divisional inspector is really the master of the situation, and not the superintendent, since the latter is tied to his office and can only endorse the action of the sub-divisional inspector. If, however, the superintendent is so far immobilised by the charge of an office with a staff of not more than 4 clerks, as to make him practically impotent in his division, the position of a postmaster-surveyor who, while at headquarters, would have to control a large and important post office with a numerous staff, would be much worse; and such control as the superintendent is now able to exercise over the sub-divisional inspectors would, for the postmaster-surveyor, be almost impossible.

39. Further, the public will not tolerate the constant absence of the head of a post office, nor, in cases of personal complaints, will they agree to deal with any one except the postmaster himself. Departmental experience fully corroborates this assertion. Discipline would also certainly deteriorate. At present the superintendent stands aloof from the rank and file subordinate to him, and is therefore in a position to act without interest or partiality. The postmaster-surveyor, on the other hand, would work in the same room, and be as much a part of the staff of the head post office, as the clerks he is required to control, and his position could be neither disinterested nor independent. His impartiality would invariably be suspected in any case in which the postal staff of his own head office and of the offices of the district were involved, and his decisions would always be challenged as unfair. Further, the efficient solution of the most important question of improved postal facilities in rural areas—a matter which only recently has attracted the attention of the Legislative Assembly—would be greatly handicapped and retarded, since the head office would be the postmaster-surveyor's first care, and he would only be in a position to give to rural areas such time as he might be able to spare from what he would regard as the most important part of his duties. These difficulties appear so real that the Committee are inclined to accept the dictum of a witness to the effect that under such a scheme the postmaster-surveyor would be able to perform efficiently neither the duties of a postmaster, nor those of a superintendent.

40. The Committee are, therefore, of opinion that as there are reasonable doubts as to whether the scheme, if adopted, would result in any large financial economy ; and as there can be no doubt that the general efficiency of the administration would be impaired, as has been in fact proved by the failure and consequent abandonment of the experiment at Poona, the system of postmaster-surveyorships is not one which they can recommend for adoption in India. Conditions in Great Britain and India are so entirely different that the failure of a scheme which has proved a success in the former, when tried in the latter, need occasion no surprise. It is not the first, and it will certainly not be the last, of those western organisations which, when plucked up by the roots and transplanted to this country, have failed to flourish.

41. The Committee are, therefore, of the opinion that the present dual organisation of divisional superintendents and first class head postmasters should continue. It has no doubt anomalies, but, on the whole, it may be said to work satisfactorily. At the same time they are convinced that a good deal more can reasonably be expected from postal superintendents. Until within the last few years these officers were required to inspect the more important offices in their divisions at least twice a year, but their inspections have been gradually curtailed, and they are not now required to spend more than 85 days in a year in inspection. These limits were imposed partly in the interests of economy, and partly with the idea that the time set free by this reduction in the number of inspections might be utilised by superintendents for giving more personal attention to public complaints, the investigation of fraud and loss cases, and the consideration of the general development of postal facilities in their divisions.

42. These objects have not been fully realised. The increase of frauds and losses which has been a disquieting feature of the department in recent years has been attributed very largely to the decrease of the superintendents' inspections. Irrespective of the fact that such inspections, if properly carried out, may detect fraud, or at least put an end to laxities which, if allowed to continue unchecked, develop into, or facilitate, actual fraud, there is no doubt that the mere fact that an office is liable to be inspected is in itself a deterrent. At present this deterrent is so remote as to exercise little real influence, since when the superintendent has finished his inspection of an office, the staff may confidently expect to be left to themselves for the next twelve months. It is this long period of isolation which creates at once the temptation and the opportunity. "*Nemo repente fuit turpissimus*" is as true of postal officials as of any one else, and it is a feature of the majority of their lapses that the original intention was probably not criminal. What usually happens is that a man borrows some of the office cash to meet some private emergency, with the full intention of re-paying it. He is tempted to do so by the knowledge that so long as the deficit is made good by the time the next inspection is due, the irregularity is not likely to be detected. In many cases this, no doubt, actually happens, and the money is duly returned, but the ease and safety of such transactions encourage their repetition, until the official finds himself hopelessly compromised by the fact that he has borrowed more than he can possibly repay, or some fortuitous incident brings matters to a head and leads to his detection. Frequent inspections and the possibility that an officer may at any moment visit the office make such irregularities so risky that they offer little temptation ; but the existing system has reduced the risk to a minimum.

43. The curtailment of inspections and of the movements of the postal superintendents may have produced some small economy by saving in travelling allowances, but the increase of frauds and consequent progressive demoralisation of the staff seems to be a high price to pay for this result. Apart from direct restriction of his movements, the recent revision of travelling allowance rates has resulted in reducing the amount of travelling allowance which a superintendent can recover from the Government, and this further tends to confine him to his headquarters with the result that the efficiency of his supervision and control, and his personal knowledge of his subordinates, have greatly depreciated. The Committee are of opinion that these tendencies are all in the wrong direction and that the value of the work of a postal superintendent varies inversely with the time he spends at his headquarters.

44. The vital necessity of inspections, if a superintendent is to perform his duties efficiently, and the desirability that he should acquire a first hand personal knowledge of local conditions and of offices in his charge has long been recognised by the Department. Paragraph 291 of the Post Office Manual Vol. II contains specific instructions to this effect and runs as follows :—

"*Touring Season.*—The inspection of the post offices within the limits of his division is one of the chief duties of a superintendent, and in order to perform this duty efficiently it is necessary that he should spend a large portion of the year on tour. In many parts of India there is some season of the year during which travelling is almost impossible, and a superintendent may therefore be excused during that period from systematically inspecting offices situated in the interior, but during the touring, or fair weather season, he must arrange to visit as many post offices as possible, and in case of emergency he must be prepared to go to any office at any time."

This paragraph clearly indicates that, so far from there being any desire to restrict the movements of a superintendent, physical causes alone were accepted as an excuse for his remaining at his headquarters.

45. The close personal supervision by the superintendent of his staff in all parts of his division must result in increased efficiency and the consequent diminution of public complaints and frauds. To curtail a superintendent's movements and inspections in order that he may have more time to deal with complaints, or fraud cases, seems merely to inaugurate a vicious circle. Frauds and complaints ought to be dealt with before they occur, that is to say, it is the prevention and not the investigation of such cases that ought to be the first duty which the department demands from its superintendents. Further, by immobilising the superintendent at his headquarters the sub-divisional inspectors have been given an opportunity to arrogate to themselves a most undesirable independence. They are now the men on the spot, and, as such, the effective control lies with them. This is conducive neither to efficiency, nor to the contentment and well-being of the staff, and it is most desirable that this state of things should be terminated without delay by allowing the superintendents to resume their proper functions. For this purpose, it is not necessary that superintendents should again be called upon to carry out the same mass of detailed inspection work which was expected of them

prior to November 1924, when the inspection work was curtailed to 85 days in a year. What now seems desirable is that each of the inspections now carried out by a superintendent should be followed at a reasonable interval by a second visit to the office inspected. At this visit no detailed inspection of the whole office should be required, but, instead, a personal investigation as to whether all defects pointed out in the original inspection have been removed or not, and the recording of a brief note in the order book of the office showing in detail whether the local staff has, or has not, taken action to remove such defects. Many inspecting officers consider that they have done their duty by recording as their inspection note a series of pious hopes that this or that defect may be removed, or, in future avoided, and regard it as no part of their work to take effective action towards the desired result, or to ensure that others shall do so. Inspections are almost valueless if they only detect irregularities but do not result in their removal, and by insisting on a system of "follow up" subsidiary inspections, it seems to the Committee that it should be possible to bring home to superintendents their responsibility, not only for detecting faults, but for seeing that effective action is taken for their removal.

46. Apart from these regular inspections, to be followed later by subsidiary inspections directed to specific points only, the Committee are of the opinion that superintendents should be encouraged to move about in their divisions as much as possible and should be given a free hand to inspect any office at any time. Officers must be trusted, and to prevent an officer from carrying out his duties because he is suspected of being anxious to do so only in order to earn travelling allowance is a pitifully short-sighted policy. It may result in the saving of a few rupees in travelling allowance but it wastes the salary of the officer, a far larger item, by depriving him of half his value and efficiency, and no true economy results. The existing travelling allowance rules are not such as to encourage touring for its own sake, and it can safely be left to heads of circles to see that superintendents arrange their tours in such a way that travelling allowance charges are kept at a minimum. Subject to this control a superintendent should be encouraged to tour as much as possible, and to familiarise himself at first hand with local conditions. This is now especially necessary, since the Department is pledged to a policy of extending postal facilities in rural areas, and the efficient and economical organisation of these facilities must depend chiefly on the local knowledge of postal superintendents. If that knowledge is defective, extravagance and waste of money will certainly result.

47. The Committee are also of the opinion that the time has come for the overhauling of existing divisional boundaries. Communications and methods of transport have improved, and the mobility of the superintendents has, in consequence, increased. During the last century the difference of the speed of transport over a good road and a railway was the difference in the speed of a horse and a railway train. To-day the motor cycle or car takes the place of the horse, and frequently provides quicker transport than a railway. The Committee have not a sufficiently detailed local knowledge to make specific recommendations as to how divisional charges should be re-adjusted, or in what cases inspectors might advantageously be substituted for superintendents, as has been suggested by some witnesses, more particularly with regard to town superintendents, but they are of opinion that there are prospects of considerable economies by enlarging the area of divisional charges and so reducing the number of superintendents, and would suggest that heads of circles should be called upon to

submit to the Director-General concrete proposals on these lines. Until such proposals have been submitted and accepted, it is impossible to forecast what actual savings may be expected.

48. The Committee understand from the Accountant-General that he has under consideration proposals for the introduction of a scheme of Local Audit, with perhaps four or five local audit groups in each postal circle. It has been suggested that under such a scheme the superintendents of post offices might be relieved of work which could be better done by trained audit inspectors, and that their numbers might be correspondingly reduced. The pay of the audit staff would probably be lower than that of the superintendents whom they would replace. This idea needs elaboration and examination by Government in the light of both audit and executive requirements before any definite opinion could be formed; but it appears to the Committee to be probable that such a measure would be conducive both to improved efficiency and economy. It is suggested that the question be pursued and that the decision be allowed for in the revision of the postal divisions recommended in the preceding paragraph.

The Railway Mail Service.

49. The Railway Mail Service is at present organised in three circles, the headquarters of which are at Calcutta, Poona and Ambala respectively. Each circle is under the control of an administrative officer of the rank of deputy postmaster-general. These three deputy postmasters-general are assisted by nineteen superintendents of the same rank and pay as postal superintendents, with whom they are interchangeable. Of these superintendents, three are stationed at the three circle headquarters and work as personal assistants of the deputy postmasters-general, while the remaining sixteen are each in charge of a Railway Mail Service division. The Railway Mail Service branch of the Postal Department was first created in 1870 and its history up to November 1st, 1906, when the first great change in its organisation took place, and the necessity for this change, are detailed in a letter No. 385-S.-Ap., dated 1st November 1906, from Mr. C. Stewart-Wilson, Director-General of the Post Office, to the Government of India. The relevant paragraphs of this letter run as follows:—

"(2) This branch of the postal service was first created in 1870 as the 'Frontier Travelling Post Office' in charge of an officer called 'Superintendent' on Rs. 600 a month. In 1877 his title was altered to 'Chief Superintendent, Travelling Post Office', and his pay fixed at Rs. 750 rising to Rs. 1,000 a month. From 1880 he has been paid Rs. 1,000 rising to Rs. 1,400, and has been designated 'Inspector-General of the Railway Mail Service' but worked also as an Assistant Director-General in the Direction till 1890. For the last sixteen years there has been no change in the organisation of the service except that in 1905, in consequence of the recommendations of the Committee referred to below, the Inspector-General was given a Deputy to assist him. In the meantime, however, the work of the Inspector-General had been curtailed by the withdrawal of Burma (1877-78), Punjab (1899), Assam (1885), Eastern Bengal (1886), Kathiawar (1892), and (from time to time)

of several unimportant and isolated lines in various parts of India from his sphere of administration, so that he now controls sorting over only about two-thirds of the Railway Mail Service mileage in India, excluding Burma. In other words, the continuance of the old organisation was possible only by the use of Procrustean methods.

- “(3) The use of such methods can be justified only by success, and cannot be defended in the case of the Indian Railway Mail Service, for it has been felt for years past by all responsible postal officers that this branch of the department has not been giving the assistance which it ought to give in the development of the post office. It will readily be understood that this has caused much anxiety, as the main duty of the post office is to carry correspondence expeditiously and correctly, and in order to do this, it must necessarily possess an efficient sorting service.
- “(4) The chief defect which has been urged against the present system is that it does not permit of constant and close co-operation between its controlling officer and the heads of postal circles and railways; of sufficient control over the local Railway Mail Service superintendents; or of proper care in the preparation of sorting lists; while the Inspector-General has his time so occupied in the impossible effort to keep up to his work in these directions that he has no leisure to think out, or try, new methods, so that sorting work is still done on old fashioned and inferior lines.
- “(5) The circumstances of Burma make the separation of its Railway Mail Service from the rest of India almost necessary, but the most that can be said in favour of separation in the case of the Punjab, Eastern Bengal and Assam is that the very evident disadvantages arising from it have at least been considerably less than those which would have ensued, had the control continued in the hands of the Inspector-General. Some years ago the evils arising from defective control had become so patent that the Postmasters-General of Madras and Bombay asked urgently that the Railway Mail Service in their circles should be transferred to themselves, though experience had shown that this was at best a very partial remedy for the evil. These proposals were not sanctioned, but every year the complaints from heads of postal circles against the existing system grew louder. In May 1904, Sir Arthur Fanshawe assembled a committee at Allahabad under the presidency of Mr. Kisch to discuss what should be the future organisation of the Railway Mail Service.
- “(6) The proceedings of this committee were forwarded to Government with my predecessor's letter No. 2198-Ap., dated 8th September 1905. Its conclusions may be briefly summarised as follows :—

It is not desirable to decentralise the Railway Mail Service on the lines followed in the Punjab. The Railway Mail Service

all over India, with the exception of Burma, should be centralised, though it would be open to the Inspector-General to ask heads of circles to undertake the working of isolated and branch sorting or transit sections of purely local importance.

The Railway Mail Service should remain under the charge of a single inspector-general who should be given the pay and status of a postmaster-general, and should be assisted by a deputy inspector-general. A time will come when this organisation will no longer suffice and the Railway Mail Service administration will then have to be divided among two or more inspectors-general with the pay and status of deputy postmasters-general, working under the control of a Railway Mail Service Branch in the Direction.

- “(7) Acting on the recommendations of this committee, in September 1905, Sir Arthur Fanshawe asked the sanction of Government to the creation of a new appointment of Deputy Inspector-General. The delay in making this application was due to the fact that Sir Arthur had grave doubts whether it was wise merely to patch up the old organisation rather than devise a new one suited to present conditions. On mature consideration, he thought it right that the recommendations of the committee should be tried, especially as something had to be done at once, and the appointment of a deputy to the Inspector-General could not but improve matters to some extent.
- “(8) The assistance given by the Deputy Inspector-General came none too soon, and, within a year, several very necessary reforms have been carried out with the help of this officer. At the same time the duty of seeing personally that the greatest possible use was made of this new appointment and the fairest trial given to the recommendations of Mr. Kisch's committee has given me an opportunity, which few others have enjoyed, of examining the work which is done by the Railway Mail Service and the way in which it is done; as also of considering what it should do and how it should be done. In carrying out this task I had the advantage of having personally administered the Railway Mail Service in the Punjab for several years, and of being constantly in touch with Mr. Sheridan, Deputy Inspector-General, whose close knowledge of Railway Mail Service work, eagerness to improve matters, and ingenuity in devising efficient improvements, have been of the greatest value. The result has been that I have been forced to the conclusion that the present organisation is unsuited to modern requirements and that it requires, not the patching suggested by Mr. Kisch's Committee, but complete overhauling. I also consider that it is now necessary to extend the sphere of work of this important branch of the postal service by entrusting, as far as possible, not merely such postal articles as happen to require train transit, but all the non-local sorting of India, to its control.

and effort almost impossible ; and, as the administrative local heads of the Railway Mail Service are of a status inferior to that of postal circle officers, there is an inevitable tendency that their suggestions shall carry less weight with the Directorate, and where differences occur, the scales tend to be weighted in favour of the latter. The Railway Mail Service personnel also feel that their interests cannot be represented with the same force as those of their postal brothers. As a result, and owing to the fact that the Railway Mail Service is not so well paid as the ordinary postal service, and has a lower standard for recruitment, there is a tendency to regard it as the Cinderella of the Department. These difficulties might be removed, either by once more placing the Railway Mail Service as a whole under the control of a single officer of the status of a Postmaster-General, that is to say, by reviving the system of one Inspector-General, Railway Mail Service, for the whole of India, or by placing the existing Deputy Postmasters-General, Railway Mail Service, under the control of postal Postmasters-General. The fact that the first system has been tried and abandoned as unsatisfactory appears to the Committee to furnish adequate grounds for not reverting to it so long as any alternative remains.

53. The second proposal does, however, suggest an alternative which appears to offer considerable attractions. To make over the control of the Railway Mail Service to Postmasters-General is a course which, in the past, has been strongly advocated by many distinguished officers of the postal department, including Sir Arthur Fanshawe, Mr. Doran, and the present Director-General, Sir Geoffrey Clarke. The suggestion was also specifically dealt with at two conferences of Postmasters-General held in 1916 and 1920. At the first of these conferences there was an actual majority of Postmasters-General in favour of the scheme, while of the eleven officers, who attended the second, six were in favour of it. As, however, opinion was on each occasion divided, no definite action was taken by the Department. It was no doubt felt that the difficulties of adjusting the Railway Mail Service charges to coincide with the various postal circles were of a very formidable nature. In fact the scheme depended for its practicability on the solution of a number of problems, the more important of which were as follows :—

- (1) The adjustment of Railway Mail Service sections in such a way as to make them coterminous with postal circles, and the designation of sections in each circle.
- (2) The control of the foreign mail sections and questions relating thereto.
- (3) The issue of high officials' tour orders, and through sorting lists.
- (4) Correspondence with the different railways regarding haulage, postal accommodation, and rolling stock.
- (5) The control of Railway Mail Service sections on through trunk lines.

54. It must be admitted that these are very real difficulties in the way of any attempt to make over to each Postmaster-General the whole of the Railway Mail Service organisation working within the limits of his

postal circle. If, however, the scheme is modified in the direction of placing only those Postmasters-General in charge of Railway Mail Service work, whose headquarters are located at the headquarters of the more important railway administrations, and giving them control of all Railway Mail Service work on the railway systems administered from those headquarters, the solution of these questions is at once greatly simplified. Such a system would require only an alteration in the broad lines of Railway Mail Service organisation and would not greatly disturb the existing details of its administration. The following steps would be necessary to give effect to it :—

- (1) The placing of the three existing Deputy Postmasters-General, Railway Mail Service, under the direct control of the Postmasters-General, Bengal and Assam, Bombay and the Punjab.
- (2) The transfer of the office establishment of the Deputy Postmaster-General, Railway Mail Service, Eastern Circle, to the office of the Postmaster-General, Bengal and Assam, of the office establishment of the Deputy Postmaster-General, Railway Mail Service, Northern Circle, to the office of the Postmaster-General, Punjab, and of the office establishment of the Deputy Postmaster-General, Railway Mail Service, Western Circle, to the office of the Postmaster-General, Bombay.
- (3) The revival of the old Southern (Madras) Railway Mail Service circle to be placed under the Postmaster-General, Madras.

55. The adoption of these arrangements would mean that the Postmasters-General, whose headquarters are at the headquarters of the more important through railway systems in India, would control the Railway Mail Service organisation working over those systems. Thus the Postmaster-General, Bengal and Assam, with his headquarters at Calcutta would control the Railway Mail Service working over the East Indian Railway, the Bengal-Nagpur Railway, and the Eastern Bengal Railway. The Postmaster-General, Punjab, with his headquarters at Lahore, the Postmaster-General, Bombay, with his headquarters at Bombay and the Postmaster-General, Madras, with his headquarters at Madras would similarly control, respectively, the Railway Mail Service working over the North Western Railway, Great Indian Peninsula and Bombay, Baroda and Central India Railways, and the Madras and Southern Mahratta Railway. As regards those railway systems, the headquarters of which are situated at places other than Calcutta, Bombay, Madras or Lahore, the Railway Mail Service organisations which work over them would be controlled by the Postmaster-General who takes over that Railway Mail Service circle to which they belonged under the old arrangement of four Railway Mail Service circles. This solution of the problem seems to avoid those difficulties which would be met with in any scheme for dividing control of the Railway Mail Service among all Postmasters-General. Thus it will not necessitate the re-adjustment of Railway Mail Service sections to make them coterminous with all postal circles or the alteration of their designations.

56. The old division of the Railway Mail Service into four circles will be revived and these will be made over, as they stand, to the Postmasters-General, Bengal and Assam, Bombay, Madras and the Punjab. The control of the Foreign Mail section, which is a through section, will be in the hands of the Postmaster-General, Bombay. The issue of tour orders and through sorting lists will be undertaken by the four Postmasters-General, instead of by the Deputy Postmasters-General, Railway Mail Service, as at present. Correspondence with different railways regarding haulage, postal accommodation and rolling stock, will be facilitated in the case of Bombay and the Punjab by the fact that the officers controlling the Railway Mail Service will have their headquarters at Lahore and Bombay, the centres of the railway administrations, and not at Ambala and Poona as at present, and for the whole of the Railway Mail Service organisation by the fact that a Postmaster-General, owing to his superior official status, will be in a stronger position to deal with the various railway administrations than a Deputy Postmaster-General. The control of Railway Mail Service sections on through trunk lines will follow the existing practice, and offers no special difficulties.

57. This scheme will produce definite economies both in office staff and in supervision. As regards the latter it will be necessary to place in the offices of the four Postmasters-General, to whom the Railway Mail Service administration is to be made over, an officer with Railway Mail Service training and experience to assist them in the work. Such an officer might be either of the status of a deputy postmaster-general or of a superintendent. The Committee think that, at first at any rate, until the full effects of the scheme have been ascertained by actual experience, it will be desirable that this officer should have the status of a deputy postmaster-general. If this suggestion is adopted the scheme will result in the creation of the appointment of one deputy postmaster-general for the office of the Postmaster-General, Madras, on a pay of Rs. 800—60—1,400, and the abolition of the posts of three Superintendents, Railway Mail Service, on an initial pay of Rs. 250, at present working as personal assistants to the Deputy Postmasters-General, Railway Mail Service, and each drawing a duty allowance of Rs. 100. There will thus be a monthly saving of Rs. 250. The retention of the three appointments of personal assistants will be unnecessary, as the various sections of the offices of the Deputy Postmasters-General, Railway Mail Service, will be absorbed into the corresponding sections of the circle offices and the personal assistants of the Postmasters-General will divide among themselves the work now done by the personal assistants of the Deputy Postmasters-General, Railway Mail Service. If on the other hand, it is agreed that a Postmaster-General in charge of Railway Mail Service will not need as his assistant for Railway Mail Service work an officer of a higher standing than a superintendent, the savings will be much larger, as the three appointments of Deputy Postmasters-General, each on Rs. 800, can be abolished, and only one extra appointment of a superintendent on Rs. 250 *plus* a duty allowance of Rs. 100 will have to be created in order to provide a Personal Assistant, Railway Mail Service, for the Postmaster-General, Madras. This will result in a monthly saving of Rs. 2,400 as against an additional monthly expenditure of Rs. 350, *i.e.*, a net monthly saving of Rs. 2,050. As however it will not be possible for a Postmaster-General to undertake the control of the Railway Mail Service unless there is a substantial delegation of powers to his subordinate, and as a superintendent

will not, as a rule, have the necessary experience or aptitude for the exercise of wide powers in the name of the Postmaster-General, the Committee are of opinion that the appointments to be abolished should be those of the personal assistants of the Deputy Postmasters-General, Railway Mail Service, and not those of deputy postmasters-general.

58. There will also be a considerable saving in clerical staff and other establishments. At present each of the offices of the Deputy Postmasters-General, Railway Mail Service, is in charge of a head assistant, but on the amalgamation of these offices with those of the Postmasters-General, the retention of these appointments will not be necessary, as the personnel will be controlled by the office superintendents in charge of the Postmasters-Generals' offices. The abolition of these appointments will result in a monthly saving of Rs. 750. Similarly there are now fifteen selection grade clerical appointments in the three offices of the Deputy Postmasters-General, Railway Mail Service, six of which are on a scale of Rs. 175—225 and nine on a scale of Rs. 145—170. When the offices are absorbed into those of the Postmasters-General, two of the higher selection grade appointments and one of the lower should be capable of reduction. The clerical staff of the three offices of the Deputy Postmasters-General, Railway Mail Service, consists of 145 men *plus* 15 record clerks. There are also 68 appointments in the menial establishments. It is impossible to forecast exactly how many of these appointments can be brought under reduction as a result of the proposed amalgamation, but an ultimate possible reduction of 20 per cent. seems a very conservative estimate. If this supposition is accepted the final results of the amalgamation, supposing that posts of three Superintendents, each with a duty allowance of Rs. 100, are abolished and one additional post of Deputy Postmaster-General is created, will be roughly as follows:—

<i>Savings.</i>	<i>Rs.</i>	<i>Extra cost.</i>
Three superintendents' appointments on Rs. 250 <i>plus</i> Rs. 100 duty allowance. Monthly savings ..	1,050	One appointment of Deputy Postmaster-General on Rs. 800.*
Three appointments of head assistants, each on Rs. 250. Monthly savings ..	750	
Two clerical appointments in the selection grade on Rs. 175—225. Monthly savings ..	350	
One selection grade clerical appointment on Rs. 145—275. Monthly savings ..	145	

*It may be possible to avoid the creation of the extra appointment by a transfer of the deputy postmaster-generalship of the Shillong range in the Bengal circle.

If this were done Assam might be made into a minor postal circle under a telegraph officer, on the lines of Sind and Baluchistan, or, by some rearrangement of duties, the administration of the existing Bengal and Assam circle might be carried on with the help of two deputy postmasters-general, instead of three, as at present.

<i>Savings</i>	<i>Rs.</i>	<i>Extra cost.</i>
Nineteen clerical appointments on the ordinary time scale with average initial pay Rs. 41. Monthly savings	779	
Three appointments of record clerks on a time-scale with average initial pay Rs. 41. Monthly savings ..	123	
Thirteen menial appointments on an average initial pay of Rs. 16. Monthly saving	208	
Total monthly savings	3,405	
Total increased monthly expenditure	800	
Net monthly savings	2,605	
Net annual savings	31,260	

59. This is a conservative estimate, as not only is the number of appointments which will be found capable of reduction on the amalgamation of the Railway Mail Service circle offices with the circle offices of the Postmasters-General probably under-estimated, but for the sake of simplicity in making the calculation, the lowest rate of pay for each appointment, and not the average pay, has been taken into account; but even so, the annual saving to be expected works out at a not inconsiderable sum. On the other hand, if it is decided to abolish the appointments of three deputy postmasters-general, Railway Mail Service, and give to the Postmasters-General, who are to be entrusted with the administration of the Railway Mail Service, officers not above the rank of superintendent as their personal assistant, the annual savings will be increased considerably. The Committee are, however, of the opinion that this extra saving will be at the cost of efficiency and do not consider that a Postmaster-General will be in a position effectively to control and administer the Railway Mail Service except with the assistance of an officer of the standing of a deputy postmaster-general who will have the experience and status necessary to permit of the delegation to him of considerable powers.

60. Altogether apart from the mere cash savings to be effected by the adoption of this scheme, it seems to the Committee that it will bring with it administrative and other advantages of a very real value. The Railway Mail Service will become a living and integral part of the postal organisation and will no longer remain in a position of complete isolation. Co-ordination of the postal and sorting work in local areas will be possible and unity of control should lead to considerable economy in the direction of replacing travelling sorting sets by stationary sorting. It will also have a good effect on the morale of the Railway Mail Service staff, as the latter will feel that they are no longer in a position of inequality as

regards the post office staff, but have the same advocate with the Directorate, with the result that their interests will no longer suffer from a less weighty representation. Economies may also be hoped for in the cadre of Railway Mail Service superintendents, as when the Railway Mail Service is placed under the control of circle officers, it may be practicable for the latter to place the smaller sorting sections under the divisional postal superintendents, with the result that fewer superintendents, Railway Mail Service, may be required. The only administrative innovation which must accompany the scheme will be that the Postmasters-General, Railway Mail Service, will occasionally have to tour outside the area of their postal circles. This, however, should give rise to no practical difficulties but, on the contrary, should afford them valuable opportunities of maintaining close personal touch with those Postmasters-General who are not in direct control of Railway Mail Service sections, but in whose circle areas such sections are working.

61. Actual experience may, indeed, suggest the advisability of placing the Postmaster-General, United Provinces, in control of the Railway Mail Service organisations working over the railway systems, whose headquarters are situated in that province, e.g., the Bengal and North Western and Rohilkund and Kumaon Railways, which are practically confined to the United Provinces and Behar and Orissa postal circles. There will probably be little difficulty in making over the control of the Railway Mail Service organisation which works on these lines to the Postmaster-General, United Provinces, at the same time keeping the control of the Railway Mail Service on those portions of the Great Indian Peninsula and East Indian Railways, which are within the United Provinces provincial boundaries in the hands of the Postmasters-General, Bombay, and Bengal and Assam. If a separate organisation for the Railway Mail Service in the United Provinces is ultimately decided upon, the creation of a second deputy postmaster-generalship will then be necessary, and this would reduce the actual annual savings to be expected to result from the scheme to Rs. 21,660. But, if in addition to these savings, the scheme gives a definite improvement in efficiency (and the Committee are convinced that such a result will follow), it appears that its adoption will be well worth while.

62. There is no necessity for the department to commit itself to the acceptance of this scheme in its entirety at once. It would indeed be preferable that the change should be made step by step, as actual experience alone can show what practical difficulties are likely to be met with. But on the other hand an experiment should not be delayed and might well begin at once with the Madras Postal Circle. There the area covered by the Madras and Southern Mahratta and South Indian Railways is practically the area of the Madras Postal Circle, and the adoption of the scheme for Madras appears to the Committee to present no practical difficulties. If the scheme succeeds in Madras, it can gradually be extended to other circles and, if still successful, can finally be adopted for the whole of India. If on the other hand the experiment at any stage proves a failure, the department will not be finally committed and a reversion to the existing systems will present no difficulties.

63. The Committee do not suggest any interference with the arrangements at present existing in Burma. The Burma Railway system is entirely isolated from the railways of India and the present organisation

of the Railway Mail Service there under the control of the Postmaster-General, Burma, appears to the Committee to be the only practicable system, and is in accord with that which they have suggested for the whole of India.

Sorting Staff in Railway Mail Service.

64. Whether or not the recommendation which we have made regarding the control of the Railway Mail Service be accepted, an economy in the internal administration of this branch of the service might be effected by the substitution of a different class of staff for the men now employed on sorting duties.

65. The following statement has been compiled for us by the Director-General's office from information collected for the purpose :—

Name of Circle.	(a)	(b)	(c)	Number of R. M. S. sorters including those performing clerical or supervisory duties employed in		Total number of the staff.		REMARKS.
	Number of R. M. S. sorters employed on purely sorting duties.	Number of head sorters and record clerks.	Number of sorters other than those in statement (b) employed on other than purely sorting duties with brief details of such duties.	Running Sections.	Stationary offices.	Sanctioned.	Actually employed.	
Northern	733	177	Clerks in offices of Supdts. R. M. S. Mail agents bag clerks, asstt. record or sub-record clerks. 168	544	534	1,100	1,078	Posts kept vacant owing to retrenchment. Do.
Western	830	279	ditto 102	731	480	1,227	1,211	
Eastern	651	271	ditto 135	683	374	1,057	1,057	
Burma R. M. S. under P. M. G., Rangoon.	28	48	ditto 13	67	22	89	89	
Calcutta R. M. S. under P. M. G., Calcutta.	271	13	Transcribers Mail Escorts Supdt's office clerks, Bag clerks, etc. 85	15	354	369	369	
F. M. Division under P. M. G., Bombay.	77	12	Supdt's office clerks and 11 sorters to deal with closed mail articles.	92	8	100	100	
Total	2,590	800	514	2,132	1,772	3,942	3,904	

66. From this it will be seen that two-thirds of the entire Railway Mail Service staff are employed on purely sorting duties. These employees are men of the clerical class and are paid on time scales ranging between Rs. 40 and Rs. 130 *plus*, in a few cases, a local allowance of Rs. 10 or Rs. 5. The general average may perhaps be put at about Rs. 85. This scale of pay is inferior to that given to other clerical employees of the department, and as the work is of a kind which generally entails constant travelling and discomfort it is inevitable that it should have attracted only such men of the clerical class as could not obtain better paid or more congenial employment. In the result the Railway Mail Service sorters may not unfairly be described, as a whole, as being a staff of the lowest clerical type.

67. The sorting work is of a kind which could efficiently be done by men of the postman class—there are many “sorting postmen”

employed in post offices—and it should be possible to secure substantial economies by a change in that direction. A sorting postman receives the pay of an ordinary postman in the locality where he is employed *plus* an allowance of Rs. 7-8-0 per mensem; ordinary postmen are remunerated at different rates, ranging from Rs. 27—45, *plus* house rent Rs. 7 in the case of a few of the most expensive places, such as Bombay, to Rs. 16—22 in the case of the cheapest. Even taking the highest basis of all (that of Bombay) this represents an average of about Rs. 49-8-0 per mensem as the emoluments of a sorting postman.

68. We believe that the Railway Mail Service should therefore attract an excellent stamp of sorting postmen if they were offered an intermediate scale of pay, giving an average of, say, Rs. 60 per mensem, such a scale for instance as Rs. 40—2—80. The higher pay for men of this class would be justified by the more arduous nature of the work, while the average saving of Rs. 25 per mensem per man on the pay of the existing clerical type Railway Mail Service sorter would represent a gain secured, not by a sacrifice of efficiency, but by employing the best men of a lower class instead of the worst men of a higher.

69. If this measure were extended throughout the service it should result in a saving of at least Rs. 7,70,000 per annum, on the basis of the foregoing figures. We do not recommend that a definite decision on this step be taken at once, but we consider that the prospect of securing so large an ultimate saving makes it desirable that the experiment be tried on a scale sufficiently extensive to enable its success or failure to be determined beyond doubt.

70. For such an experiment to be successful it would be necessary to ensure that the right class of men is actually recruited, since to allow men who are really of the clerical type to enter the service as sorters on the lower scale of pay would only lead to constant dissatisfaction and unrest. We therefore recommend that recruitment be made only from the establishment of ordinary and sorting postmen.

CHAPTER IV.

The Directorate.

71. The Directorate of the Posts and Telegraphs Department comprises four distinct sections, the Postal, Telegraph Traffic, Telegraph Engineering, and Wireless Branches. The majority of the staff are stationed at Calcutta, whence it is intended that they shall be transferred to Delhi when the new Secretariat is ready for occupation, while the rest are attached to the headquarters of the Government of India with which they move between Delhi and Simla. The scheme of control is that indicated in the accompanying diagram (page 36).

72. The Committee may say at once that they see little prospect of effecting savings of expenditure in this office by any considerable scheme of re-organisation. They recognise the need for a strong and highly efficient centralised administrative control of the department, and they find no reason to believe that the several branches and activities indicated in the diagram are not necessary, subject to some measure of re-arrangement, or that officials carefully chosen for the different posts will not render an adequate return for their salaries. Some minor re-arrangements and reductions of staff may prove possible when once the bulk of the office is transferred from Calcutta to Delhi, owing to the bringing together of the entire staff and the consequent elimination of much written correspondence and noting and the substitution of freer personal communications.

73. If the view advocated in Chapter II of this report, in favour of the retention in its main outlines of the existing scheme of departmental organisation, be accepted, there does not appear to be any ground for a radical departure from the corresponding division of the Director-General's office into branches, as now, each charged with the control of the corresponding executive branches of the department. We thus consider that there should continue to exist separate Postal, Telegraph, Traffic and Telegraph Engineering branches. The question of retaining the Wireless branch as a separate entity is discussed in Chapter VIII and if the recommendations made there be approved this section of the work should be merged in the headquarters Engineering branch. The Railway Mail Service work is even at present controlled, through an Assistant Director-General specialist officer, by one of the Postal Deputies; and following on the views expressed in Chapter III we would merge this work still more completely in the ordinary postal business of the department.

74. A more far-reaching measure, however, which appears to us to be necessary, is the provision of better means than exist at present for the co-ordination of establishment, and of budget, work. Under the existing system the establishment questions which arise, and which in the broadest meaning of the term include all matters relating to the recruitment, postings, promotions, condition of service as to pay, leave, pension, etc., appeals or personal matters of the staff, are handled by a remarkable number of different officers, nearly all of whom moreover are chosen for their appointments because of their technical ability rather than for their special knowledge of regulations and skill in dealing with personnel.

75. Thus the Wireless officers deal with all establishment questions relating to Wireless staff; the different Deputies under the Chief Engineer each with all establishment questions relating to the staff subordinate to them; and so on throughout the department. There are six

different officers who submit cases dealing with such matters direct to the Director-General, and there is no automatic provision to ensure any uniformity in the attitude adopted in respect of such questions. Co-ordination by any general survey of the bearings of any particular proposal on the interests of the staff as a whole is left to be provided by the Director-General personally.

76. It is not pretended that this system is permitted in practice to work quite as badly as it might conceivably do, different officers do consult each other informally, or files in which manifestly general issues are raised, are not infrequently passed from one branch to another. But this is necessarily left in the main to the personal discretion of the different heads of branches who must often be unable to know what particular issues involve wider implications than may appear on the surface.

77. This system cannot work well. Efficiency and uniformity of policy and treatment of staff questions are of the first importance in such a department as that of the Posts and Telegraphs in which two-thirds of the total working expenditure is expenditure on staff, and in which there are so many offices and communities each on the alert to take advantage of errors or disparity of treatment. It is the Committee's strong recommendation therefore that steps be taken to concentrate in a special branch of the Directorate the disposal of at least those parts of the establishment work of the office in which there is a particular need for uniformity and co-ordination. Individual appointments, transfers, and promotions within the sanctioned cadres may perhaps best be dealt with entirely, as at present, by those branches and officers which would in any case have to be consulted in the particular cases even if this class of work were transferred to the new establishment branch; but all questions of a more general nature, and particularly questions relating to the framing and interpretation of rules, the revision of cadres, scales of pay, allowances, and of conditions of service in general should be dealt with by a special expert staff. Appeals even on purely personal matters so often involve the consideration of general questions, and their disposal so frequently bears on the disposal of, or may give rise to, other cases that it seems on the whole desirable that these too, though their general implications may not always be obvious, should be dealt with by the special branch. Natural cases even of a general character would arise not infrequently in which it would be unwise for the establishment branch officers to act without consultation with the heads of the technical branches, and it would be necessary to prescribe that this procedure should be adopted; it would be easier to ensure such prescriptions being made effective in the case of a special branch such as is here proposed than to rely on their necessity being perceived and observed by the larger number of officers now concerned.

78. An establishment branch such as is here contemplated by the Committee would relieve the technical branches of a very considerable share of their present work, and of what by many of the officers concerned is regarded as the least agreeable portion of it. It should be the charge of a selected officer of the status of Deputy Director-General under whom could work two Assistant Directors-General of whom one should be conversant with telegraph, and the other with postal service conditions.

79. It appears to the Committee that to provide such an establishment branch no additional expenditure is necessary. They are of opinion that

if the staff of the different technical branches were relieved of their present work in connection with personal matters it should be easy to find the Establishment Deputy Director-General and his two assistants by a reduction of the number of postal Deputy Directors-General from two to one, and by transferring one Assistant Director-General from the Postal and one from the Traffic Branch to the new Establishment Branch. It would also be necessary to transfer to this branch a reasonable part of the clerical staff now employed in all other branches of the office. The latter measure should indeed enable some saving of total clerical staff to be effected since the concentration of the establishment work in one place should lead to its being done with less waste of power and with greater facility.

80. The Committee have not thought it necessary to work out the scheme in detail as the first question to be decided is whether it should be approved at all, and the scope of the duties to be performed, but they are confident that a re-arrangement on these lines is feasible and is most desirable.

81. A somewhat similar measure appears to be very desirable in connection with the disposal of budget and accounts questions. In the Director-General's staff there is at present no one person or section of the establishment who is acquainted with the position in respect of these matters as regards the department as a whole.

82. The greater recognition now accorded to the importance of such matters and the stricter enforcement of responsibility for the control of expenditure in relation to the budget grants, and the complications attending questions of allotments and re-appropriations, for the satisfactory disposal of which a grasp of the position of the department, as distinct from a grasp of the position of its different branches, is often necessary, render it almost essential that there should be constituted a single Budget and Accounts Branch whose staff should be directly responsible to the Director-General while remaining in close liaison with the different headquarters branches.

83. Here also it should be possible to effect the change without increase of cost, since in each branch of the office are certain staff who deal with the sectional aspects of the matters in question. It is the Committee's proposal that these members of the staff should be brought into closer relation with each other and should constitute the personnel of the new budget and accounts section. The head of this branch might, it is suggested, have the status of an Assistant Director-General. Possibly some small increase of cost might be involved in such a promotion but the department should not hesitate to provide for this.

84. Incidentally the Committee would refer to a suggestion which has been made in some quarters that the posts of Assistant Directors-General might appropriately be filled by promotion within the headquarters office rather than by the introduction of departmental officers from outside. This does not commend itself to the Committee as a general proposition. It seems to them to be important that in an office of this kind contact should be retained as far as possible with the actualities with which the administrative staff are concerned, and they believe that this can best be done by insisting that as a general rule the higher officials of the directorate should be men who have firsthand acquaintanceship with the post and

telegraph executive work. Exceptional cases might, of course, be treated specially ; such a post for instance as that of the Assistant Director-General, Budget and Accounts, proposed in paragraphs 83 might well be filled by the promotion of a competent member of the head office staff. But normally the advancement to the upper grades in the department of members of the subordinate staff should be through the executive grades of the service.

The Controller of Telegraph Traffic.

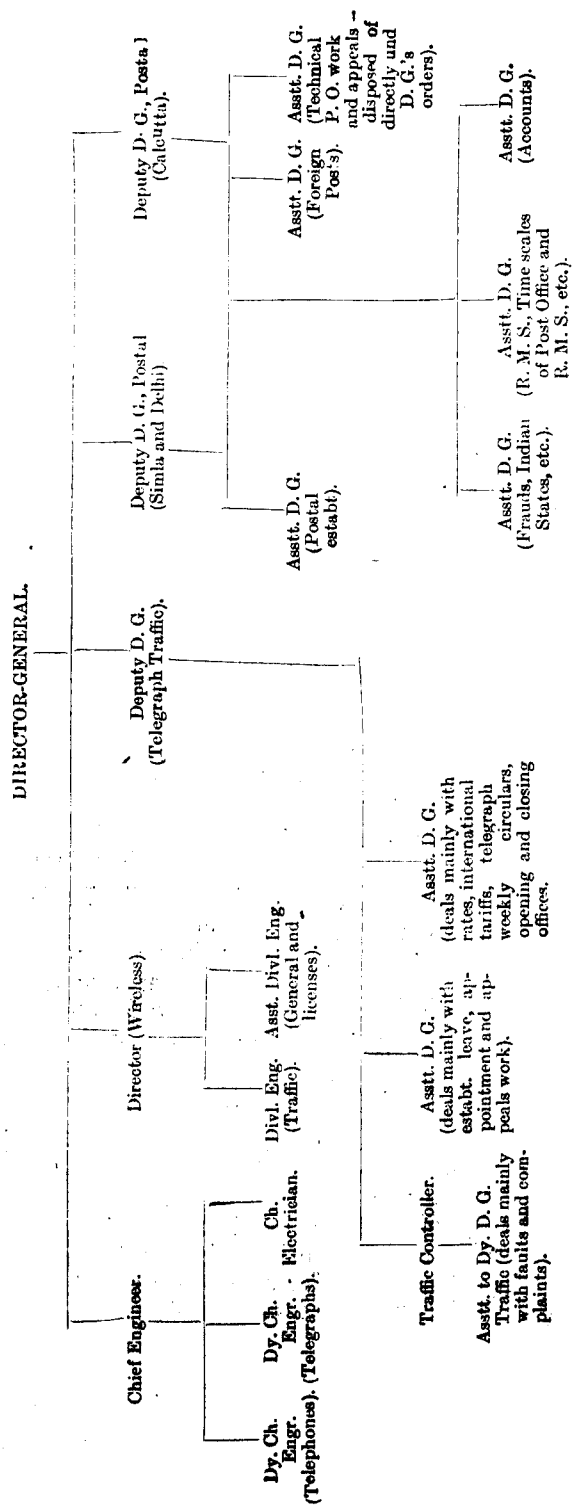
85. Telegraph traffic control as generally understood is control exercised by one or more central officers who receive frequent (for instance, in America, hourly) reports from the outlying main offices as to the state of their traffic. The Controller, in the light of these current reports, gives instructions for the routing of all traffic so as to minimise delay. The local officers are required to carry out the controller's instructions and there is no room for friction between any two offices the traffic of which he regulates.

86. Traffic control in this sense does not exist in India. The so-called Traffic Controller here is a touring officer of the Director-General's headquarters staff, who does not regulate the hour to hour routing of traffic but whose functions appear rather to be more those of a general assistant to the Deputy Director-General in dealing with matters of general administration. We have found no evidence of any special value being attributed to his operations from the traffic control point of view, though it is generally recognised that his visits to different offices enable him to give useful help in connection with staff questions. He appears, in fact, to have absorbed some of the duties of the Deputy Director-General (Traffic) and it appears doubtful whether this duplication is necessary.

87. If as we have proposed in paragraph 78 the Traffic branch is relieved of the bulk of the troublesome establishment work which now devolves upon it, the burden of the Deputy Director-General, Traffic, should be considerably lightened and it would even appear that this officer might be able to dispose of the regular administrative work, and to undertake such occasional touring as might be necessary, without the assistance of the "Controller" whose post could be abolished.

88. The Committee do not, however, feel justified in recommending an immediate decision to this effect. They are disposed to think, rather, that it would be best to arrange that the personal duties of the Traffic Controller and of the Deputy should be redistributed in such a way as to permit the functions of the former to assume more largely the character implied by the name, while the discharge of ordinary administrative and inspecting duties should devolve more extensively on the latter. After a reasonable trial of such an arrangement—for a period, say, of six months or a year—a decision could be taken upon a surer basis as to whether the lesser post need be retained at all.

Diagram referred to in paragraph 71.



CHAPTER V.

Telegraph Traffic.

(a).—Combined offices.

89. The importance of the part played by combined offices in assisting in the disposal of telegraph traffic in India has been noted in a previous chapter. As the name implies, a "combined" office is a post office which also sends and receives telegrams. The telegraph branch of such offices is manned by postal clerks who have been trained in telegraph signalling and are under the direct control of the postmaster in charge of the office. In many combined offices there are postal clerks who for a part of their attendance discharge purely postal duties, and for the rest of the time work as telegraph signallers. The average monthly pay of a postal clerk is Rs. 80 while that of a station service departmental telegraphist (taking the average of the higher and lower scales) is Rs. 112 and that of a general service departmental signaller is Rs. 168. In addition to pay a general service telegraphist is also supplied with free quarters, or with a house rent allowance of Rs. 35 per month in lieu thereof.

90. Thus there is a difference of Rs. 32 per month, or Rs. 384 per year in the pay of a postal signaller and station service telegraphist, and of Rs. 123 per month or Rs. 1,476 per year in the pay of a postal signaller and the pay and allowances of a general service telegraphist. These differences are very considerable, particularly in the case of the postal signaller and the general service departmental telegraphist, and it is obvious that where the former can replace the latter without detriment to efficiency, considerable savings are likely to result.

91. As regards efficiency, while it is admitted that postal signallers are not, as a rule, the equals of departmental telegraphists in Morse signalling and have no knowledge of high speed telegraph systems, it is the opinion of a large number of the witnesses examined by the Committee that postal signallers are sufficiently efficient for the class of telegraph signalling upon which they are employed. It must be remembered that the total number of messages sent and received daily by the telegraph branch of a combined office is usually not large, and that postal signallers are rarely called upon to dispose of any serious traffic pressure or to signal at a high speed. The Committee are prepared to accept this opinion as to the relative efficiency of the postal signallers as sound, more particularly since it is corroborated by figures which show that the percentage of mutilations which occur in messages signalled by combined offices does not differ appreciably from the percentage of mutilations in messages signalled by departmental offices.

92. The Department has long been alive to the important economies to be effected by the conversion of departmental offices into combined offices, where conditions permit, and where traffic is not of such bulk or complexity as to necessitate the employment of highly skilled but expensive departmental telegraphists. It has, however, been hampered in carrying through a steady programme of such conversions by two factors. The first of these has been a decline in telegraph traffic which has resulted in the Department being over-staffed with departmental telegraphists. As

the men who constitute this surplus are wholetime Government servants and cannot be turned adrift at a moment's notice : their services have had to be utilised somewhere and they have therefore been allowed to continue to man departmental telegraph offices which might probably have otherwise been converted into combined offices. The second factor has been want of space in existing postal buildings for the accommodation of a telegraph branch, and lack of funds, owing to retrenchment, for the construction of the necessary additional premises. With the approaching equilibrium of staff and traffic, as a result of the stoppage of recruitment, the first factor will disappear. As regards the second, the fact that a small initial capital expenditure will enable the department, by the employment of a cheaper, though relatively not less efficient, agency, to save large sums annually, makes it desirable in the interest of economy that projects for the conversion of departmental into combined telegraph offices should not be held up owing to difficulties in finding the usually very modest capital sums required for such new construction, or modification of existing postal buildings, as may be necessary before the conversion can take place. The Annual Report of the Posts and Telegraphs of India for the year 1923-24 shows that the conversion of 12 small departmental telegraph offices into combined offices resulted in an annual saving of Rs. 33,696, and the economies that may be expected from a steady prosecution of this policy are therefore very considerable.

93. The criteria necessary for a decision as to whether a departmental telegraph office is, or is not, required in a particular place, were clearly stated by Sir Lewis Tupper's Telegraph Committee ; which recorded the following opinion :—

“ Our opinion on the principles which should govern the opening and combining of certain offices is as follows :—We consider that no signal office should be departmental except for traffic, technical, military, strategical or political reasons. The telegraph service should meet the commercial and public interests and we consider that a departmental office is justified on the grounds of traffic when it has been found that an efficient service cannot be rendered by the postal staff. The efficiency of the service depends on the class of postal candidates recruited, the training which they undergo, and the supervision which is exercised over them.....Each proposal for the conversion of an office to departmental or combined should be considered on its merits.....The point for consideration in such cases is whether a reasonably efficient and reliable service can be offered to the public by a combined office and when this condition is satisfied there is no reason for having the office departmental. It is waste of force and money to keep a small office in charge of a well-paid departmental signaller if the work can be done efficiently by a cheaper postal signaller, and the question of converting such offices should be periodically examined as the work of the postal signaller improves in consequence of the higher standard to be introduced.”

94. That the service now rendered by combined offices is “ reasonably efficient and reliable ” there is no reason to doubt. Improved rates of pay have enabled the department to recruit a better class of men, the

training of such men has been improved by insisting on a higher standard for qualification as signallers, and supervision is more efficient owing to the introduction of a system of giving postal superintendents special instruction in telegraph traffic administration. The department is, therefore, now in a far better position to extend the conversion of departmental telegraph offices into combined offices than it was in 1906-07 when Sir Lewis Tupper's Committee sat. Of the five reasons which that Committee considered might justify the existence of departmental offices, the last three relate to military and political considerations, with which the Committee are not competent to deal. It will suffice to remark that if for purely military or political reasons the department is compelled to provide an office with a more expensive establishment than is justified by departmental requirements, there seems no equitable reason why those departments, whose demands are responsible for this extra expenditure, should not be required to make an equivalent contribution in order to cover it. There remain the traffic and technical reasons. As regards the former the Tupper Committee have defined the position by stating that a departmental office is justified on grounds of traffic when it has been found that an efficient service cannot be rendered by the postal staff. Technical reasons were not explained. Presumably the Committee considered that all “ testing ” and “ repeater ” offices must be departmental. This, however, seems unnecessary. Where traffic requirements can be met by a combined office, there should be no need to retain a departmental office simply in order to carry out tests or for “ repeater ” working. It would be more economical to convert such offices into combined offices and to attach to them the departmental technical staff necessary for conducting the tests or looking after the repeaters.

95. If this principle is accepted, then it follows that, apart from such few offices as it may be desirable to retain as departmental for military or political reasons, no office should be a departmental office unless the traffic is of such bulk and complexity that it cannot be dealt with efficiently by the postal staff. If such a policy is followed the result will be that only telegraph offices at important places and on main circuits will continue to exist as departmental offices and the smaller departmental offices will, as soon as possible, be converted into combined offices. The number of such departmental offices is at present considerable as may be seen from the following figures :—

Circle.	Total number of departmental offices.	Number of departmental offices with a total staff operation clerical and supervisory, of ten or less.
Bengal and Assam	24	17
Bihar and Orissa	4	1
Bombay	16	5
Burma	17	13
Central Circle	10	4
Madras	26	14
Punjab	29	14
Sind and Baluchistan	4	2
United Provinces	20	13
Total	150	83

The majority of these smaller offices do not appear to be departmental for military or political reasons, and the smallness of the staff they employ is *prima facie* evidence that the traffic with which they deal is not such as would be beyond the powers of a combined office. If all, or most of them, can be reduced to combined offices the effect will be to halve the number of departmental telegraph offices.

96. Apart altogether from the actual savings which would result there would also be some relief to the large departmental telegraph offices. The strength of the signalling staff of the telegraph department is arrived at by an estimate of the yearly traffic. This figure is divided by 42,000—the estimated annual message outturn of a departmental telegraphist—and the result gives the number of departmental telegraphists which Government are asked to sanction in order to deal with the traffic expected. Small offices cannot, however, be manned entirely on a traffic basis, since for the hours that they are open circuits must be attended to. Thus it happens that while the department as a whole is manned on a basis of signalling operations, the small offices have to be manned on a basis of circuit hours, with the result that the operating staff in small offices do not perform per man per year the basic number of signalling operations on which the total signalling staff of the department is calculated. For instance, in the Bengal and Assam circle during 1923, 12 small departmental telegraph offices disposed of 918,347 messages, and employed for this purpose 33 departmental telegraphists. Thus the average annual outturn per signaller was 27,828 messages. Or, to put the case in another way, although the number of messages disposed of by these 12 offices only required 22 telegraphists, in actual fact, 33 telegraphists were employed. It is therefore quite obvious that there must have been a shortage of staff elsewhere and that other offices were required to produce more than 42,000 messages per operator for the year in question. That they were able to do so was due to the installation of high speed signalling mechanical apparatus and a consequently higher average outturn of signalling operations by the staff.

97. The abolition of the small offices will greatly economise the staff of the department and the Committee are therefore of the opinion that the policy of converting departmental into combined offices should be vigorously and consistently pursued. It is, however, impossible for the Committee without the necessary local knowledge to make any detailed suggestions as to which offices should be immediately converted, but no time should be lost in calling upon heads of circles to review the position of all smaller departmental offices and to arrange for their early conversion into combined offices, except where there are special circumstances which make such conversion impracticable.

(b).—*General and Station Service.*

98. Prior to the year 1906 the signalling staff of the Telegraph Department was divided by two systems of classification, the one vertical and the other horizontal. The latter was based generally on a somewhat arbitrary appraisal of the men's capabilities as operators and was effected by a system of four grades, superior, good, average and indifferent, each carrying a different scale of pay. The last of the grades was merely a punitive grade and no appointments were made to it direct, but telegraphists were liable to be reduced to it for misconduct. The "average" grade

was that in which a telegraphist joined the service and his promotion to the "good" and "superior" grades was granted on the result of a general examination.

99. The "vertical" classification was into two branches, each of which was "horizontally" divided into the four grades mentioned above. These two branches consisted of a general service and a local service. Telegraphists of the general service were liable for service anywhere in India and Burma, while those of the local service were engaged only for service within the province in which they were recruited. On the recommendations of the Committee under Sir Lewis Tupper which sat in 1906-07 the "horizontal" classification was abolished. The "vertical" system, however, continued.

100. The terms of reference invited the opinion of that Committee as to "whether a strict local and non-pensionable service should be formed in the Presidency towns and other large centres" but the Committee rejected the idea of a non-pensionable service and, as regards the suggestion to organise a local service for towns, recorded the opinion that "we think it would be an administrative inconvenience if there was no power to transfer the men to another place." No recommendations dealing specifically with the local service were made beyond the suggestion that an experiment should be made of recruiting it from the ranks of postal signallers. The desirability of retaining the local service was not challenged, nor did the Committee record any opinion as to what percentage of the total staff of telegraphists should be composed of men in the general and local service, respectively.

101. The Telegraph Committee of 1920, however, gave a careful consideration to the question of local service. After noting the fact that the local service was not really local, since the unit of locality was not a particular place but a particular postal circle, the Committee made the following recommendations :—

"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 organisation shall consist of the two classes, general and station, the number in each class being placed, at the outset at any rate, at approximately $4\frac{1}{5}$ general and $1\frac{1}{5}$ station."

102. No details are available as to the calculations which gave the proportion suggested for the two services, and finally accepted by Government. The system was, however, challenged before the Telegraph Committee of 1921 and the complete abolition of the station service was advocated.

103. The question was thoroughly considered by the Committee and the conclusions arrived at were as follows :—

"The Committee are of opinion that, as the system of station service has been in force only for a short time, it is premature to consider the question whether it should be retained or not. The Telegraph Committee of 1920, after enquiry, advocated it and the Government after mature consideration have accepted it. No strong objection on principle is urged against it. It has the merit of being more economical than the general service. The Committee see no reason to urge a reconsideration of this question. Mr. Barton and Colonel Gidney are willing to let this question lie over for some time, but they would strongly maintain that the proportion should be fixed; namely $4\frac{1}{5}$ ths of the cadre, present and future, should always be general service, and should not be less. There are obvious objections to accepting that recommendation. What exact strength under each head will be needed can only be determined after the system, now introduced, has been tried for some years. The proportion of $4\frac{1}{5}$ ths and $1\frac{1}{5}$ th, as suggested by the Telegraph Committee of 1920, was only a suggestion as an approximate figure to suit existing conditions and protect the interests of men already in the service, both general and local.

"The requirements of the department and the inclination of men who enter service can be the only tests, and proportions cannot be determined with reference to the interests of men who are yet to enter the department. It is quite right to safeguard existing interests. The proportion will have to vary either way as conditions change. The Committee therefore are not prepared to accept the suggestion that this proportion should be maintained for all time or for future additions."

104. We are of opinion that the time has now come for a further consideration of the advisability, or otherwise, of retaining the proportions between the two services decided upon by the Committee of 1920 as suitable for the initial stages of the scheme. The difference in cost to the tax-payer of appointments in the two services is so appreciable that any inflation of the general service beyond the limits strictly required for the efficient working of the department seems to be an unwarrantable extravagance. The usual rate of pay of the station service signallers is Rs. 60—150 though for certain particularly expensive localities the pay is Rs. 10 higher,

that is, the average monthly cost of an appointment in the higher of the two scales is Rs. 117 and in the lower Rs. 107. The scale of pay of a general service telegraphist is Rs. 80—250, which gives an average monthly cost of such appointments as Rs. 168. In addition, the general service telegraphists receive either free quarters at the expense of the department, or a house rent allowance of Rs. 35 per month in lieu thereof. The total monthly cost of an appointment in the general service is thus Rs. 203, nearly double the cost of a station service appointment in the lower of the two station service scales.

105. It is thus obvious that any increase in the number of station service telegraphists which effects a corresponding decrease in the number of general service telegraphists must result in large aggregate savings. As already remarked, the Committee of 1920 did not publish the calculations by which they arrived at the proportion of the two services recommended by them. Probably the suggested proportion of $4\frac{1}{5}$ and $1\frac{1}{5}$ was based on the consideration that the station service was an innovation and, until actual experience showed that it was likely to succeed, it was felt that a modest beginning was all that was required. At present there are more than 500 station service telegraphists in the department, and the Committee understand that no difficulty is anticipated in obtaining men for this service as soon as normal recruitment is resumed.

106. As the training and the qualifications demanded by the department from a general service and a station service signaller are precisely similar, there can be no question as to the relative efficiency of the two services for discharging the signalling duties of the department. The general service telegraphist is given a higher rate of pay, not on the basis of the work he does, but to compensate him for the greater liabilities which he accepts. The conditions of station service offer the attractions of life-long residence at home and complete immunity from transfer. On the other hand the disabilities of general service are that a signaller will usually be employed away from his home, and is liable to transfer to any place in India or Burma at any time.

107. The present proportion between the two services means that the department maintains a signalling staff 80 per cent. of which is transferable. The only logical grounds on which the proportion of general service and station service signallers can be decided should be what proportions of signalling appointments are required to be transferable in the interests of the efficient administration of the Telegraph Department and what proportion of appointments cannot be filled by local recruitments.

108. It must at once be admitted that in certain parts of the Indian Empire, and at certain places where important Departmental Telegraph Offices exist, there is no adequate field of local recruitment available for the supply of station scale telegraphists. Burma may be quoted as an example: hill stations such as Simla, Ootacamund and Darjeeling; and frontier stations such as Quetta, Peshawar and probably Rawalpindi; but the number of telegraphists required to man departmental offices in such places is a very small proportion of the total departmental signalling staff. Thus a distribution statement of the staff for December 1924 shews that only 8 per cent. were employed in Burma; 3 per cent., in the hill stations of Simla, Darjeeling, Shillong, Ootacamund and Naini Tal, and 4 per cent., at Quetta, Peshawar and Rawalpindi. The total of these figures is only 14 per cent. of the total number of departmental telegraphists. Apart from

supplying the staff for departmental offices where local fields of recruitment for a station service do not exist or are inadequate, a certain proportion of the signalling staff must be transferable in order to meet local fluctuations in traffic and to enable the signalling force in offices to be augmented or decreased as traffic rises or falls.

109. From figures supplied to the Committee it appears that of the general service telegraphists attached to the four major postal circles, viz., Bengal, Madras, Bombay and the Punjab, approximately 34 per cent. are transferred annually, the majority of such transfers taking place within the circles. This high percentage of transfers is at present largely due to two factors; the first being the posting of staff to and from hill station departmental offices at the beginning and end of the hot weather, and the second the existence of a large number of small departmental offices which have no reserve staff of their own. Consequently when vacancies occur among the staff of such offices they have to be filled by transferring staff from other places. If the Committee's recommendation to convert the majority of small departmental offices into combined offices is accepted the necessity for transfers will be greatly diminished. The Committee are therefore of opinion that an ultimate proportion of 50 per cent. general service and 50 per cent. station service telegraphists should be the aim of the department, and that recruitment should now be so adjusted as to give this proportion as early as practicable.

110. A steady pursuance of this policy coupled with a methodical conversion of the small departmental offices into combined offices will mean that by the time the final proportions of 50 : 50 are reached the necessity for transfers will have so far diminished that it will be more than met by a staff half of which has accepted general service conditions. The final attainment of the proportions recommended will result in an annual saving on the present expenditure of approximately Rs. 7,00,000 in pay and Rs. 4,30,000 in house rent allowances or Rs. 11,30,000 in all. This saving is so considerable that no time should be lost in taking the preliminary steps towards its ultimate realisation.

(c).—*Employment of telegraph operators on non-operative duties.*

111. The Telegraph Committee of 1920 recorded the opinion that "for every hundred operative telegraphists added to the strength an addition of twenty-four non-operative telegraphists is necessary". The term "non-operative telegraphists" covers Baudot, repeater, and desk supervisors, testing telegraphists, telegraphists in charge of offices, instructors of training classes, etc. The data on which this conclusion was based are not available, and beyond stating that the recommendations were made after "careful examination" of the case, the Committee made no reference to the method of their calculations. The Government of India accepted the proposed percentage with obvious hesitation, and in their despatch to the Secretary of State, explaining the additional staff which they proposed to employ as a result of the Committee's report, wrote as follows :—

"The standard of 24 per cent. suggested by the Committee is not based upon any very logical grounds and for the present we propose to accept it provisionally and to treat it as subject to revision in the light of further experience."

112. On the 1st December 1924, 2,304 departmental telegraphists were employed on operative duties, and 491 on the non-operative duties detailed in the subjoined statement.

Number of Telegraphists employed on non-operative duties, with a brief statement showing the non-operative duties on which such men are employed.

	With allowance.	Without allowance.	Total.
1. Telegraphists holding charges of offices	69	nil	69
2. Instructors, telegraph training classes	26	nil	26
3. Testing telegraphists	43	nil	43
4. Baudot supervisors	72	nil	72
5. Wheatstone supervisors	3	nil	3
6. Repeater supervisors	92	5	97
7. Desk supervisors	60	9	69
8. Complaints section supervisors ..	4	nil	4
9. Press supervisors	6	5	11
10. Paid calls and refunds	nil	7	7
11. Assistant to despatch office T. M.'s in presidency offices	nil	11	11
12. Public counter and despatch office supervisors in large offices (not presidency offices)	6	2	8
13. Message drafts office	nil	5	5
14. Preparing morning reports, etc. ..	nil	2	2
15. T. M. O. supervisors	nil	6	6
16. Concentrators	nil	6	6
17. Booking and despatching in offices for which no separate clerks have been sanctioned	nil	27	27
18. Traffic supervisors	3	3	6
19. Asst. to supdts. or dy. supdts. ..	4	4	8
20. Testing learners	nil	4	4
21. Baudot learners	nil	6	6
22. Quarters and conservancy inspector ..	nil	1	1
Grand Total	388	103	491

113. The percentage of operators employed on non-operative duties was therefore actually 21.3 per cent. of the total operative staff. The Committee have visited three of the largest departmental telegraph offices, viz., those at Calcutta, Bombay and Rangoon, and from what they saw,

there, and from the evidence of witnesses who have appeared before them, have no hesitation in saying that a percentage of twenty-four of the total operative staff is excessive for the number of operators required on non-operative duties.

114. Apart from the evidence of witnesses and the impression formed by the Committee as a result of visits to the offices mentioned in the preceding paragraph, this conclusion is strongly supported by the fact that at a time when there is no shortage of operative staff and no temptation to divert operators required on non-operative duties in order to augment the number of signallers, the department is, in actual practice, only employing on non-operative duties 21.3 per cent. of the total operative force. Even this proportion seems to be due largely to the fact that operators are being employed on non-operative duties because they are not required at the instruments.

115. The Committee are of opinion that even with a percentage reduced to 21.3, the number of operators employed on non-operative duties is at present excessive. Where some technical experience is required in branches in which the bulk of the work is usually of a purely clerical nature, this can be supplied by having a technical expert in charge of the branch to whom all questions involving technical difficulties can be referred for solution. It is not necessary to man the branch throughout with technical experts when the bulk of the work is of a purely non-technical and clerical nature.

116. The precise extent to which the application of this principle would enable the number of operators shewn in the preceding statement to be reduced must be a matter for detailed departmental examination; as an indication of the probable result the Committee would estimate that the reductions might apply to the following items in the statement:—

Item No.	Duty.	No. of operators actually employed.	No. of operators necessary.
7	Desk supervisors	69	40
8	Complaints supervisors ..	4	0
9	Press supervisors	11	0
10	Paid calls and refunds ..	7	0
11	Asstts. to D. O., T. Ms. in Presidency offices	11	0
13	Message drafts	5	0
14	Morning reports	2	0
19	Asstts. to supdts. or dy. supdts. ..	8	0
22	Quarters inspector	1	0
	Total	118	40

117. This would represent a reduction of seventy-eight telegraphists which the Committee are confident could be effected without any decrease in the efficiency of the department. Allowing for a further reduction of thirteen men on account of leave reserves this makes a total reduction of ninety-one men. Thus to reduce the number would leave a staff of four hundred operators for employment on non-operative work, for a total operative staff of 2,304, a proportion of approximately 17 per cent. The Committee's estimate is necessarily a summary one, and an attainable figure may prove to be a little higher, but it seems improbable that a higher percentage than 18 or thereabouts could be justified.

118. The difference between this and the existing sanctioned provision of 24 per cent. (which is at present taken into account by the department in calculating the total staff permissible), i.e., 6 per cent. on 2,304 telegraphists equals 138 men. The reduction of 138 general scale appointments thus appears to be feasible and would result in an annual saving of Rs. 3,36,000 approximately. It will be necessary, however, to replace these operators by a clerical staff, and men of class II of the clerical staff will be suitable for this purpose. The average pay of this class is Rs. 125 per mensem and the annual cost of 138 appointments is therefore approximately Rs. 2,07,000. The net annual saving to be expected as a result of replacing 138 General Scale appointments by the same number of clerical appointments of class II will therefore be Rs. 1,29,000. But as many of the non-operative appointments at present held by operators carry allowances of Rs. 20 per mensem in addition to pay, and as of the 138 appointments to be reduced at least one-third will be appointments carrying such allowances, the net annual savings will amount to nearly Rs. 1,40,000 per annum.

(d).—Standard of telegraphists' output.

119. The strength of the operative staff is at present calculated on the basis of 42,000 messages per operator per year. As an operator works 2,275 hours in the year (*vide margin*) the above basis gives an outturn of 18.46 messages per operator hour which is equivalent to 20 messages per operator hour allowing for wastage caused by unavoidable overlapping of duties, *vide para. 13* of the Report of the Telegraph Committee, 1920. This standard outturn is obviously applicable to Morse and is much too low for a Baudot operator. It appears that 40 per cent. of the traffic in the large offices is dealt with on circuits equipped with Baudot apparatus and a revision of the above basis of 42,000 messages per operator per year for determining the strength of the operative staff for such offices is therefore considered to be necessary.

120. A Morse operator earns pie-money on every message exceeding 150 messages disposed of by him in a single term of duty, which works out to 20 messages per hour in 7½ hours, whereas this limit for a Baudot

operator is 200 messages, which works out to 26.66 messages per hour in $7\frac{1}{2}$ hours. As 20 messages per operator hour on Morse is reduced to 18.46 in consequence of wastage referred to in the preceding paragraph, 26.66 messages per operator hour on Baudot should similarly be reduced to 24.61.

121. As 40 per cent. of the traffic in large offices is disposed of by the Baudot system $2\frac{1}{5}$ th of 2,275 hours, or 910 hours, is taken up on Baudot and the remaining 1,365 hours on Morse. The annual outturn per operator should therefore be 910×24.61 messages on Baudot plus $1,365 \times 18.46$ messages on Morse = 47,593 or roughly 47,000 messages, which should be taken as the revised basis for calculating the operative staff in large offices. As those offices employ the majority of the staff the resultant economies should be very considerable.

(e)—*High-speed telegraphy.*

122. The primary object of high-speed telegraphy is to accelerate the telegraph service by reducing the time of transmission over the wires of telegraph symbols by means of which the messages are actually transmitted. In this way the traffic-carrying capacity of the wires is automatically increased, as, with the reduction of the line time required for individual messages, it becomes possible to dispose of a much larger number of telegrams over the same wires in a given time. This secondary effect of high-speed working is of the utmost importance from the economical and commercial point of view, as it enables a much larger volume of traffic to be dealt with without undue increase of the wire plant. In fact it has entirely revolutionized the original methods of telegraph working.

123. There are two fundamentally different systems of high-speed working, viz., (a) the Automatic, of which the most important is the Wheatstone, with its latest development, the Creed system; and (b) the Multiplex, of which the most important is the Baudot, with its latest developments, the Murray and Western-Electric Multiplex systems.

124. In the Automatic system the telegrams are individually transmitted at a very high speed, several operators being employed to punch the messages on paper tapes which control the transmitting mechanism. In the Multiplex system on the other hand, the line time is periodically distributed amongst a number of operators, each of whom is given in turn the sole use of the line for a small fraction of a second in each period or cycle, and each of the corresponding or conjugate pairs of operators (viz., one at the sending and the other at the receiving end) constitutes what is known as an *arm*, or *channel*, of the Multiplex system.

125. The Multiplex system has several outstanding advantages over the Automatic system which has now been practically abandoned in this country. It is being developed on strictly scientific lines and it is now possible to work four channels, up and down, over the longest lines in India. In fact one of these Multiplex circuits between Bombay and Calcutta is now carrying more than 4,000 messages per day during its working hours with only one retransmitting station at Nagpur. This is an achievement of which the department may justly be proud. With the development of Multiplex working, it has also become possible

to introduce what is known as the *Echelon* method of working, i.e., dropping some of the arms, or channels, at one or more intermediate offices on the line between the two terminal stations.

126. The *Carrier Current* System by means of which it is possible to obtain several channels, both for telegraphy and telephony, over the same wires by using different bands of high-frequency currents, is just emerging from the experimental stage, and has yet to be taken up and developed in this country. The *Phantom* method of telegraph working, by means of which it is possible to superimpose one telegraph circuit on a telephone loop, is already working satisfactorily. The *Composite* method, by which it is possible to superimpose two telegraph circuits on a telephone loop, is still being experimented with in India, but the results so far obtained are most encouraging.

(f).—*The Zone System.*

127. Full use, however, cannot be made of the necessarily complicated and expensive high-speed equipment, except on lines which carry a heavy and fairly constant load of traffic. It is therefore no longer considered necessary or even desirable to connect the less important stations directly with one another, but through the intermediary of what are known as *Zone centres* or the collecting and distributing points of the Telegraph net-work. The smaller offices now work directly into the *Zone centres* on the simple slow-speed system while the *Zone centres* themselves are connected with one another by means of more complicated high-speed systems. In this way it has become possible to extend telegraph facilities to the smallest stations without increasing the cost of the wire plant beyond the economical and commercial limit.

128. This *Zone system* of working was first introduced in this country, in the Central Circle, in 1912, but was abandoned after a short trial. It is not, however, an innovation and has long passed the experimental stage, and is now in force in all civilized countries and up-to-date telegraph administrations. With the advent of the high-speed telegraph systems, working arrangements, for the disposal of traffic were practically revolutionized in both Europe and America. A number of depots or *zone centres* were created for the collection and distribution of traffic, and between these *zone centres* the traffic was worked off on the high-speed systems. This not only caused a large saving in lines, wireplant, and maintenance charges, but also greatly accelerated the disposal of traffic.

129. The *zone system* has given entire satisfaction all over the world for the disposal of both telegraph and telephone traffic. It is a scientific method for the economical management of traffic which has been evolved by experts. But, in order to obtain the fullest benefit of the system, it is obviously necessary to work to their maximum capacity the high-speed circuits by means of which all adjacent *zone-centres* are interconnected. It is of the utmost importance, therefore, to group the minor circuits, and link them up with the main circuits in such a way as to ensure the latter being kept fully fed by traffic collected from the former. In India we have at the present moment only the rudiments of the system. Many of the main circuits do not carry even one-third of the traffic they are capable of handling efficiently. This is mainly due to the faulty grouping of the minor circuits. It is not generally understood that the load

or volume of traffic between any two offices should determine the method of working, i.e., whether the offices should work direct or through a *zone-centre*.

130. The *zone system* of working leads to economy, not only in circuit accommodation, but also in operative cost, though it, no doubt, increases the number of signalling operations and the chances of mutilation and delay, owing to the traffic having to be transited through the *zone* or *sub-zone centre*. But the important reduction in the number of main circuits which it is possible to effect by taking the fullest advantage of high-speed multiplex systems, more than counter-balances these disadvantages.

131. The Committee think that the *Zone-system* should be developed systematically in future, with the extension of the high-speed Multiplex, and *echelon* methods of working.

CHAPTER VI.

The Telephone System.

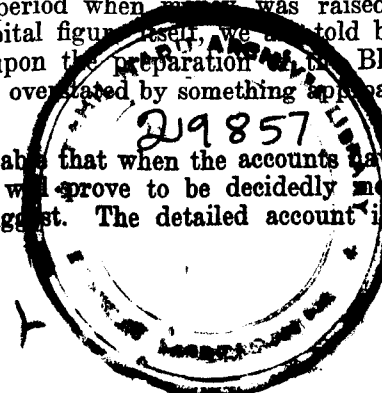
132. Within the past few years only have attempts been made to exhibit separately the financial results of the working of the telephone systems of India, and statements designed with that object are now available. Their preparation cannot, however, be regarded as more than a first step in the direction indicated, as the data and methods on which they were drawn up were inadequate or defective. A further advance is represented by the *pro forma* account in paragraph 78 on page 29 of the Director-General's Annual Report on the Posts and Telegraphs for the year 1923-24, in which, for the first time, notice is taken of the need for providing specifically for depreciation liabilities, as well as for current maintenance of the plant. This account takes credit for actual receipts, *pro forma* rental of departmental free connections used by branches not directly concerned with the telephone branch, and rents derived from telephone systems provided and technically maintained, but not worked, by the department; it is debited with all actual expenditure on maintenance, operation and supervision, house-rent actually paid by, or otherwise debit-able to, the department, *plus* interest charges on capital at the assumed rate of $5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., and charges at 5 per cent. on the revenue expenditure to cover cost of control and audit, *plus* charges, at rates recently tentatively assumed, for depreciation.

133. The net result thus arrived at shows a surplus of Rs. 54,015 for the year 1922-23 and a deficit of Rs. 1,72,258 for the year 1923-24. The capital outlay on the telephone system is not mentioned in the Report, but in the other compilation referred to above was shewn as standing at Rs. 1,63,42,365 at the end of March 1923 while at the end of March 1924 the figure was Rs. 2,05,59,841.

134. These results will be materially affected by a more accurate computation of the debits properly leviable against the telephone system. The methods of accounting for telephone expenditure have, we are told, already been under re-examination and an improved system has been introduced in the case of the Delhi division and is to be extended elsewhere from the 1st April. The *pro forma* account, to which we have referred, evidently overweights the expenditure side of the account by making full provision for depreciation, though expenditure on replacements, such as should then be a debit against the separate depreciation account, has already, in so far as it has been actually incurred, been charged directly to working expenses along with ordinary repairs and maintenance. We observe also that the uniform debit of $5\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on account of interest, which is based on the rates of interest payable by Government on capital raised since 1916-17 appears to be high, since much of the outlay incurred on the lines dates from a period when money was raised at a comparatively low rate. The capital figure itself, we are told by the officer who is principally engaged upon the preparation of the Block Account of the department, is probably overstated by something approaching Rs. 25 lakhs.

135. It thus appears probable that when the accounts have been overhauled the telephone system will prove to be decidedly more profitable than the available figures suggest. The detailed account indicates that

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there are nevertheless a number of telephone installations which are not directly remunerative, and this will doubtless prove to be the case even under a more reliable system of accounts. Telephony is, however, in its infancy and even from the strictest commercial point of view it is unlikely that the question of the retention of such installations would be discussed solely on the basis of present returns of profit and loss; in developing a business it must be apprehended that there will be some loss for the first few years of its life; while in the actual case the question of public demand and convenience must be considered. We have no recommendation to make therefore under this head beyond the obvious one that when true accounts are available they should be reviewed from time to time with a view to considering whether in any extreme cases the loss incurred is not justified by the circumstances.

136. A general measure of economy in the telephone administration might be effected, at least in the smaller and less expensive stations, by employing as operators a less costly class of employee than those who are at present employed on the all India scale of Rs. 50—3—95—5—100. Steps towards this end are already being taken in the Posts and Telegraphs Department, and should be persisted in, if the result of the experiment is favourable. Great care will have to be observed in this, however, as a telephone system is largely dependent on its popularity. Bad operating will directly affect this, and cheapness of operation might result in a net decrease in revenue. The best economy in the telephone system will be secured by increasing the number of connections, and the Committee recommend that sustained efforts should be made by canvassing to secure more subscribers, and to ensure that the service rendered is efficient and useful to the public.

137. The question should also be considered whether in the cases, which are frequent, where the public demand does not necessitate a 24 hour service, but where this is provided in compliance with the special requirements of the civil administration for police or similar purposes, the extra operative staff thereby necessitated should not be paid for by those authorities.

138. In several instances, for example at Calcutta and Bombay, there exist small local exchanges under departmental management—the subscription to which is usually limited to Government officials—side by side with the larger exchanges managed by private companies. Opinions differ as to whether such an arrangement is in accord with sound policy and as to whether it does not involve unfair competition by Government with the companies to whom licenses have been granted. It might be difficult to justify the abandonment of such Government exchanges on grounds of financial policy but the Committee is at least of the opinion that they should not be extended or be the objects of any considerable new capital expenditure.

CHAPTER VII.

Absenteeism, Leave Rules and Medical Certificates.

139. The complaint has long been general throughout the Department that the existing provision of a 17 per cent. reserve to cover the absence of men on leave is insufficient, and almost every witness whom we questioned on this point has emphasised the fact, although opinions differ as to the reason and the remedy for it.

140. Representatives of the subordinate staff generally, and a few of the controlling officers, urge the arduous nature of the work in the department, both on the postal and telegraph side, as conducing to a sick rate and a demand for rest higher than normally prevails elsewhere. In the view of these witnesses the proper remedy for the present unsatisfactory state of affairs is an increase in the leave reserve provision. They urge, with some force, the recommendation in favour of a 20 per cent. reserve made by the postal committee of 1920, which was not approved by the Government of India, who in 1921 sanctioned a reserve of 17 per cent. only for the Post Office and Railway Mail Service, the same figure as already in force for the telegraph branch.

141. In actual practice the number of absentees is usually decidedly above the 17 per cent. limit: the extent of the excess varies greatly from time to time, and place to place, but it is probably not above the mark to say that at least 20 per cent. of the staff are constantly absent: the figure commonly runs to about 25 per cent. and occasionally is far higher. As an example, the case of the office of the Postmaster-General, Bombay, may be cited; the following statement shows the high percentage of absenteeism prevailing from time to time. The figures for the first half of the year 1922 represent an average absenteeism throughout that period of over 26 per cent. of the staff.

Months.	1917-18.		1918-19.		1919-20.		1920-21.		1921-22.		1922-23.		1923-24.	
	Sanctioned No. of clerks excluding reserve clerks.	Number of days absent.	No. of clerks sanctioned excluding reserve clerks.	Number of days absent.	Sanctioned No. of clerks excluding reserve clerks.	Number of days absent.	Sanctioned No. of clerks excluding reserve clerks.	Number of days absent.	Sanctioned No. of clerks excluding reserve clerks.	Number of days absent.	Sanctioned No. of clerks excluding reserve clerks.	Number of days absent.	Sanctioned No. of clerks.	Number of days absent.
April	111	399	112	621	139	503	139	692	140	983	141	1,289	128	765
May	..	516	..	680	..	456	..	598	..	1,222	..	1,195	..	942
June	..	454	..	590	..	428	..	474	..	863	..	967	..	433
July	..	415	..	502	..	306	..	357	..	779	..	738	..	398
August	..	409	..	445	..	197	..	392	..	873	..	814	..	443
September	..	327	..	437	..	211	..	341	..	816	..	889	..	516
October	..	277	..	605	..	382	..	417	..	1,085	..	787	..	638
November	..	488	..	600	..	527	..	610	..	1,075	..	899	..	675
December	..	517	139	304	..	443	..	577	..	967	..	939	..	432
January	..	484	..	322	..	574	..	551	..	1,025	..	927	..	484
February	..	423	..	587	..	687	..	682	..	1,002	..	500	..	594
March	..	573	..	687	..	705	..	884	..	1,199	..	744	..	748
TOTAL	..	5,262	..	6,360	..	5,419	..	6,575	..	11,879	..	10,688	..	7,068

142. Statistics collected by the Director-General, Posts and Telegraphs, a short time ago for the purposes of an inter-departmental conference on this subject (the difficulty is by no means peculiar to the Posts and Telegraphs Department) showed that in seven of the principal telegraph offices, employing 2,732 men, the average percentage of absentees throughout the two years, 1922 and 1923, was 23½, of which no less than 19 per cent. represented absences on medical leave. The latter figure compares strikingly with the corresponding figure for seven principal post offices, 3,269 men, where the absentees on medical certificate amounted to the, only relatively, small amount of ten per cent.

143. The belief is general amongst the controlling officials of the department that in this, as in other branches of Government service, there is a tendency on the part of some sections of the staff to obtain medical certificates on inadequate grounds, and the figures just quoted lend force to the impression that this is done. We are inclined to agree with those witnesses who ascribe the remarkable number of absentees, whether on ordinary leave or on medical certificate, to the basic fact that the Government leave rules are too liberal. Most of the staff of the department now come under the operation of the Fundamental Leave Rules, and we feel, we cannot do better than quote at some length from a letter received by us on the subject from Mr. A. C. Badenoch, the Accountant-General, Posts and Telegraphs Department; he writes:—

“ You ask whether I agree with the argument that the staff are at present using up the accrued balances of leave with which they were credited on coming under the Fundamental Rules and that when these balances have been wiped out, matters will adjust themselves satisfactorily.

“ 2. When a non-gazetted Government servant came under the ordinary leave rules of the Fundamental Rules he was credited with the privilege leave due to him *plus* one-twelfth of the period spent on duty or on privilege leave prior to that date, minus, of course, any leave apart from privilege leave which he had taken. Compared with what he had earned before there was no very startling balance which accrued to him on the date on which he came under the Fundamental Rules. From the date on which he became subject to these rules his leave account is credited with two-elevenths of the period spent on duty, that is to say, in a year he accumulates roughly two months five days, reckoned in terms of average pay. I think that his rate of accumulation, after he comes under the Fundamental Rules, is quite rapid enough to allow of his taking considerable spells of leave on average pay. Accordingly I do not think very much of the argument that the present high rate of absenteeism is due to the working off of accumulated balances. Indeed, but for the abolition of the limitation on the amount of privilege leave, or leave corresponding to privilege leave, which might be accumulated, the Fundamental Rules did not affect the amount of leave due.

“ 3. In my opinion accumulated balances have little to do with the present higher rate of absenteeism. The increased rate of leave allowances, especially the concession contained in note

to Fundamental Rule 87, has had far more to do with the increase in the amount of leave taken. While it is possible for a non-Gazetted officer under the ordinary leave rules to get on medical certificate the considerable amount of leave which is admissible to him under Fundamental Rules 81 (b) (ii), so long will the number of absences be very much greater than it was before the introduction of these new concessions. I do not quite understand what is meant by your witnesses who say that matters will adjust themselves satisfactorily. It seems to me that conditions must adjust themselves so as to give permanently a higher level of absenteeism than before the introduction of the Fundamental Rules.

4. I attempted to obtain statistics showing the increase in the amount of leave taken. I have not, however, been able to obtain anything satisfactory. Up to 1920 the pressure of war work and the shortage of establishment made the leave position abnormal, so that the grants of leave were phenomenally few. In July 1920 the concession of commuting half-pay leave was introduced. Until the introduction of the Fundamental Rules, however, the average salary which was given during leave was the average of three years' pay. From 1922 the average has been of one year's pay. The statement attached shows that there has been a marked increase in the amount of leave taken between 1920-21 and 1923-24 and this is due, in my opinion, not to any increase in the amount of leave which can be granted, but to the higher rate of allowances which may be granted during particular portions of leave. It has nothing, I would repeat, to do with balances, but everything to do with allowances. In many cases it has paid a man to go on leave, *e.g.*, when he has been officiating in a higher appointment.

“ 5. Recently the Government of India have amended the note to Fundamental Rule 87 and permitted the non-Gazetted Government servant to draw only his substantive pay as leave allowance during his leave. This, I think, will tend to reduce the amount of leave taken. The old rules prescribed a certain minimum period between one period of privilege leave and another. The Fundamental Rules make no such limitation. In the case of our non-Gazetted establishments I am inclined to think that the abolition of the limitation was a mistake. I have recently come across a case in which a postal servant took leave for eight months on full average pay on medical certificate. He obtained a fit certificate and returned to duty for one day. He then obtained another medical certificate and went on leave on average pay for another period of eight months.”

144. The Committee would mention that they made private enquiry as to the extent to which leave, whether ordinary, or on medical certificate, is allowed in the case of several private employers. The replies were confidential and cannot be quoted in detail, but in no case did it appear that leave is allowed on anything approaching the scale now recognized by the Government regulations.

145. It may be possible to do something to improve the Medical Certificate procedure and thus to establish some greater obstacle than at present exists in the way of those who may feel disposed to abuse it ; but the real remedy does not, in our opinion, lie in that direction but in introducing a set of leave rules which will not place a premium upon abstention from work. This is a general question affecting most branches of the Government service in India and we feel that our duty is done when we draw attention to it as indicating one of the principal ways in which a real economy may be effected.

146. The Posts and Telegraphs budget for the current year provided the sum of Rs. 542 lakhs for the pay of permanent establishment, excluding officers ; if we estimate the excess strength here due to the utmost advantage being taken of the present leave rules at even the modest figure of two per cent., this would represent a direct saving of Rs. 10,84,000 per annum in wages with further, indirect, savings in allowances and pension liabilities.

147. It is not out of place to mention here that if the success of the Posts and Telegraphs Department is to be judged by ordinary commercial standards, allowance must be made for the fact that in common with other Government services the department is required to provide a reserve of staff to cover a rate of absenteeism which—whether it be fixed at 17 or 20 or any other comparable percentage of the staff at work—would be regarded by any private employer as preposterous.

148. The Committee are informed that a similar question has been engaging the attention of the Railway Department of the Government of India, and that a new set of leave rules has been formulated on a standard much more nearly approximating to ordinary commercial practice than that of the Government Fundamental Leave Rules and is now under the consideration of the Government. The case of the two departments in this respect is the same, and the Committee recommend that the extension of the new railway regulations to the Posts and Telegraphs Department should be taken into consideration, due regard being had to any special disabilities incidental to the work of the department, such as restriction of holidays, unusual working hours or split duties.

CHAPTER VIII.

Miscellaneous.

I.—Superior Staff.

149. The suggestion has been made, for instance by the Public Accounts Committee, that the higher staff of the Posts and Telegraphs Department may be in excess of requirements. That Committee in their report on the accounts for 1922-23 made the following statement :—

“ Another question that we discussed with the Director-General was the possibility of reducing the superior staff in his department, for some of us feel that retrenchment has left them practically untouched and has spent its force on the rank and file. There is force in what he has said about the impossibility of reduction of officers proportionate to reduction in staff, but we are of opinion, specially in view of the recommendations of the retrenchment committee, that the matter requires further investigation.”

150. This observation was made more particularly in the light of the remarks by the Accountant-General, Posts and Telegraphs, on page 17 of his Appropriation Report on the accounts for 1922-23, in which comparisons were made between the actual votable expenditure for the year under the sub-heads “ pay of officers ” and “ pay of permanent establishments ” in the controlling staff of the department, and the budget provision made for the same year under these heads, as subsequently modified during the year by the Legislative Assembly. Appreciable “ savings ” under the sub-heads “ pay of permanent establishments ” had been noticed. It seems clear, however, that such comparisons afford a test of the accuracy of the judgment with which the budget is prepared and revised rather than of the rise or fall of expenditure. It is true that taking the comparative figures of actual expenditure in recent years we find an indication of an increased cost of officers ; the figures for the whole department being :—

Head.	1921-22	1922-23.	1923-24.
Pay of officers	31,33,737	30,41,114	34,98,494
Pay of permanent establishment	5,09,50,996	5,29,40,994	5,26,98,449

but these figures also are unfortunately misleading since, during the period covered by them, the classification of a large number of individuals who were formerly treated as subordinates was changed to that of officers. This has led us to make the following comparison of the numbers of officers actually sanctioned during the past four years. The references to the ‘ lists ’ are to the printed establishment lists of the department.

Sanctioned number of Gazetted Officers, Posts and Telegraphs.

	1920 (October list).	1921 (November list).	1922 (August list).	1923 (December list).	1924 (December list).	REMARKS.
Post Office ..	223	223	223	224	224	(a) Postmasters-General .. 8 Deputy Postmasters-General .. 13 Presidency Postmasters and Postmasters, Rangoon and Lahore, .. 5 Superintendent, Aligarh Workshop .. 1 Superintendents .. 181 Gazetted Postmasters .. 38 Total .. 240 (b) Increase due to the inclusion of Deputy Superintendents in gazetted cadre — Superior, 1st division .. 10 Superior, 2nd division .. 36 Deputy Superintendents 1st class .. 20 Ditto 2nd class .. 34 Total .. 100 (c) Reduction of one 2nd division superior officer. With the necessity for better supervision owing to the expansion of telegraph engineering work and telephones additional appointments were created and from 1923 Assistant Engineers and Deputy Assistant Engineers were included in the gazetted cadre. (d) Superior officers .. 51 Assistant Engineers .. 12 Deputy Assistant Engineers .. 60 Assistant Electricians .. 3 Deputy Assistant Electricians .. 12 Telephone Engineers .. 3 Total .. 141 Increases in 1923 and 1924 due to introduction of improved supervision and inclusion of Assistant and Deputy Assistant Engineers in the gazetted cadre. Increase in 1923 due to the inclusion of Deputy Assistant Engineers in the gazetted cadre.
Railway Mail Service.	23	23	23	22	22	(a)
Telegraph Traffic ..	46	46	46	100(b)	99	
Telegraph Engineering ..	43	57	57	144(d)	144	
Telegraph Stores and Workshops.	3	3	3	11	12	
Wireless (excluding Director-General's Office).	N/L.	3	3	12	11	
Director-General's Office.	Director General 1 Postal .. 9 Traffic .. 5 Engineering .. 6 Wireless .. 4 Total .. 25	Director General 1 Postal .. 8 Traffic .. 5 Engineering .. 7 Wireless .. 3 Total .. 24	Director General 1 Postal .. 8 Traffic .. 5 Engineering .. 6 Wireless .. 3 Total .. 23	Director General 1 Postal .. 8 Traffic .. 5 Engineering .. 11 Wireless .. 3 Total .. 28	Director General 1 Postal .. 8 Traffic .. 5 Engineering .. 11 Wireless .. 4 Total .. 29	
Total ..	363	379	378	638	551	

151. From this it will be seen that the number of officers in the post office and railway mail service has remained practically unchanged. Explanations are given in the statement of the increases, which were the principal ones, in the number of traffic branch officers and in the engineering and workshop and stores branches. On the general question we would say that it appears to us that the summary reduction of staff in response to demands for economies, when not based on detailed consideration of the necessities of the work of the department, and involving, as it does, the reversal of decisions initially taken as a rule after considerable discussion when the cadres were fixed or increased, is apt to prove an unwise measure. Elsewhere in this report we make recommendations which if approved will have the effect of economising in the gazetted as well as in the lower grades ; but as a general observation we may say that we are in complete agreement with the argument of the Director-General, Posts and Telegraphs Department, alluded to by the Public Accounts Committee, that it is not to be expected that a reduction of inferior staff can be accompanied by a proportionate reduction of the supervising officers ; this is none the less true because it is obvious.

152. It is understood that the Public Accounts Committee had also been impressed by the figure of 847 gazetted officers, compared with 120,578 non-gazetted, prominently mentioned by the Accountant-General in paragraph 42 of his Audit Report for the year 1922-23. This figure has been the subject of a reference by the Committee to the Accountant-General, from whose reply it is clear that it has been misunderstood. Mr. Badenoch writes :—

“(2) The purpose of the statement was to show the volume of work done in the audit offices, and the figure given there actually represents the number of officers whose pay and allowances are audited in the gazetted audit department of the Audit office, and for whom a personal system of audit is applied. For instance, postmasters on Rs. 250—350 (whose number is about 109) are not gazetted officers in the technical sense, but their pay and allowances are audited in the gazetted audit department in the same manner as if they were gazetted officers.

“(3) It will be evident from this explanation that the number of gazetted officers given in the statement referred to, cannot constitute a proper basis on which to found any conclusions regarding the ratio of gazetted officers to non-gazetted establishment of the department. The figure should be compiled from the budget estimates or from the “List of Officers of the Posts and Telegraphs Department.”

153. As shewn above there were, in December 1924, 551 gazetted officers in the department ; but it must be noticed that over four hundred

of these are officials of comparatively modest status. The figures in December 1924 were :—

	Pay.
181 superintendents of post offices and railway mail service	Rs. 250—700
38 gazetted postmasters	„ 350—650
(exclusive of five higher posts of the Presidency postmasters and postmasters, Rangoon and Lahore.)	
35 officers of the second division, superior traffic branch	„ 350—700
(These hold charge of the larger telegraph offices and analogous posts.)	
54 deputy superintendents, traffic	„ 350—600
17 assistant engineers	„ 350—700
75 deputy assistant engineers	„ 350—600
4 assistant electricians	„ 350—700
17 deputy assistant electricians	„ 350—600
Total ..	421

154. There are thus only (551—421) 130 superior officers of the kind ordinarily implied by the term and employed on the higher executive or administrative duties of the department, a ratio of one superior officer to about 900 men. This does not appear to the Committee to be high.

II.—Wireless Telegraphy.

155. The construction, maintenance and use of the wireless telegraph equipment of the country, the responsibility for which had previously been divided among the ordinary branches of the department, were placed in charge of a special section in 1920, under the control of a Director of Wireless whose position was one of direct responsibility to the Director-General. The subsequent development of the wireless organisation, which about that time was conceived on a large scale, though it was considerable, has been retarded by financial considerations; and we find in the Director-General's Annual Report for 1923-24 the statement that expenditure in the wireless branch had been reduced to an absolute minimum. The inland stations have, for the most part, been "laid up" in charge of maintenance staff, and, though kept in working order, are not in use for ordinary business.

156. The Committee have discussed with Commander Nicholson, the Director of Wireless, the question whether, in this state of arrested development, the elaborate organization and staff now maintained should not be susceptible of reduction. He is emphatic that though many of the wireless stations are not in full operation it is necessary to retain the present staff, which could be reduced only if it were definitely decided entirely to abandon the equipment.

157. The Committee do not feel justified in opposing this view; it appears to them manifest that wireless must be regarded as still in an initial stage of development, and that its use will inevitably be extended as time goes on, though different opinions have been expressed to them as to the scope for its development as an auxiliary to, or substitute for, the land wires for internal traffic.

158. It is clear, at least, that wireless must be regarded, not as a rival of the ordinary telegraph system or as a separate entity, but, as an essential and integral part of the telegraphic communications of the country. Cordial co-operation between the ordinary and the wireless branches already exists, but we believe that to make it complete it is desirable that on some convenient occasion measures should be adopted to unify the control of both under the Chief Engineer. The Committee are satisfied, however, that the technicalities involved are such as to render necessary the retention of a specialist subordinate wireless establishment.

III.—Press Telegrams.

159. The rates charged for press telegrams are much below those levied for private messages. For inland traffic the rates compare thus :—

Class.	Unit No. of words.	Charges.	For additional words.	Address.
		Rs A. P.		
Express Press ..	48	1 0 0	Six -/2/-	Free.
„ Private ..	12	1 8 0	One -/2/-	Charged.
Ordinary Press ..	48	0 8 0	Six -/1/-	Free.
„ Private ..	12	0 12 0	One -/1/-	Charged.

Thus a press and a private message each of, say, 50 words, including two words for address, would cost at Express rates, Rs. 1-2-0 and Rs. 6-4-0 or, at Ordinary rates, Rs. 0-9-0 and Rs. 3-2-0 respectively.

160. The statistics of inland traffic in Appendix XV of the Posts and Telegraphs Department Annual Report for the year 1923-24 shew that 14,586,490 private and 445,320 press messages were transmitted, realizing Rs. 1,64,64,908 and Rs. 4,62,051. This works out at Rs. 1.13 for each private, and Rs. 1.04 for each press, message, but the average number of words per message is of course much higher in the case of the press than in that of the private telegrams. Statistics are not available of the difference in the case of inland traffic but it can hardly be less than the corresponding difference in the case of foreign traffic where we find [Appendix XIV (3)] 2,330,596 private messages comprising 19,758,481 words, or say 8½ words per message; as against 30,963 press messages or 980,892 words or 31 words per message.

161. It should be noticed also that press telegraph traffic is specially treated in another respect. The rules provide that "multiple press messages addressed to several places will be charged for as a single message but a copying fee of four annas per hundred chargeable words plus four

annas for the excess is charged for each destination after the first, *whether all addresses are in the same town or not.*" Since delivery in different towns involves additional telegraph operations and since considerable advantage is taken of this provision, the concession indicated in the words italicised in the above quotation is a very substantial one.

162. Without arguing too closely from the figures it seems probable that the press traffic brings in a revenue of only about one-fourth of the same volume of private correspondence, and certain that at such rates this item of the Posts and Telegraphs Department's business is an unprofitable one. There thus seems to be here a *prima facie* opportunity of improving the revenues of the department by raising the charge to a remunerative figure.

163. The suggestion has been considered more than once in recent years. The last occasion was in 1923 when the matter was discussed in the Posts and Telegraphs Department. Attention was then drawn to the strong opinions expressed in the past in favour of low rates; on grounds of public policy. Lord Curzon was quoted, as holding that any step to extend knowledge should be welcomed by every thoughtful man even if it were to add to the loss already incurred upon press telegrams. He had remarked that he was one of those who hold most strongly to the view that the Postal and Telegraphic Services exist for the benefit of the public and not for the pecuniary gain of the Government. The same view had been urged by other authorities. On a review of the whole subject it was considered unadvisable to proceed with the matter and the rates were left unaltered.

164. The Committee feel it right to draw attention to the matter as a possibility of reducing an element of loss in working the department; but they anticipate that the view taken by the Director-General in 1923 will be endorsed and that no enhancement of the rates will be approved. It will of course be observed that in this case, as in other instances cited in this report, the commercial character of the department must be subordinated to considerations of the public advantage.

IV.—Repairs and Maintenance of Buildings.

165. All posts and telegraphs buildings are now the property of the department which has been authorised to make its own arrangements for their maintenance and repairs. It has been customary in the past to entrust the construction and the upkeep of all such buildings to the provincial Public Works Departments, which debited the Posts and Telegraphs Department with the actual cost of work done for it *plus* certain fixed percentages on account of supervision and general charges. Of late, however, these fixed overhead charges have been abandoned and it is now the practice of the Public Works Departments to distribute the actual cost of their whole overhead charges over the various items of work executed, and to debit other departments, for instance, the Posts and Telegraphs, with their share of the actuals so calculated on the work done for them.

166. The indirect charges thus levied are in general heavy, and the question has been raised whether it would not be more economical for the Posts and Telegraphs Department to make other arrangements for its work. It would appear that for important work, such as new con-

struction, or considerable extensions to existing buildings, it would be advisable for the department to continue to take advantage of the expert assistance and supervision of the Public Works Department authorities. But it seems unnecessary to trouble them with the arrangements for ordinary annual repairs, whitewashing, etc. Work of this kind could be efficiently undertaken and supervised by the departmental telegraph engineer establishment who would normally execute it through the agency of contractors. These engineers are, of course, not specially skilled in engineering work of this character, but it is believed that the business which it is here proposed to entrust to them is such as they could conveniently undertake.

167. In the budget for the year 1924-25 the provision for repairs to posts and telegraphs buildings amounted to Rs. 7,37,650, of which Rs. 1,54,580, or nearly one quarter, was estimated as the cost of Public Works Department establishment, tools and plant. If the procedure suggested above be substituted it should be possible to effect a net saving which at a guess may perhaps be put at about Rs. 50,000 per annum under this head.

168. The headquarters administration of the building branch might appropriately be placed in charge of the Chief Engineer, rather than, as at present, in that of one of the postal Deputy Directors-General.

V.—Minor Questions.

169. In the course of our enquiry our attention was drawn to a number of questions of minor importance, of which we select the following as deserving notice. They are proposals either for increasing revenue or for reducing expenditure :—

Postal Branch—

- (a) *Detention time for V. P. parcels.*—The ten day time allowance for the retention of V. P. articles (See section 425, Vol. I, P. O. Manual, and also paragraph 3 of the "Intimation to Addressee" form) leads to consignees using the post office as a warehouse for their parcels. This throws considerable unnecessary work and expense on the post office, which has both to find accommodation, and to re-write up, from day to day voluminous lists of the articles in hand. It has been suggested that the reduction of the time limit, say to 48 hours, or the imposition of a special demurrage charge, would either reduce the work or increase the revenue.
- (b) *Insurance Rates.*—Several witnesses suggest that the charge for insurance of letters and parcels might be raised. At present the money order business is competed with successfully by the insurance facilities, owing to the relatively low rates for the latter. The discrepancy of the charges may be illustrated by the fact that a registered letter insured for Rs. 200 costs only 4 annas for insurance *plus* say 4 annas for postage and registration, a total of 8 annas; whereas Rs. 200 remitted by money order would entail payment of Rs. 2. Moreover letters containing currency notes can be, and often are, insured for sums below their real value.

- (c) *Post Box and Window delivery charges.*—The charge of Re. 1 per mensem levied for Post Box facilities at the three presidency towns, and a few other large towns, appears to be low, having regard to the value of the service rendered. In the case of post box delivery at Rangoon the addressees further get the benefit of a special sorting of their foreign mail in the Railway Mail Service, with the result that they obtain specially quick delivery ; it has been suggested that this would justify the collection of a special fee in this case. Window delivery is not charged for ; it has been proposed that where this special service is rendered it should be paid for as in the case of post box deliveries.
- (d) *Post Office Savings Bank.*—The smallest sum of money that can be deposited at any time is four annas ; the total amount at call which may be deposited in any one year is Rs. 750, and the total amount which a depositor may have at call at any time (excluding current interest) is Rs. 5,000 in the case of an adult or Rs. 1,000 in the case of a minor. These limits appear to us to be low and might well be raised ; we think that the minimum deposit, in particular, should be increased to not less than one rupee.
- (e) *Sorting in Railway Mail Service.*—It is the policy of the department to reduce as far as possible sorting in travelling sections, and thereby save expensive haulage and accommodation. Particularly in respect of parcel sorting there may be room for a development of this policy.
- (f) *Motor Mail Working.*—Some witnesses have suggested that it would be economical to revert to the use of horse drawn transport in many cases where motors are now used in local areas. We cannot recommend this retrograde measure as a general policy, but there may be special cases in which the reduction of motor services would prove desirable and consistent with efficiency.
- (g) *Bags, accounting, etc.*—There is a heavy expenditure on the bags used for the transport of postal matter. The supervision of accounting for the disposal of these bags and their repairs requires constant vigilance. It is suggested that every bag should bear inside the neck an indication of the date of its issue.
- (h) *Special Post Bags.*—We were struck at Bombay by the length of the list of officials whose personal correspondence is specially sorted out on receipt of the foreign inward mail. This sorting entails additional work and we suggest that the list be reviewed and that the number of officials who receive this special service might be curtailed.
- (i) *Standard Post Office Fittings.*—The suggestion has been made that standardisation of post office fittings would lead to economy by preventing unnecessary changes and uneconomical expenditure. This measure could be completely effective only if the post office buildings were themselves of uniform types, which is not the case. It may, however, be

possible to do something in the direction indicated, at least with reference to the larger offices.

Telegraph Branch—

- (j) *Envelopes for telegrams.*—There would be a considerable saving of expense both on stationery and on staff engaged in copying out addresses (a special staff is employed in the large telegraph offices) if the envelopes used for telegrams could be dispensed with. This involves the design of a form of message draft suitable for use in India, which would permit of suitable folding in single or multiple sheets so that secrecy would be preserved, the original address be visible, and the message easily opened for perusal. The department has already this matter under consideration.
- (k) *Rental for Railway and Canal telegraph lines.*—It is understood that the Department has under examination the question of the rentals recoverable for telegraph lines leased to railway and canal administrations. No definite conclusion as to the suitability of the existing charges on this account can be reached until the departmental block account has been worked out—a piece of work now in progress. We can therefore only advise that the matter be not lost sight of, and that, when figures of cost are available, the rentals be revised if necessary.

General—

- (l) *Contingencies, forms and stationery.*—We obtained no evidence to suggest that there is any general tendency to extravagance under these heads. In the case of post offices the expenditure permissible under the head “Contingencies” is regulated by strict rules which err, if at all, somewhat on the side of parsimony. In the larger establishments there is more likelihood of waste and the matter is one which requires constant vigilance by superintendents and other controlling staff. It has been suggested that in large offices, such as the G. P. O., Bombay, the contingent charges are so high as to render desirable the deputation of a special officer who should examine the details of the expenditure and advise on the adoption of measures for its reduction. We recommend that action be taken in this direction.
- (m) *Special services for high officials.*—Special arrangements, involving additional cost, are made for the postal and telegraph service of high officials, e.g., Governors of provinces, during their tours. The question has been raised whether special charges should not be levied in such cases.
- (n) *Excise work in Burma.*—A special staff is employed in Rangoon in the examination of parcels for contraband articles, such as opium. It is understood that the department receives no credit on this account. We suggest that the excise authorities should pay the cost involved.
- (o) *Stock Depots.*—At the instance of the Chief Engineer, Telegraphs, steps are being taken to close down the telegraph stock depot at Madras, the need for which is not such as to

justify the cost ; and the case of other depots is under consideration. In places where there are both telegraph and postal depots the question should be examined whether some saving of expenditure might not be secured by combining these. This is a matter for discussion in the first instance between the heads of the postal and telegraph circles, as questions of convenience, possible conflict of requirements, etc., need consideration, as well as figures of cost.

- (p) *Aligarh Workshop*.—The suggestion has been made that the postal workshop at Aligarh might be closed and the work done there (manufacture and repair of letter boxes, stamps, locks and other miscellaneous equipment) transferred to the Telegraph Workshops in Calcutta. The Committee have no definite recommendation to make on this point ; the question is one which deserves departmental examination, and should be settled on its merits.

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CHAPTER IX.

Conclusion.

170. The principal specific economies which the Committee have recommended are :—

	Annually about Rs.
(a) by merging the railway mail service circles in those of certain postmasters-general, (para. 58)	31,000
(b) by substituting a cheaper class of railway mail service sorters (para. 69)	7,70,000
(c) by revising the ratio of general to station service telegraphists (para. 110)	11,30,000
(d) by substituting clerical for telegraphist staff for the execution of certain duties (para. 118) ..	1,40,000
(e) by undertaking the departmental charge of ordinary repairs and maintenance of buildings (para. 167)	50,000
	21,21,000

171. While this annual saving, of the order of 20 lakhs of rupees, alone may turn the balance between profit and loss in the accounts of the department, much more would be saved by the adoption of the Committee's further recommendations, to which, however, no even approximate figures can readily be attached, under such heads as :—

- (f) a revision of the cadre of superintendents of post offices on the basis of a review of their territorial charges (para. 47) ;
- (g) the further replacement of departmental telegraph offices by combined offices (para. 97) ;
- (h) a revision of staff on the basis of a more reasonable standard of output by telegraphists (para. 121) ;
- (i) a revision of the conditions which at present make for an excessive absenteeism, as a result of which the department bears heavy charges for staff who produce no results (Chapter VII).

And there are numerous minor savings to be effected by the adoption of such of the miscellaneous suggestions, made throughout the report, as may survive detailed departmental examination.

172. It is proper to emphasise, however, that the more important economies realised only by slow degrees, since they involve alterations of staff which cannot be introduced by a stroke of the pen, and changes which obviously must be made with due regard to the legitimate interests of the existing staff of the department.

173. The Committee derived the greatest advantage from the information and advice rendered by the large number of representatives of all classes in the department whom they consulted, and they desire to thank these gentlemen for the trouble they took. Their acknowledgments are due, above all, to the Director-General and his headquarters officers, who have given them all possible assistance.

DELHI ;

The 19th February 1925.

T. RYAN.

G. P. ROY.*

J. R. T. BOOTH.

*Subject to my observations in the accompanying supplementary note.

G. P. R.

POSTS AND TELEGRAPHS COMMITTEE, 1924-25.

Note by Mr. G. P. Roy.

I regret I have not been able to fall in with some of the views and recommendations of my colleagues. The most important point for the consideration of the Committee is the question of continuing the present organization or of re-amalgamating the traffic with the engineering branch. This is a matter of very great importance in the internal administration of the service, and deserves very careful consideration.

2. *Post and Telegraph Organization.*—The historical sketch in the beginning of the Report gives a clear idea of the object of the amalgamation of the Post Office of India with the Indian Telegraph Department. The chief object was to effect economy, and to improve the efficiency of the service. No one for a moment can question the soundness of the idea of amalgamating the post and the telegraph services of a country. But there is a limit to the practical realization of such an ideal organization. The local conditions of the country undoubtedly play a very important part in determining the suitability of any organization. In introducing new ideas of organization, especially those borrowed from other countries, their suitability or otherwise, with respect to the local conditions, should receive very careful consideration. The amalgamation scheme of 1914 was borrowed from certain countries of Europe, but at that time there were also several countries in Europe which had separate services for the Posts and the Telegraphs. It is needless to mention that the post and telegraph organization of almost every country is undergoing rapid changes. Some countries where the two services were previously amalgamated are now considering the desirability of separating them ; in other countries, where they are already separate, the question of amalgamating them is receiving consideration. It will thus be seen that there can be no hard and fast rule on the subject of organization. Some countries where the two services were amalgamated before the war, now possess two different branches absolutely separate from each other, but controlled by one Minister of Communications. It may be of interest to note in this connection that in their Report on the Telephone Service in the United Kingdom, the Parliamentary Committee of 1922 strongly recommended the separation of the Post Office from the Telegraphs and the Telephones.

3. *Amalgamation of the Telegraph Department with the Post Office of India.*—The scheme for the amalgamation of the telegraph department with the post office had been under consideration for a long time, and was eventually brought into effect in 1914. This scheme promised to effect a saving of Rs. 3 or 4 lakhs a year. The fact that a similar arrangement was in force in other countries considerably facilitated the introduction of the scheme. But it appears to have been overlooked that the constitution and the personnel of the two services which were to be amalgamated, were entirely different. The telegraph department composed as it was of engineers and technical staff, was constituted on the lines of the Public Works department, whereas the post office, consisting of non-engineers and non-technical staff, was organised on the lines of a general administrative department. The great war unfortunately synchronized with the introduction of the amalgamated service. The department of posts and telegraphs had to rise to the occasion, and rendered all possible assistance for

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the maintenance of communication in the different theatres of war. Thus the department was not in a position to feel or scrutinize the effects of the amalgamation, for the first four years after its introduction. Then came the period of financial stringency when the department had to cut down its expenses in every branch. This was followed by the period of reaction during which vigorous attempts were made to revive the activities of the department in various directions ; and consequently the expenditure of the department increased considerably. The amalgamation scheme does not appear to have succeeded in effecting any reduction of expenditure.

4. *Duties of the present Committee.*—The present Committee was appointed with a view to investigating all possible avenues of economy, without any sacrifice of efficiency. I consider that in addition to the channels recommended by my colleagues, there are several others which they have not touched, but which, in my humble opinion, would not only offer scope for further economy, but also for the improvement of efficiency. The duties of this Committee are very well defined, and as far as I can make out, the Committee is precluded from taking into consideration the vested interests of any branch of the service. It is for Government to consider the recommendations submitted by the Committee, and to see how they affect the vested interests of any particular class of officials of the department.

5. *Unity of control for each Circle.*—The Committee has fully considered the question of establishing unity of command in the organisation of the Circles, similar to that in the organization at headquarters. My colleagues have expressed their views to the effect that it is not possible at present to secure this unity of control. Here I regret I do not agree with them. Unity of control will undoubtedly reduce the working expenses of the department, and I am certainly of opinion that it should be tried, as I hold that it is quite feasible to do so. But at the same time it may interfere with the vested interests of some of the branches of the service. At present the department has 11 administrative appointments for the officers of the telegraph department, 4 for the officers of the old Post Office, and 5 for those of the Indian Civil Service, the total being 20, excluding the appointment of the Director-General of Posts and Telegraphs. It will be seen that for the administrative control of the different circles, the department has three classes of officers. Out of the eleven telegraph administrative appointments, one is allotted to Burma where the same officer is in charge of the entire arrangement consisting of the post office, telegraph traffic, and telegraph engineering. Another telegraph officer is appointed as an officiating Postmaster-General in India. In addition to these two administrative appointments, a telegraph engineer of executive rank is placed in charge of the Sind and Baluchistan Circle, where the organization is practically similar to that of Burma. Since the amalgamation, more than 8 telegraph engineers of the administrative grade have worked as Postmasters-General, and the department has had sufficient opportunities for scrutinizing the administrative work done by these members of the engineering branch, in the different postal circles. I have no doubt that the engineer officers have carried out the administration of the Post Office, as satisfactorily as any member of the Indian Civil Service, or of the Post Office. This would prove that it is quite easy for an engineer officer to undertake the administration of a postal circle, although there was considerable doubt on this point at the time of the introduction of

the amalgamation. Unity of control connotes that the officer in charge should be able to take intelligent interest in, and control the working of, the various branches under him, viz., the post office, telegraph traffic, and engineering. I am in favour of further extending the system now in force in Burma, and in Sind and Baluchistan. This would obviate the duplication of administrative machinery in the circles, and thereby effect a reduction in the number of administrative officers, and also a considerable annual saving without any loss of efficiency.

6. During the last ten years the department has not proceeded in the direction of fusing the two branches with a view to effecting a real amalgamation throughout the service, i.e., rendering it possible to have the working of the department carried on by only one set of officers. As stated in paragraph 20 of the report, the amalgamation of 1914 was more a redistribution of duties than a fusion of the two services. The main obstacle in the way of complete fusion is the difference in the training and qualifications of the respective officers of the two branches. This can be rectified by having junior engineers to do both postal and telegraph duties, as divisional superintendents of posts and telegraphs. It is needless for me to point out that while it is easy for an engineer to undertake postal duties, it is impossible for a non-technical officer to be in executive charge of any engineering works. Hence the necessity of recruiting only qualified engineer officers, in future, for the department of posts and telegraphs, if unity of control and complete amalgamation be the objective in view. This would however interfere with the vested interests of some of the officials of the post office.

7. *Re-union of Telegraph Traffic with Telegraph Engineering.*—If however, for any special reasons, it is considered undesirable to make any drastic changes on the lines suggested above, I would strongly recommend the re-union, at any rate, of telegraph traffic with telegraph engineering. The special feature of the present organisation is the complete separation between the traffic and the engineering. The Postmasters-General are responsible for the traffic, and the Directors for the engineering of the telegraph branch. On account of this separation, it is very difficult to ensure proper co-operation, or co-ordination between the two branches, with the result that the progress of the telegraph service in India is being seriously retarded. This retardation is also to a large extent due to the want of technical knowledge, and training on the part of officers and staff of the traffic branch. Modern traffic management is a scientific problem, demanding a very high degree of technical knowledge. The selection of suitable apparatus, the investigation of improved appliances to keep the telegraph service up-to-date, and the general organisation, both indoor and outdoor, for the disposal of the traffic with the minimum operative cost, are essentially the work of engineers. The following extract from a technical journal on Communication Engineering, will indicate how engineers are employed in the management of traffic in other countries :—

“ There are traffic engineers, charged with the operation of the 45,000,000 mile network of wires covering the country, who must study the conditions under which circuits are used and how best to adapt them to the varying loads ; find improved ways of dispatching traffic and measure and improve the accuracy with which it is handled ”.

Owing, however, to the separation referred to above, the engineering branch of the department has at present hardly anything to do with the traffic organisation. The railway organisation, with a separate traffic and an engineering branch, is entirely unsuitable for the telegraph system, in which the conditions of working are essentially different. The traffic organisation of a railway system is more or less a commercial or business engineering. On the other hand, the traffic organisation of a telegraph system is more or less a *scientific* organisation for the successful operation of which a good working knowledge of telegraph engineering is absolutely essential. In fact telegraph traffic and telegraph engineering are so closely inter-linked that one cannot be separated from the other, without crippling the efficiency of both, and increasing the operative cost. At present there is a distinct dual control throughout the telegraph service, which cannot but impair the efficient and economical working of the department. The apparatus and the lines belong to the engineer, but are worked by another agency over which the engineer has no control whatever. It is of the utmost importance that there should be unity of control in the disposal of traffic, which is the primary business of the department.

8. The Committee has had full opportunities of discussing the question of re-uniting the traffic branch with the engineering, and the majority of the officers have supported the re-union. It is interesting to note that no fewer than six Postmasters-General have definitely advocated the separation of the traffic branch from the post office. Amongst these is Mr. P. G. Rogers, I.C.S., who has studied the question very carefully, from the very commencement of the amalgamation, and who has had opportunities of seeing its actual working in large presidency offices like Calcutta and Bombay. He has definitely recommended the transfer of the traffic work to the engineering branch. Even the Deputy Director-General, Traffic, and the Traffic Controller are in favour of the transfer; and so are the Accountant-General, Posts and Telegraphs, and the Deputy Accountant-General in charge of the Telegraph Branch. Mr. Sutherland, Chief Engineer, Telegraphs, at the time of leaving this country, preparatory to retirement, left an official note expressing his considered views on the subject of improving the efficiency of the service. An extract from his note bearing on this point is reproduced below:—

“ The Telegraph Department, when it existed had a very good organisation, Traffic and Engineering went hand in hand, the unit charge was the Sub-division. Divisions were of a workable size and there was an adequate Directorate capable of keeping the machine in an efficient state and dealing with future policy and requirement. To facilitate arriving at an amalgamation of the two departments of Posts and Telegraphs this organisation was broken up. Circles were formed and Sub-divisions abolished. Later, Traffic was dissociated from Engineering and attached to the Post Office and the two departments were combined under one Director-General. This arrangement has been in force sufficiently long to warrant remarking on it.

“ With experience as a Postmaster-General in three Circles, as Deputy Director-General, Traffic, and as Chief Engineer. I

consider the present system is a failure in respect of the dissociation of Traffic from Engineering and is an expensive and inefficient arrangement. I do not advocate the reversion to two separate Departments under two Directors-General. On the contrary I think two departments under one Directorate a better arrangement but I am convinced that Traffic and Engineering should be re-united. * * *

“ The disposal of traffic is entirely dependent on close co-operation between Traffic and Engineering, i.e., close co-operation between the outdoor engineer in charge of the lines, the indoor engineer in charge of the plant, the Divisional Engineer who is in charge of both, and the supervising and operating traffic establishments. None of these have any real connection with the Post Office and have every connection with each other. Postmasters-General of the I. C. S. and Post Office cadres have no knowledge of indoor or outdoor engineering, with which many Traffic troubles are concerned. The indoor and outdoor engineers are under one authority but the traffic establishment is under another. The old organisation was good and the efficiency of the service stood high.

“ Contrast this with present day conditions. The Divisional Engineer has an area which he cannot efficiently control, he has attached officers to whom he can delegate authority but no responsibility. If traffic delays occur the lines are blamed by the Traffic staff and the Traffic staff are blamed by the Engineering, either outdoor or indoor or both, correspondence starts between the head of the Office, the Postmaster-General, the Director of Telegraphs and his Divisional Engineer who is very probably stationed at the seat of the trouble. The nett result is *nil* as everyone blames anyone not in his own branch. Meanwhile we have a Divisional Engineer on the spot who, if responsible for both Traffic and Engineering could effectually settle the matter at the outset. It would be his responsibility whichever side might be to blame. The Postmaster-General has his Deputy Postmaster-General (Traffic) who has his several Superintendents of Telegraph Traffic and all of them tour over the same ground visiting the same offices as Directors, Divisional Engineers and Attached Officers, these engineering officers being perfectly capable of doing the work of both.

“ The dissociation of Traffic from Engineering has been a failure, has not led to economy, and is an inefficient arrangement. I am quite prepared to be told by every Postmaster-General and the whole Traffic Branch that I am wrong but there are two aspects of the case and in representing mine I have no axe to grind ”.

In view of the overwhelming evidence and of the considered opinion of experts to the contrary, it is difficult to see how the retention of the existing arrangement can be justified merely on general grounds. It is true that the separation of traffic from engineering was introduced on the recommendation of a Committee; but it was never contemplated for a moment that the system could not be changed or modified in the light of actual experience of its working.

9. *Comparison of the volume of Traffic disposed of by Combined Offices and by Departmental offices.*—Reference has been made by my colleagues to the working of the combined offices, especially to the volume of traffic disposed of by such offices. It is hardly possible to obtain any correct idea of the relative importance of combined offices with respect to departmental offices, by simply comparing the total volumes of their respective traffic. It should be borne in mind that the departmental offices are either zone or sub-zone centres, and they actually have to collect traffic to and from the feeder lines. The duties and functions of a departmental office do not appear to have been clearly understood. The chief function of a departmental office is the collection of traffic from the smaller offices and the circulation of the same by high-speed apparatus over the longest lines of the country. The duty of a feeder office, on the other hand is simply to transmit and receive the local traffic to and from the nearest departmental office. There can therefore be no fair comparison of the relative importance of the feeder and the main offices, by simply taking into account the volume of traffic disposed of, or the revenue collected at the booking offices. As a matter of fact, although 3,507 combined offices disposed of a total of 10,190,431 messages in 1923-24, the daily average works out to less than 10 messages per office; whereas the signalling operations performed by the main or departmental offices were 87,192,276. That is to say, only about 20 per cent. of the total signalling operations were carried out in the combined offices. The total average traffic disposed of by a combined office is, as stated above, less than 10 messages per day, or less than one message per hour. When the combined office system was first introduced in this country, it was found to be the cheapest agency for collecting the traffic from rural areas, and the Post Office was an agent of the Telegraph Department. This system of combining offices has been gradually extended, and simply because the agents now collect a large volume of traffic and revenue for the main system, it does not necessarily follow that the power of controlling the traffic should be transferred to the agents from the main department which continues to perform 80 per cent. of the signalling operations. It should be clearly understood that a departmental office has to exercise, so to say, the collective responsibility, as regards disposal of traffic, for all the combined offices working into it. The mere volume of the traffic handled in combined offices forms, therefore, no criterion of their relative importance with respect to the departmental offices. This being so, it is unreasonable to contest that the control of the entire traffic branch should remain with the Post Office, lest the re-amalgamation of traffic with engineering should give rise to any kind of dual control in the combined offices, which after all perform only about 20 per cent. of the signalling operations of the department.

10. *Telegraph work during the Great War.*—While on the subject of reuniting the traffic and the engineering branches, it may be mentioned here that in all theatres of the great war, the two branches worked under the same control, namely, that of a telegraph engineer. In Mesopotamia the department had two distinct officers, one in charge of the post office, and the other in charge of the telegraph traffic and engineering. The success of the telegraph operations in Mesopotamia and in other theatres of war, was entirely due to this unification of control. This system is in force in the Royal Corps of Signals. The army does not consider it either necessary, or expedient to split up the service into traffic, and

engineering, mainly because the separation is an artificial one which neither promotes harmony nor conduces to efficiency.

11. *Transfer of Traffic to Engineering.*—The Revised Estimates for 1924-25 of the department show that the traffic organisation in the offices of the Postmasters-General, costs the department Rs. 4,15,370 and the estimated expenditure for 1925-26 is Rs. 4,74,800. If traffic is re-united with engineering, the Directors of Engineering, who at present are not fully worked, will be able to undertake the control of the traffic in addition to their present duties. They will not require the entire staff now provided in the offices of the Postmasters-General. The proposal for the reintroduction of the sub-divisional system has been accepted by Government, and, when effect is given to it, the sub-divisional officer will control the engineering as well as the traffic work in his charge. The traffic control and the inspection of offices will be considerably cheaper. Similarly divisional engineers and directors will control both the branches of the same service. It will then not be necessary to depute highly paid officers to inspect small combined offices as is done at present. Then again at present the traffic is controlled in an over-centralized form, inasmuch as the traffic officers are all located at the headquarters of the Postmasters-General. This obviously cannot be a satisfactory organisation. The re-union of the traffic and the engineering is therefore recommended. The existing Superior Traffic Branch will remain as it is; the officers will be suitably employed as Personal Assistants to the Directors of Telegraphs, and also for general traffic work in large telegraph centres. The scheme will lead to a reduction in the lower grades of the supervising staff.

12. *Re-organization of Railway Mail Service.*—The Committee is unanimous about joining up the Railway Mail Service with the Post Office. This is as it should be. It is however not possible at present to hand over to the Postmasters-General, especially the principal Postmasters-General, the Railway Mail Service in addition to the telegraph traffic, without absolutely overburdening them. This is a matter which requires careful consideration. After all, the telegraph traffic is a foreign branch as far as the Post Office is concerned, whereas the railway mail service is an allied branch of the Post Office. It would therefore not be advisable to add on the railway mail service to the Postmaster-General's charge, without the transfer of the traffic work to the engineering. It would be a very faulty organisation otherwise, which must ultimately interfere with the efficient working of both the branches of the Post Office. The most rational organisation would be to amalgamate the railway mail service with the post office, and the telegraph traffic with telegraph engineering. This would ensure, as far as the department is concerned, a homogeneous organisation, and unity of control in its two main branches.

13. *Reorganisation of the Directorate.*—I regret I differ from the views expressed by my colleagues on the organisation of the Directorate. I consider that the Directorate requires re-organisation, with a view to effecting economy and as well as improving its efficiency. A great deal of extra work in the Directorate is caused by over-centralisation of its own organisation. In paragraph 5 of this note I have recommended the reduction of the number of administrative charges by the introduction of unity of control, i.e., by placing all the branches of the circles under one head, on the lines of the existing organisation in Burma. I anticipate, however, that there may be considerable difficulty in adopting this arrangement, due to the existence of vested interests. I have ventured therefore

to submit an alternative proposal, namely, the re-union of telegraph traffic with telegraph engineering. Under this scheme the Director-General of Posts and Telegraphs need only have two senior officers under him—a Director-in-Chief of Telegraphs, and a Director-in-Chief of Post Offices. The Director-in-Chief, Telegraphs, will have two administrative officers under him,—one Director of Engineering, and one Director of Traffic. These two officers will be assisted by five executive officers. On the postal side the Director-in-Chief will have five Assistant Directors of the same rank as the present Assistant Directors-General. This will, of course, necessitate more decentralisation of the work of the Directorate, by the delegation of greater powers to the circle officers. There are at present six administrative officers at headquarters, under the Director-General, but, by the adoption of this scheme, it will be possible to save two administrative appointments, the average pay of which is nearly Rs. 4,000 per mensem. Besides effecting this economy, the scheme will lead to greater expedition of work in the Directorate.

14. *Re-organisation and re-distribution of Circles.*—The circles may, under my alternative proposal, be redistributed as indicated below :—

Name of Circle.	Postal on Telegraphs or combined.	Major or Minor.	To be placed under Post Office or Telegraph officers.
1. Burma	Combined ..	Major ..	Telegraph.
2. Bengal and Orissa ..	Postal ..	Do. ..	Post Office.
3. Eastern	Telegraphs ..	Do. ..	Telegraph.
4. Assam	Combined ..	Minor ..	Do.
5. Behar	Do. ..	Do. ..	Do.
6. United Provinces ..	Do. ..	Major ..	Do.
7. Central	Do. ..	Do. ..	Do.
8. Punjab and N. W. F. ..	Postal ..	Do. ..	Post Office.
9. Northern	Telegraphs ..	Do. ..	Telegraph.
10. Sind and Baluchistan ..	Combined, ..	Minor ..	Do.
11. Bombay	Postal ..	Major ..	Post Office.
12. Western	Telegraphs ..	Do. ..	Telegraph.
13. Madras	Postal ..	Do. ..	Post Office.
14. Southern	Telegraphs ..	Do. ..	Telegraph.

There are at present thirteen Major Circles and one Minor Circle. Of the thirteen Major Circles, seven are Postal, five Telegraph and one Combined. But from the tabular statement given above, it will be seen that

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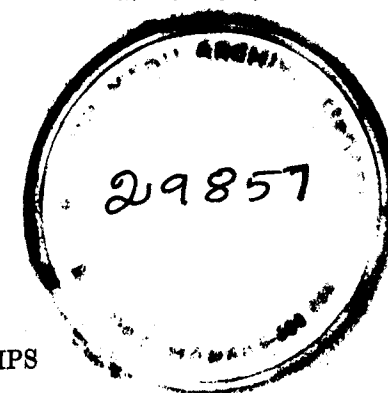
with the proposed redistribution, there will be four Postal, four Telegraph, and three Combined Major Circles, in addition to three Combined Minor Circles which will be placed under Telegraph officers of the executive grade. This arrangement will not only lead to greater efficiency through the unification of control in six circles, but will also effect a saving of two administrative appointments. Further, if this re-distribution is adopted, and the re-union of traffic with engineering is sanctioned, there will be no necessity for retaining the appointment of the Traffic Controller. The Directors of Telegraphs, or the officers in charge of the combined circles, will control the traffic in their respective jurisdictions; the Director-in-Chief of Telegraphs, assisted by the Director of Traffic, will control the traffic arrangements of the department as a whole.

15. *Fixing proportion of General Service to Station Service Telegraphists.*—The question of fixing the proportion of general service to station telegraphists has been under consideration for some years, but no satisfactory solution has yet been reached. In dealing with this vexed question, the efficiency of the operative force should be kept prominently in view. Any drastic measures for increasing the number of station service operators, with a lower salary, cannot but diminish the attractions the service now offers to all classes of recruits both Indian and non-Indian. Such measures must ultimately lower the efficiency of the service. It should be borne in mind that most of our traffic and engineering subordinate officers have been recruited from general service telegraphists, and any reduction in the number of these general service men, will react on the selection of subordinate officers for the higher grades. Further, it would be a serious handicap in the internal administration of the department, if the percentage of station service or non-transferable staff be increased to 50 per cent. It seems impossible to lay down any hard and fast proportion and also to foresee how the proportion recommended by the Committee in this respect will affect the working of the department. In the circumstances I would suggest that for the present, at any rate, no definite proportion be fixed but that every endeavour should be made to increase gradually the strength of station service telegraphists in the department. This question should be reviewed every year with a view to ascertaining the actual requirements of the department in respect of mobile and immobile operative staff.

G. P. ROY.

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to submit an alternative proposal, namely, the re-union of telegraph traffic with telegraph engineering. Under this scheme the Director-General of Posts and Telegraphs need only have two senior officers under him—a Director-in-Chief of Telegraphs, and a Director-in-Chief of Post Offices. The Director-in-Chief, Telegraphs, will have two administrative officers under him,—one Director of Engineering, and one Director of Traffic. These two officers will be assisted by five executive officers. On the postal side the Director-in-Chief will have five Assistant Directors of the same rank as the present Assistant Directors-General. This will, of course, necessitate more decentralisation of the work of the Directorate, by the delegation of greater powers to the circle officers. There are at present six administrative officers at headquarters, under the Director-General, but, by the adoption of this scheme, it will be possible to save two administrative appointments, the average pay of which is nearly Rs. 4,000 per mensem. Besides effecting this economy, the scheme will lead to greater expedition of work in the Directorate.

14. *Re-organisation and re-distribution of Circles.*—The circles may, under my alternative proposal, be redistributed as indicated below :—

Name of Circle.	Postal on Telegraphs or combined.	Major or Minor.	To be placed under Post Office or Telegraph officers.
1. Burma	Combined ..	Major ..	Telegraph.
2. Bengal and Orissa ..	Postal ..	Do. ..	Post Office.
3. Eastern	Telegraphs ..	Do. ..	Telegraph.
4. Assam	Combined ..	Minor ..	Do.
5. Behar	Do. ..	Do. ..	Do.
6. United Provinces ..	Do. ..	Major ..	Do.
7. Central	Do. ..	Do. ..	Do.
8. Punjab and N. W. F. ..	Postal ..	Do. ..	Post Office.
9. Northern	Telegraphs ..	Do. ..	Telegraph.
10. Sind and Baluchistan ..	Combined, ..	Minor ..	Do.
11. Bombay	Postal ..	Major ..	Post Office.
12. Western	Telegraphs ..	Do. ..	Telegraph.
13. Madras	Postal ..	Do. ..	Post Office.
14. Southern	Telegraphs ..	Do. ..	Telegraph.

There are at present thirteen Major Circles and one Minor Circle. Of the thirteen Major Circles, seven are Postal, five Telegraph and one Combined. But from the tabular statement given above, it will be seen that

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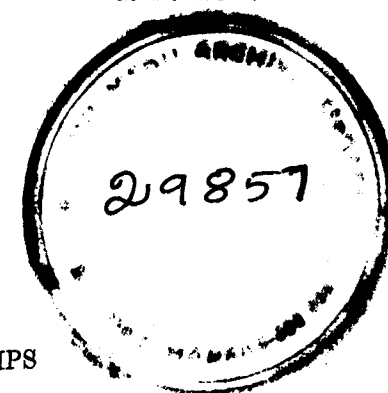
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