

APPENDIX I.

REPORT ON THE FUTURE OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND ROAD/RAIL RELATIONS.

Detailed views of the I. R. T. D. A.

Summary of Report as given at the end of each chapter.

Comments of the I. R. T. D. A.

CHAPTER I.

1. The object of any transport policy must be to provide and develop cheap and efficient transport for all by the means best suited for the kind of traffic involved.

1. Agree; but some clarification is necessary as regards the criteria which will determine the means best suited for the kind of traffic involved.

We urge that business interests and industry be properly represented on any authority which is to implement this recommendation.

2. The interests of individual providers and users of transport must be subordinated to the interests of the whole community.

2. Agree; but it must not be forgotten that the providers and users of transport are members of the community.

3. There should be a Central Transport Budget, in which the Provinces should share, for pooling of revenues and balancing of capital expenditure.

3. Whereas we are strongly in favour of Central Control of all transport, we are not in a position to express any opinion as to whether the proposal for a central transport budget would meet this need.

4. A small expert Committee should be appointed immediately to make recommendations as to the structure of the Central Transport Budget, designed to remove the financial conflicts which were manifest before the war and which will otherwise recur. The consent and co-operation of the Governments concerned is essential.

4. Agree as above.

5. Our specific recommendations are intended primarily to cover the critical years after the war and to lay foundations for the future.

CHAPTER II.

1. Transport should be cheap and accessible to all.

2. The main object should be to get motor transport into the heart of the countryside and to prevent undue overcrowding and competition on the better developed routes.

3. Motor transport should be used to a greater extent than hitherto by the Governments in India for administrative and "development" purposes.

4. The expansion of motor transport will provide employment for demobilised drivers.

5. Public need, convenience and safety should govern the regulation of passenger motor transport, the regulation of the carriage of goods should mainly be with reference to public or economic need only.

CHAPTER III.

1. Few portions of railways are likely to escape road competition for passengers, but healthy competition is desirable.

2. The principle of maximum amalgamation of road transport operators to form substantial concerns on main routes and controlled monopolies on light traffic routes should be the basis of policy.

5. Agree.

1. Agree.

2. Agree; but it connotes a simultaneous improvement throughout the road system of the country.

3. Agree.

4. Agree; but the greatest care is necessary to ensure that the efforts in this direction are not wasted and are placed on really sound foundations.

5. We think that convenience is an important factor of economics in goods transport. We also think the considerations of safety must enter into the question of carriage of any form of transport.

1. Agree.

2. Agree; but we emphasize that the pioneer operator should not be in a position to find himself driven off the road by a more powerful organisation which is anxious to take advantage of the business

3. Railways should now develop closer co-operation with road transport and ultimately acquire a commanding interest. A beginning should be made now. There is no advantage in State Ownership divorced from railways.

4. Subject to certain salutary conditions, there should be no restriction on the range or numbers of passenger motor transport.

5. Minimum fares for both road and rail should be stabilised by agreement.

6. The early creation of an Indian Road Board is necessary.

CHAPTER IV.

1. While there is little prospect in the near future of motor transport being used for marketing crops and supplying village needs, it will develop gradually with a real improvement of roads and a reduction in its costs. Even now, it can assist special forms of agriculture, e. g. market gardening and fruit growing and should be encouraged to do so.

2. Local " trucking " will undoubtedly increase in industrial and urban areas.

he has built up, particularly during seasons of increased traffic. For the protection of the pioneer operator, it would appear that businessmen must be widely included in the authorities which control these quasi monopolies.

3. We are opposed to railways acquiring a commanding interest in road transport. It follows we do not agree that a beginning should now be made. We agree there is no advantage in State Ownership divorced from railways,

4. Agree.

5. We are reluctantly prepared to agree to the fixation of minimum fares provided they are stabilised by agreement between the railways and the road operators concerned. This should be stabilised at frequent intervals and should as far as practicable satisfy all concerned.

6. WE AGREE.

1. In agreeing with this statement, we would emphasize that in other parts of the world it has been established that there are perishable foodstuffs, particularly in the neighbourhood of urban areas which can only be carried by motor vehicles.

2. Agree.

3. An immediate urgency for action is in the field of general goods transport in which road/rail questions at once arise.

4. No improvements in operation or efficiency of the railways can sterilise road competition for the carriage of the higher rated goods traffic.

5. Motor transport can compete economically with railways only in respect of short-haul goods traffic; the transfer of such traffic to the roads would be an improvement of transport facilities and should be encouraged.

6. In the past, overloading and finance by bankruptcy enabled motor transport to compete uneconomically with railways for long distance goods traffic and impelled railways to resort to wasteful cutting. The recurrence of this should be prevented except where long distance traffic by road is in the public interest by a system of regulation combining expert judgment of the merits of each case on the basis of public and economic need and scientific zoning.

3. Agree; this is true in respect of public goods transport by road, particularly on routes parallel to railways. However, in respect of the private carrier class, i.e. motor transport operated by private owners for their own private purposes, road/rail questions should not arise, as was admitted by Government during discussions on the Motor Vehicles Act of 1939. The same applies to other vehicles performing functions which cannot be discharged by railways, such as traffic of specialised nature, including refrigerator vans, requiring 100% road transportation.

4. This may be so; nevertheless, it is the duty of the railways to improve their service for every possible article they can handle. We presume the statement in question does not connote that railways intend to stagnate. There is very great room for improved services.

5. Though we agree with the latter half, we do not agree with the first portion. Whereas on broad lines this statement may be correct, we take the view that the limit placed at 50 or 100 miles is far too low. We visualise short-haul traffic as being more in the neighbourhood of 250 miles.

6. Please see remarks on para 5. The best solution to road/rail problems seems to be to revise railway rates so as to bring the ceiling down to about the lowest level at which motor transport can compete. This will entail the raising of the rate for coal or similar low-rated commodities. The public should then have freedom to choose the method of transport to be employed. The means of transport best suited to any kind of traffic will then be indicated by the con-

7. A definite road/rail policy must precede any general revision of railway rates and tariffs.

8. There is, in general, no advantage in railways operating or participating in motor transport of goods on parallel routes. However, during the war and in the years immediately following, direct, joint, or co-ordinated use of motor transport by railways, on a short term basis will be necessary.

9. The control of traffic on the National Highway System should be central.

10. The early creation of the Indian Road Board is necessary.

CHAPTER V.

1. Motor Transport is paying adequately for the use of roads, in addition to a reasonable contribution to public revenues.

2. A scientific review of motor vehicles taxation is necessary.

sumers' choice, based on the service the various transport agencies are capable of rendering.

WE AGAIN URGE THAT ON ANY AUTHORITY, BUSINESSMEN MUST BE REPRESENTED.

7. As above. Our opinion is that the railway rate structure requires to be completely revised.

8. Even if it is of no advantage to the railway, it is of advantage to the general community to have parallel freight services not necessarily operated by the railways themselves.

That road motor transport of goods on routes parallel to the railways is in the public interest is shown by the recently inaugurated service between Mettupalayam & Ootacamund on the S. I. Rly. and similar new services elsewhere.

9. We presume this applies only to "through" traffic on the National Highway system.

10. AGREE.

1. We feel that motor transport is paying a disproportionately large share.

2. We agree that a scientific review of motor taxation is necessary, particularly with regard to reciprocal exemption for inter-provincial movements of vehicles.

We are of the opinion that taxation should be equal throughout India including the Indian States. We realise

the difficulties but suggest now is the time to start with a clean slate and remove the anomalies. This can be done all the more easily if there is to be a Central Transport Budget because the revenues received by the Provinces from the Centre will then require adjustment. Unless taxation is uniform, how can minimum fares be laid down and why should operators be favoured in one Province and penalised in another?

Please also see Appendix II on Inter-Provincial Transport.

CHAPTER VI.

1. The existing Transport Authorities under the Motor Vehicles Act, 1939 are adequate for the regulation and control of passenger motor transport, but the Provincial Authority should have a whole-time Chairman and should include representatives of road, rail and, where necessary other forms of transport.

2. Goods transport on National Highways should be controlled by the Centre.

3. Subject to the above, the regulation and control of goods transport should be in the hands of a whole-time Provincial Transport Commissioner (who will also be the Chairman of the Provincial (Passenger) Transport Authority), to be nominated by the Central Government, and of the Chairmen of the Regional Transport Authorities under him.

4. An Indian Road Board should be created from April 1944, to examine in greater detail the complex problems involved, to prepare for the launching of the road plan, and to make a beginning in the regulation and co-ordination of

1. Agree.

2. We presume this is intended to refer to "through" goods transport on national highways.

3. Yes; but it is not clear whether the Provincial Transport Commissioners will be empowered to issue permits for "through" traffic on National Highways on behalf of the Central Government.

4. Yes; This should be done quickly. It is desirable that there should be a non-official representative of road transport interests on the Indian Road Board.

transport, even before the termination of the war. This Board should be responsible generally for the development of roads, of road transport and closer road/rail relation.

5. The existence of a Member and Department of Transport is axiomatic.

5. Agree.

CHAPTER VII.

1. Legislation may be required to give the Indian Road Board a constitutional backing and to provide for the adjustment of differences between the Central and Provincial Governments.

1. Agree.

2. The Motor Vehicles Act, 1939. needs amendment in a number of respects.

2. Agree. We would draw special attention to the recommendation to remove the bar which now exists against the representation of people engaged in—which means people having a knowledge of—road transport on the transport Authorities.

In Appendix II we refer, inter alia, to the need for a special class of permit for semi-goods vehicles such as Demonstration Units and the like—and also to other aspects of regulations. The Appendix contains specific examples of existing anomalies arising from present decentralised control.

3. The various Motor Vehicles Taxation Acts in force need amendment to rectify anomalies.

3. Agree.

CHAPTER VIII.

1. The bullock cart will be the principal means of transport for agricultural marketing for some time to come.

1. Agree. It follows that the needs of bullock cart traffic should not be lost sight of in designing roads. Competition

2. The development of pneumatic tyred carts must be pursued. The tyres and the carts should be manufactured in India; a start might be made from the salvage available after the war.

CHAPTER IX.

1. The use of producer gas should be encouraged.

between motor transport and bullock cart will be useful.

2. Agree. The suggestion to use post-war salvage is sound but it is considered that something should be done at once to prevent bullock carts from scarifying road surfaces. The Indian Roads Congress has been experimenting with a broad rimmed bullock cart wheel which differs very little from the existing wheel except that it is 5½" wide. These could be fitted with simple type roller bearings and made by village wheelwrights—a great point—and, while not being as satisfactory as pneumatic equipment, will reduce the wear and tear of road surfaces to a very marked extent. There is no need to wait for the end of the war to introduce this type of wheel. The amount of wood and steel required is almost exactly the same as that consumed in the existing narrow rimmed wheel.

No objection provided at all times the principle is maintained that no class of vehicles should be subsidised by inequitable taxation conditions. All vehicles should pay their share towards roads without discrimination. Since the report accepts the fact that the best method of taxation to deal with wear and tear of roads is a tax on fuel, it seems inconsistent to suggest that the producer gas vehicle should not be made to pay an equivalent tax to the petrol vehicle.

We would at the same time stress the need for reducing the duty on petrol, so that increased use may bring in greater return in tax revenue.

As regards the basis of post-war taxation of producer gas vehicles and

diesel engined vehicles, our view, as we said in 1938 when dealing with diesel fuel, is that the merits of the vehicles should be allowed to establish themselves.

A copy of our letter dated 30-3-1938 is enclosed-Appendix IV. Whatever we said therein in regard to diesel vehicles applies with equal force to producer gas. In short, as a direct tax on diesel fuel or charcoal is not practicable, the next best method is to fix a vehicle tax for diesel and producer gas vehicles, based upon an average annual vehicle mileage. The incidence of the tax should be such as to leave the comparative merits of petrol and diesel and charcoal vehicles as nearly as possible as they would be if they ran free of taxation so that none of them would be deprived, by taxation, of the opportunity of developing on its own merits.

2. The future policy regarding the closure or retention of branch line railways should be determined before the question arises of the replacement of those dismantled during the war.

3. The questions of the use of decked railway bridges by road traffic and the finance of combined road and railway bridges will be more easily resolved under the arrangements proposed in this Report.

2. Certainly.

3. The decking of railway bridges should only be regarded as a temporary expedient until funds are available for separate road bridges.

Even the decking of railway bridges to make them usable by road vehicles will probably take some time and may call for certain structural alterations. In any case the number of bridges which can be so adapted must be limited. It is suggested that temporary improvement can be effected quickly and cheaply in the crossing of rivers immediately after the war by the utilization of surplus landing craft and invasion barges. To a province like Bengal, where the roads

generally run at right angles to the many rivers, this would mean a considerable facility where no crossing at present exists.

4. For the proper study of transport questions fuller road/rail and other traffic statistics will be necessary.

4. Agree.

CHAPTER X.

We agree that the question of Indian States is of primary importance.

APPENDIX II.

(Vide remarks against Chapter V, para 2, and Chapter VII, para 2).

Inter-Provincial Road Transport.

Double Taxation:—It is generally the case that a vehicle, used in more than one taxation area, incurs more than one tax for the same taxation period and this unfair double taxation introduces additional complications into the operation of motor fleets. The furtherance of national transport development and economic unity reasonably calls for a uniform system in which single registration and taxation would cover a vehicle wherever it may legally go. Without damaging provincial and state finance and without requiring major re-organisation, reforms are needed to remove these undesirable barriers against the free passage of goods and vehicles. Simplification of road law, particularly affecting taxation, would be equivalent to the removal of very substantial natural barriers to transport development.

The present system, by which each province and state is responsible for raising its own road revenue, creates a vested interest in the fragmentation of Indian Road transport. Reform could be effected by centralised taxation and the issue of bulk grants to each area according to its burden or, alternatively, the issue of a "general", as opposed to a restricted, permit would entail a division of the revenue from the relative licence amongst the areas in which the vehicle operates, the proportions to be based on information supplied by the holder. Such "general" licences would be at a higher rate than restricted ones to defray the extra cost of administration.

Permit System:—Further complications are caused by the system of permits designed to control the development of public carrier transport organisations, to improve their service and to prevent uneconomic competition. It could never reasonably have been the aim of legislation to resist the private operation of road transport for purposes for which rail services cannot cater. Whilst such a system is necessary to regulate public carriers, its obstructive effect could be reduced by instituting three forms of permits to cover vehicles used for goods transport as their main function or ancillary to other purposes.

1. For public carriers, demarking the area and conditions of operation.
2. For private goods carrying vehicles

Permits issued in the area of registration whilst prescribing their function should allow such vehicles to travel freely throughout all the provinces and States.

3. For specially registered semi-goods vehicles which are not used for the transportation of goods but which carry goods for special purposes.

Propaganda and demonstration units which carry limited supplies to facilitate their main function, comprise a typical class. Such permits would apply only to vehicles clearly designed for some purposes other than the carriage

3-04 of goods. Other vehicles in this category would include mobile clinics, cinema vans etc. The licensing and operation of these vehicles should be as untrammelled as ordinary private motor cars and they should not be subject to any of the orders restricting movements of goods vehicles on particular roads since (a) the vehicles, if they carry goods, are not primarily used for the purpose and do not compete with the existing transport services upon which they depend, and (b) they do not carry loads to make them in any way different from a private motor car of equal size.

Road Laws and Regulations :—The diversity of road laws and regulations in this country comprise another field of needed reform and they should be unified to fall within a national understandable pattern.

Local regulations are devised without any necessity to conform to generally applied principles, e.g. in respect of definitions, some roads are scheduled as fit for "light" vehicles but this term is not nationally defined and its application does not always accord with the national definition of heavy vehicles. An operator may thus break the law by interpreting local regulations on his experience elsewhere. This vagueness of definitions complicates the assembly of reliable road data and, in particular, seasonal road restrictions should be promulgated in a standard form.

Local Procedure :—Lacking complete uniformity throughout the country there is a greater responsibility on authorities to assist incoming traffic to keep the law. It is often necessary for those operating vehicles in certain States to make prior written applications for detailed permits, and replies are not always prompt. There is considerable room for improved information and rationalisation in respect of detached portions of States — which are many — crossed by 'through' highways. Maps are an inadequate guide to these instances and they are not usually indicated by frontier posts where legal formalities can be completed. This lack of helpful arrangements frequently results in a technical offence and a consequent dislocation of schedules whilst awaiting settlement in the courts — sometimes far distant.

Action Required :—Difficulties in the way of reform are obvious, some constitutional, which may delay complete realisation but success through Central legislation in respect of the provinces plus negotiated agreement by the Centre with States, should not be impossible. Continuance of the present conditions will prevent the full use by the nation of the expanded road systems scheduled for the post-war future.

Experience shows it is futile to regard progress as a matter of stimulating reciprocity arrangements between provinces, and between Provinces and States and, in addition to secure uniformity by tackling individual anomalies.

The underlying principles permitting the fragmentation of road law, taxation and administration are objects most requiring examination and improvement. Only the Central Government can tackle this and, as they have in many other problems in the past had no difficulty in securing general adherence to a national policy similarly they should have no great difficulty in putting over a radical change in respect of transport law.