

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

Tuesday, 15th February, 1921.

The Assembly met in the Assembly Chamber at Eleven of the Clock.
The Honourable the President in the Chair.

The Honourable the President: Members desiring to take their seats, will please advance to the table to take the Oath or Affirmation in the manner prescribed.

There was no Member present to take the Oath.

The Honourable the President: The next item on the List of Business is the asking and answering of questions.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

CLEARING OF LETTER BOXES IN VILLAGES.

1. **Mr. M. K. Reddiyar :** (a) Is Government aware of a general complaint from the village population that the present system of delivering letters and closing the post boxes is far from satisfactory ; and of a demand as a remedy that the post boxes should be cleared, at least two hours after the delivery of the letters, to facilitate the posting of replies to the letters received ?

(b) Do Government propose to inquire with a view to make the necessary changes ?

Mr. C. A. Innes : Where there is a post office in a village, letters are delivered as soon as possible after they are received. On the other hand the time at which letters are despatched from the village is regulated by the hour of departure of the nearest mail train.

In villages where there is no post office but only a letter box, the postman delivers letters in the village and before leaving it clears the local letter box. As he takes some time delivering letters or paying money orders in the village it is likely that he does find replies, to some of the letters delivered, in the letter box when he clears it and, in practice, if requested to do so, he waits for a few minutes for urgent letters.

With the present establishment it is impracticable to require the village postman to wait two hours at each village and the cost of carrying out the proposed change would be out of all proportion to the advantages to be gained by the villagers.

RATES FOR TELEGRAMS AND RAILWAY FARES, ETC.

2. **Mr. B. Venkatapatiraju :** Do the Government propose to reduce at an early date, (1) the inland telegram rates and (2) fares for third class passengers

' With regard to the Army, our military services are at present undergoing a process of reorganization, and, in actual fact, practically all the existing appointments are at present on a provisional basis. At the point which the scheme for reorganization has so far reached, it can only be said that it is proposed to reduce a large number of regimental appointments, while, on the other hand, it will probably be necessary to create permanently certain new appointments, in order to admit of the improvement of the staff and departmental organization and to provide for certain new services, such as the Royal Air Force and Mechanical Transport. Appointments carrying rates of pay in excess of Rs. 500 on the military side are, apart from appointments on the clerical establishments, almost invariably filled by officers holding King's Commissions, the main qualification for which is that the candidate must be a British subject and must have passed successfully through Sandhurst or Woolwich. Arrangements have been made, since the date of the Armistice, to give a certain number of King's Commissions to Indian gentlemen.

As regards the higher military clerical appointments, a number of these are held by Indians, who have precisely the same opportunities for advancement as Europeans. The present intention is to make the clerical establishments at Army Headquarters civilian in status and to throw open appointments, as far as possible, to Indians who are qualified under the rules governing recruitment for the Secretariat offices of the Government of India'.

INDIAN EXCHANGE.

67. **Mr. Manmohandas Ramji:** (a) What have been the highest and lowest points between which the Indian exchange has fluctuated during the year 1920, and what were the dates on which these points were reached?

(b) Has it been found possible to maintain and support the rate of 2s. fixed by the Government?

(c) What steps, if any, are proposed to be taken by the Government to maintain and support the rate of 2s. fixed by them.

(d) If it is not possible to maintain and support the rate of 2s. fixed by the Government, will they be prepared to reconsider the recommendations of the Majority Report of the Committee on which the recommendations of the Government of India were based?

The Honourable Mr. W. M. Hailey:

(a) Highest rate	2s. 10½d. Calcutta on 11th February 1920.
Lowest rate	1s. 4½d. Calcutta and Bombay several days in Decem- ber 1920.

(b), (c) and (d). I may refer the Honourable Member to the answer which I shall shortly be giving to Mr. Garu in a similar question.

SLAUGHTER OF CATTLE.

68. **Mr. Manmohandas Ramji:** Will the Government be pleased to state :—

(a) The number of slaughter-houses in British India maintained by municipalities, military authorities, private or other agencies, and where they are located?

(b) The total number of cattle (classified, if possible, into cows and buffaloes and calves of these) slaughtered at these slaughter-houses during the last quinquennium?

(c) The total quantity of beef required by the military authorities every year?

(d) How far this demand is met by slaughter of indigenous cattle and how far by import from outside?

(e) Whether it is possible to increase imports of frozen meat to such an extent as to replace the slaughter of indigenous cattle?

(f) What restrictions, if any, as to age, etc., are imposed in the case of different slaughter-houses regarding the slaughter of cattle?

Mr. J. Hullah: Full information is not available, but is being collected as far as possible. As regards the Army in India, the information is as follows:—

(a) There are 55 slaughter-houses in India besides a varying but small number of field slaughteries trans-Indus, *i.e.*, one at every station where British troops are rationed and besides these, sheep and goats are slaughtered at a large number of special and small locally arranged slaughter-houses wherever Indian troops require them. In a few large centres municipal slaughter-houses are used by Army Contractors, *e.g.*, at Bombay.

(b) No statistics exist showing the number slaughtered in the last 5 years, nor is it possible to classify these except to say that no buffaloes or buffalo calves are used for ration purposes. Vicious bulls and bullocks and sterile cows form a large proportion of the cattle used for ration purposes. Fertile cows and useful draught and plough animals are too valuable for milk and draught purposes to be sold at the low prices paid under competitive conditions.

(c) The quantity required annually approximates to 7,752 tons of fresh beef.

(d) All requirements are met by the use of indigenous cattle, except that the mobilization reserve and any surplus of tinned meat likely to deteriorate, if kept in stock, is turned over by occasional issues as necessary to British troops instead of fresh meat. No imported meat is used as rations. For hospitals, imported concentrates are issued, such as essence of beef.

(e) It is not possible to import frozen meat without heavy expenditure in oversea countries and on ship and rail freight charges and on numerous specially built refrigerator vans and cold storage, all of which would require the employment of highly paid experts to erect and maintain them. Fresh meat in India is obtainable at the cheapest prices known; importations of meat would involve heavy unnecessary expenditure abroad.

(f) No restrictions are imposed.

The Honourable the President : The hour of questions having come to an end, before we proceed to the next item of business, I should like to draw the attention of Members to the fact that there are 260 questions on the order paper to-day and that we are now, at the end of one hour, at Question 68. No doubt this is due partly to the position in which we are at the beginning of the Session, with a large accumulation of business awaiting handling by the Assembly. If, as time goes on, however, the number of questions remains as great as it is at present, the Assembly will have to find means for dealing with them. I would remind them that the House of Commons has found it necessary to lay down the rule, first of all, that questions remaining unanswered at the end of any given sitting shall be answered not orally but by printed answers circulated with the votes the following morning. Secondly, a further restriction has been placed by the House of Commons on the asking and answering of questions by the imposition of a limit of eight questions, which number, and no more, shall be asked by any one Member at any given sitting. I am only giving this for the information of the Assembly to show that, in order to protect the business of the Assembly and in order that questions may be answered and may not be crowded out by the business of the Assembly, we may be compelled to issue some such rules as these for our own use. No rules will be introduced as yet, until we see how business proceeds. Meanwhile, Members might bear this in mind.

Rao Bahadur T. Rangachariar : May I say for your information that in the local Council in Madras we have an interval of half an hour before the meeting commences, printed answers are laid on the table and if anybody has any supplementary question to ask, he writes it down and asks the question. That saves time. Perhaps that may be a convenient method to adopt.

The Honourable the President : I can assure the Honourable Member that all means of procedure will be duly considered before any procedure is adopted under the powers conferred upon the Chair by the Rules and the Standing Orders.

I have a Message from His Excellency :

The Message was received by the Assembly, standing.

MESSAGE FROM HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR GENERAL.

ORDER.

For the purposes of sub-section (1) of section 67A. of the Government of India Act and in pursuance of Rules 43, 46 and 47 of the Indian Legislative Rules, I, Frederic John Napier, Baron Chelmsford, hereby appoint the following days for the presentation to the Legislative Assembly of the statement of the estimated annual expenditure and revenue of the Governor General in Council (in the said Rules referred to as the Budget) and for