

CONFIDENTIAL

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

POST WAR RECONSTRUCTION'

REPORT

OF

THE TECHNICAL SUB-COMMITTEE

TO

THE SUBJECT COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT

ON THE FUTURE OF ROAD TRANSPORT

AND

ROAD RAIL RELATIONS

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APPENDIX I

[Vide para. 5 (1).]

ROADS AND ROAD TRANSPORT.

Precis of Report of Technical Sub-Committee.

1. *The Present position.*—There has been no road planning in India and the evolution of road administration has been on the assumption that roads are suitable for devolution. Roads are a Provincial subject and the responsibility for the bulk of the roads upon which rural welfare depends has been thrown to local bodies with bad results. "Provincial" metalled roads have been developed as the skeleton of a system convenient to the administration and the more influential classes while rural roads have generally been neglected. There has been no expansion or improvement commensurate with the growth of the population and the movement of commercial crops. That more and better roads are a necessity that will make for social, political and economic progress cannot be disputed.

2. *Classification of roads for planning.*—The policy laid down by the Transport Advisory Council in the matter of road development and construction is to the effect that in future road plans should give more weight than heretofore to improvements in rural areas now inadequately served while at the same time, despite objections to the duplication of existing means of transport, there must be an adequate system of national trunk roads (called the skeleton system of trunk roads by that Council). Starting from this it follows that there must be a uniform road classification based on primary objects and usage. The road plan should accordingly consist of plans for the following classes of roads!—

- A. National Highways,
- B. Provincial Main Roads,
- C. District Roads,
- D. Village Roads.

Each class has its function and the order in which the classes have been placed does not imply any order of priority or importance. But there can be no doubt that preference is due to classes C. and D.

3. *National highways.*—The National highways should be planned by the Centre, in consultation with the Provinces and States, upon national considerations including defence, security and general policy. In broad outline these roads will link Provincial capitals by the nearest reasonable routes, main ports and international routes at frontiers. It is important that the Centre should have control over traffic on national highways and their maintenance and development should be a charge on Central revenues.

4. *Provincial main roads.*—The Provincial main roads will include the bulk of the existing trunk roads which do not become national highways. For the road plan this is the class needing the least emphasis, since it has behind it the interests of the Provincial administration, of commerce, of transport operators, private motorists and the influential classes generally. Development of these roads is not likely to be neglected and they should be delineated and their improvements planned by Provincial authorities and considered separately from the bulk of the plan which must be directed towards rural development.

5. *District Roads.*—By this process of elimination we could reduce the somewhat alarming prospect of an all India road planning to a district-wise survey. The district roads which are mainly those under the charge of local bodies should be uniformly planned on a rational basis with reference to the criteria of accessibility and standard of work. By accessibility is meant how nearly the rural population has access to the rural road system in charge of public authority. It has been suggested that an arbitrary and *prima facie* reasonable criterion of bringing public roads to within half a mile of all large villages should be adopted provisionally and that the matter should be further investigated by random sampling in a few typical areas. The question of standards of work is more difficult and would depend on the volume of traffic to be carried.

6. *Village Roads.*—There are hardly any proper village roads at present. Villages are scattered more or less evenly over the countryside and many fall within, rather than on, the existing mesh of roads maintained by public authorities. The track connecting the village with the nearest public road is not so much a thoroughfare as a private lane used, or abused, by the villagers. The tracks often follow the boundaries of fields rather than the most direct route and the actual alignment may vary from time to time with fragmentation or consolidation of holdings. Obviously to plan the development of the public roads and to ignore the last mile or so which the villager has to traverse, is to leave the work half-done. Where a survey reveals that there are large villages or groups of villages unreasonably far from the public road system, then that system must be extended to give better service. But there still remains the last link of the village road and great drive will be needed to bring about its improvement. The great bulk of these village roads must for many years remain merely graded or stabilized earth and their management might

have to be left to village panchayats subject to the necessary technical and other advice being made available.

7. *Bridging*.—The question of bridging is also important. A bridge is a permanent asset, relatively cheap to maintain, and major bridging may be useful in taking up the slack of steel and cement production in the early years after the war. Major bridge siting and designing is specialised work, and technical advice will have to be given to those concerned.

8. *Road-Rail Co-ordination*.—In any plan for road development, the essential functions which railways alone can perform and the question of road-rail co-ordination or an appropriate division of functions must be taken into account. The possible effects of road building and road traffic on the finances of railways and on the ability of the railways generally to continue the low rates on materials, e.g., coal, on which industries have grown and depend should be borne in mind. In particular the point whether a branch line dismantled during the war is to be restored or not would necessitate alternative road plans.

The release of large numbers of drivers and vehicles after the war will create new problems. The main object of any road plan must be to get motor transport into the heart of the countryside where it has not so far gone, not only to reduce competition on developed routes, but because it is in itself desirable. The problem of absorbing these vehicles in rural areas should therefore be planned for.

The Technical Committee is prepared to make proposals in this regard, if called on to do so.

9. *Road administration and finance*.—The Technical Committee is precluded from discussing the probable capital and recurring cost of the road plan and the problem of financing it. The question is whether the present distribution of responsibility for roads accords with the distribution of sources of revenue and powers to tax. If not, any road plan will be wrecked in the attempt to saddle inelastic revenues with necessarily expanding liabilities. In any case the methods of doing from the Centre to the Provinces (the allocation and grants from the Central Road Fund, comprising the proceeds of a part of the import and excise duty on motor spirit, are referred to) and from the Provinces to local bodies should stop and be replaced by arrangements based on the principle that the Government and the Legislature that impose the taxation should be responsible for the proper use of the money and for the maintenance of the roads provided with it.

These points need not hold up the preparation of the road plan, but should be faced before it is ready.

10. *Preparation of plan*.—With a stereotyped form of recording information and proposals, the mechanics of compiling the plan on the lines indicated in paras. 1 to 7 above could be simplified. It is assumed that the plan should be ready for use by January 1945. It will probably have to be in two parts, providing respectively for immediate post-war work and a longer term plan. If possible, the general plan should be ready in skeleton outline by the end of March 1944 in order to take stock of the position.

11. *Organisation at the Centre*.—All this indicates the necessity for a Central organisation which would investigate the various issues involved, deal with all administrative and technical problems and advise Provinces on all technical matters. More realistic rural road planning needs new angles of vision and new researches and traffic studies. These things if left to Provinces mean multiplication, waste of effort and delay. The Central organisation must therefore be adequate, not only to give the lead, but to step in where there is stagnation.

12. *Summary of recommendations*.—(i) For rational planning, roads must be divided into the four classes mentioned in para. 2 above, the plan for each being self-contained and ready, in skeleton outline by 31st March 1944.

(ii) As far as possible, the plan should take into account the probable future of branch-line railways.

(iii) The Central Government should delineate and plan for class A, indicate the form and format of the plan for other classes, tender advice and assistance over the whole field, including various investigations by sampling and other preparatory work.

(iv) The general outline of the proposals should be stated in a general letter to Provinces. More detailed letters should follow on each class.

(v) The initiative must be taken by the Central Government and its organization must be adequate.

(vi) The Technical Committee should be authorized to report further on a plan for the future of road transport and road-rail relations.

(vii) The position of the States in relation to these plans (which the Technical Committee expect will result in the disappearance of the road fund in its present form) must be examined.

APPENDIX II.

[Vide para. 14 (3).]

PART (A)

Tonnage of, and earnings from, goods traffic other than fuel, military traffic, live-stock and Railway materials and stores carried over Class I Railways during 1938-39.

Serial No.	Commodity.	Tons.	Earnings (Rupees).	Percentage of total goods earnings.
<i>All figures are in hundreds.</i>				
1	Rice in husk	9,621	42,842	0.65
2	Rice not in husk	38,875	2,96,244	4.46
3	Gram and pulse	26,401	2,28,565	3.44
4	Wheat	23,642	2,39,875	3.62
5	Jowar and Bajra	7,212	52,607	0.79
6	Other grains	7,530	49,153	0.74
7	Marble and stone	38,047	90,900	1.37
8	Salt	21,952	1,77,534	2.67
9	Sugar	22,367	2,15,914	3.25
10	Wood, unwrought	18,175	84,609	1.27
11	Metallic ores	38,468	1,05,899	1.59
12	Oil seeds	40,824	3,60,313	5.42
13	Cotton, raw, pressed	12,242	2,73,737	4.12
14	Petrol (in bulk)	3,879	1,03,938	1.56
15	Kerosene oil (in bulk)	6,082	76,355	1.15
16	Molasses (in bulk)	3,180	13,100	0.20
17	Cotton, raw, unpressed	1,766	15,306	0.23
18	Cotton manufactured	12,493	2,53,763	3.90
19	Fodder	17,716	86,516	1.30
20	Fruits and vegetables, fresh	35,332	1,27,257	1.92
21	Gur, jaggree & molasses etc. (not in bulk)	10,134	88,130	1.33
22	Jute, raw	15,836	1,18,290	1.78
23	Iron & steel, wrought	24,250	2,63,367	3.97
24	Kerosene oil (in tins)	5,965	82,116	1.24
25	Petrol in tins	726	13,203	0.20
26	Tobacco	5,408	87,741	1.32
27	Provisions	20,444	3,06,154	4.61
28	Manures	3,990	19,305	0.29
29	Other commodities	1,40,699	11,77,011	17.72
Total			50,54,744	76.11
Fuel, military traffic, live-stock, Railway materials and stores on Revenue Account.			15,87,024	23.89
Total Goods Earnings (Class I Rys.)			66,41,768	100

PART (B)

Statement of average charges in pies per ton mile over certain Railways in 1938-39.

Serial No. in Part (A).	Commodities.	Rates in pies per ton mile.					Percentage of earnings of this commodity to total goods earnings Class I Railways.
		B.N.R.	G.I.P.	E.I.R.*	M.S.M. (B.G.).	N.W.R.	
2	Rice not in husk	10.54	9.40	6.63	5.60	..	4.46
4	Wheat	9.58	7.38	..	..	7.68	3.62
5	Jowar & Bajra	12.41	7.92	..	10.71	7.68	0.79
8	Salt	10.63	8.31	..	6.25	..	2.67
9	Sugar	4.34	6.84	9.9	3.60	11.13	3.25
13	Cotton, raw, pressed	..	19.90	12.4*	14.04	16.57	4.12
18	Cotton manufactured	8.04	11.09	12.8*	19.50	..	3.90
20	Fruits and vegetables fresh	..	7.94	10.5*	9.29	..	1.92
24	Kerosene oil in tins	12.82	12.26	..	13.23	..	1.24
26	Tobacco	13.02	15.63	..	16.28	..	1.32

~~Actual charges in pies per ton mile for certain other goods not named above.~~ The percentage of total earnings from these (and many others) are included in item 29 of part (A).

Paper bales or bundles	9.10	..	..	..	..
Wheat flour	11.42	..	..	..	..
Matches	25.50	..	..	..	..
Ghee	13.41	..	16.4*	..	..
Tea	7.10	..	13.8*	..	..
Mowha flowers	9.07	12.74	..	..	..
Betel nuts and spices	12.86	..	14.0*	..	..
Hardware . . . . .	..	..	19.9*	..	..
Stationery . . . . .	..	..	19.9*	..	..

* These figures show the actual charges (pre-war) between certain important stations and may not represent the average for the entire system.

APPENDIX III.

[Vide para. 18 (3).]

Actual Example—Delhi Muttra Road, Mile 4.

	Tons per day.	Percentage of Total.
Motor transport vehicles	1192.78	72.3
Motor car and taxis	169.93	10.3
Other vehicles	288.29	17.4
	<u>1651.00</u>	<u>100.0</u>

	Rs.
Capital value at present day costs	32,000
Interest at 4%	1,280 p.a.
Maintenance	1,300 p.a.
Total annual bill.	<u>2,580 p.a.</u>

Share of motor transport 72.3% of 2580 = Rs. 1,865

Gross ton miles motor transport = 1192.78

Nett @ 2/3rd = 794

Cost per ton mile to be recovered = $1865 \times 16 \times 12$

$$\frac{794 \times 365}{1865 \times 16 \times 12} = 1.235 \text{ pies.}$$

Cost per nett ton mile 24 pies. Of that 1.235 pies is 5.15 per cent.

The "average" case assumed was that 6.9 per cent of operating cost should go to pay for the road.