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GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
RAILWAY DEPARTMENT
(RAILWAY BOARD)

Annexure 'A'.

No. 409-TC.

New Delhi, 1st May, 1947.

To

The General Managers,
All Indian Govt. Railways.

The Board have for some time had under consideration the question of decasualisation of certain types of railway labour, and as an experiment one administration was directed to work out a scheme for decasualising the licensed porters working at a large station. The report is still awaited, but as in the meantime certain recommendations bearing on the subject have been made by the Labour Department of the Government of India, the Board have decided that each railway which entrusts the licensing of porters to contractors or jamedars should experiment at one large station for a period of six months with a system of direct recruitment, and therefore report to the Board with recommendations. The Board desire individual administrations to work out their own schemes, but to observe the following principles:-

- (1) A register of licensed porters to be opened and maintained by the railway at the station concerned. Licensed porters at present in the service of contractors or under the supervision of jamedars should, if their characters are satisfactory, be taken on to the railway registers.
- (2) No licensed porter should be deprived of his work unless he wishes to resign or there are complaints against him which would justify dispensing with his labour.
- (3) A special railway organisation to be set up to supervise and control porters and prevent exploitation of passengers. This organisation will, in addition, verify the characters of new-comers to the service, and so regulate the flow of labour that all licensed porters will have reasonable opportunity of earning a days' wage.
- (4) Free medical treatment to be provided for licensed porters.
- (5) A monthly or daily licence fee on a 'no profit no loss' basis to be recovered from licensed porters to cover the cost of the organisation referred to in (3) above and the provision of uniforms (2 shirts a year).
- (6) Badges and buckles to be supplied free by the railway, but to remain railway property. A small returnable security deposit to be taken from the licensed porters to whom such railway property is entrusted.

- (7) Licensed porters to be required to sign a bond or enter into some other form of agreement to ensure their regular attendance and proper discharge of their duties.
- (8) Payments to be made at reasonable rates for railway handling work undertaken by licensed porters. Care to be taken to see that the number of hours daily which licensed porters are required to give to this work is limited, and that there is strict rotation so that the earnings of individual porters from the handling of passengers' luggage are not adversely affected.
- (9) A licence fee book or some similar document to be provided by the railway to each licensed porter, in which all payments made on account of licence fee will be recorded. Full particulars of the holder with his thumb impression, details of buckle and badge issued on deposit and of uniform supplied and any other information which it is considered might usefully be included therein, will also be recorded in this book.

In order that the objects of the scheme should be fully appreciated by those to whom it will apply, and that no scope is left for agitators to misrepresent railway intentions, the Board recommend that advance propaganda should be undertaken.

The Labour Department of the Government of India have suggested that in matters not connected with earnings, leave, provident fund, and gratuity benefits, i.e., in regard to the use of shelters, medical treatment, education and housing facilities, licensed porters might be placed on a footing of equality with similar workers recruited as railway employees. The Board agree that free medical treatment should be given and they accept in principle the proposal that in due course housing might be provided; but owing to the present shortage of materials and for other reasons which it is not deemed necessary to enumerate, they consider this must be regarded as a long-term proposal concerning which, however, they would appreciate an expression of views in due course. They would also like to have comments on the proposals relating to use of shelters and educational facilities.

In the meantime the Board may be furnished with up-to-date information as to the licensed porter system at present prevailing at different categories of stations on your railway and details of charges recovered from porters, whether by way of licence fee, charge for uniform, buckles and badges, or otherwise.

Sd/-
(A.A. Brown)
Director, Railway Board.