



PAC—64

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

(1991-93)

SIXTY-FOURTH REPORT

(NINETH ASSEMBLY)

**REPORT OF THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE ON
THE ACTION TAKEN OR PROPOSED TO BE TAKEN BY
THE GOVERNMENT ON VARIOUS RECOM-
MENDATIONS, SUGGESTIONS OR REMARKS
MADE BY THE COMMITTEE CONTAINED
IN THEIR 53rd REPORT ON THE
TRANSPORT (L.W.T.) DEPART-
MENT, GOVERNMENT
OF ASSAM.**

Presented to the House on..... 21 DEC 1992

ASSAM LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

DISPUR, GUWAHATI—6

CONTENTS

	Pages
1. Composition of the Committee	ii
2. Prefatory remarks	iii
3. Report	1—17
4. Annexure	18

Composition of the Committee
(1991-93)

CHAIRMAN :

1. Shri Sasha Kamal Handique.

MEMBERS :

2. Shri Upendra Nath Sanatan.
3. Shri Rameswar Dhanowar.
4. Shri Alauddin Sarkar.
5. Shri Zoi Nath Sarma.
6. Shri Nurjamal Sarkar.
7. Shri Debendra Nath Baruah.
8. Shri Lakshmi Prasad Borgohain.
9. Shri Kosh^Swar Baruah.
10. Shri Kali Ranjan Deb.
11. Shri Derhagra Mochahary.

SECRETARIAT :

1. Shri D. Talukdar, Secretary.
2. Shri A. R. Chetia, Under Secretary.
3. Shri Subimal Kr. Das, Committee Officer.

PREFATORY REMARKS

1. I, Shri Sasha Kamal Handique, Chairman of the Committee on Public Accounts, having been authorised to submit the Report on their behalf present this sixty-fourth Report of the Committee on Public Accounts on the action taken or proposed to be taken by Government on their 53rd Report on Transport (Inland Water Transport) Department, Government of Assam.

2. The Written memorandum on the action taken or proposed to be taken by the Government were considered by the Sub-Committee constituted for this purpose (Annexure-I) in their sitting held on 18th November 1992.

3. The Committee has considered the draft report and adopted the same in its sitting held on 25th November, 1992.

4. The Committee wishes to express their thanks to the representatives of the Government in the Transport (Inland Water Transport) Department for their kind co-operation in furnishing the relevant information/clarifications to the Committee.

DISPUR
The 25th November, 1992

S. K. HANDIQUE,
Chairman,
Committee on Public Account.

SIXTYFOURTH REPORT OF THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTS
COMMITTEE, ASSAM LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
ON THE ACTION TAKEN OR PROPOSED TO
BE TAKEN BY GOVERNMENT OF THEIR
FIFTY-THIRD REPORT.

The Report

OBSERVATION IN FORTY-SIXTH REPORT.

1. 1. 1. The Committee appreciate the sincere efforts of the Transport Department to bring their water Transport wing to the lime-light of development to cater the economic need of the region. However, in view of the continuing loss sustained in last few years, the Committee feels that the Department would cause a study to analyse their bottleneck for which they sustained loss and to find out remedial measure, so as to run the organisation at "no profit no loss basis" with utmost economy.

1. 1. 2. The Committee would like to know the overall assessment and the achievement made in 7th Five Years Plan in relation to the projection made of the functioning of the I. W. T. Deptt. and report may be submitted to the Committee within a period of 3 months.

REPLY OF THE GOVERNMENT

1. 2. 1 The Department of Inland Water Transport with utmost efforts tried to make good the losses incurred by the ferry service, by revising the rates of ferry tolls. The ever-increasing expenditure, particularly on the maintenance of approaches etc. on the banks, and operational cost due to the change of behaviour of both Brahmaputra and Barak river and frequent natural calamities are the main causes of loss, incurred by the ferry services. Inland Water Transport is a Public Utility Department, and if services rendered to people is taken into account, perhaps such losses can be overlooked. However attempts are continuously being made to reduce such losses.

1. 2. 2, Overall assessment and achievement made in the 7th Five Year Plan is as under :

Name of the Schemes	Achievement
1. Passenger Vessels	20 Nos. : Revenue Earning
2. Cargo Vessels/Barges	11 Nos. :
3. Office Building	2 places :
4. Crew Training Center	1 No. : Non Revenue Earning
5. Relief Boats	16 Nos. :
6. Pontoon	1 No. :
7. Survey Launch	1 No. :

OBSERVATION

1. 3. 1. The reply adduced by the Department in respect of 53rd Report the observation does not appear to be specific. The Committee would have been happy to have the study report analysing the draw-backs with their proposal to overcome those adversaries, similarly, the Committee wanted to know the overall assessment and the achievement made in 7th five year plan. The Department, instead of complying with the required report, have furnished such a reply from which we do not find a clear picture on neither their remedial measures proposed to be taken nor their projection made with result desired during 7th plan period.

1. 3. 2. The Committee regrets to note that the Department took the Committee's observation in this part of 53rd Report casually and recommends that the Department will, furnish the required information in detail within a period of 3 months from the date of presentation of this Report before the House.

OBSERVATION/RECOMMENDATION IN FIFTY THIRD REPORT

2.1.1. The Committee feels that the Government ferries are not run efficiently for which private ferries plying unauthorisely attract more passenger. Sometimes sincerity of the operating staff is also not free from doubt of the passengers. The Committee also wonder as to how the private ferries can have parallel business when such operation is barred by law. The Committee would be happy to know if the illegal plying of boats by private person has been arrested by now and whether any steps have been taken to divert the passenger traffic now being born by private services to Government ferries with suitable improvement in accommodation and safety.

2.1.2. The Committee also feels that in view of the recurring losses, the Inland Water Transport Organization ought to make their ferry services economically viable like a private interpreneur in the business. With an end in view the Department my increase its business taking up more and more ferry services. Before taking such projects the Department should make their own assessment pragmatically under two different heads, one is ferry operational cost and the other including the maintenance of approach road so that Water Transport has been properly developed in a riverine State like Assam.

2.1.3. The services operated in the river Barak and Katakhal need more attention for the sake of services to the Valley. The Committee feels that Commercial Services rendered by the Central Water Transport Organisation can be taken over by the Department in full or in part. The Department may taken the projection of 1978 when carrying of materials like cement, iron rods etc. by river route from Calcutta to the Valley was possible at much cheaper carrying charge.

2.1.4. The Committee also feels that the Department would let the Committee know the maintenance cost made in between 1980-81 to 1987-88 for approach road at both Jogighopa and Pancharatna Ghat with a feasibility report on putting up permanent docking arrangement which can do way with the requirement of having shifting approach road from time to time. Information required may be

supplied to the Committee within three months of the presentation of the Report to the House.

2.1.5. The Committee further feels that the Department is maintaining a large batch of Muster roll workers in addition to the regular establishment's staff for operation of ferries. The Department may work out what should be the rationale or optimum number of workmen per vessel required to run it without impairing efficiency. The inflated staff retained in the regular establishment or Muster Roll establishment may be deployed gainfully elsewhere.

REPLY OF THE DEPARTMENT

2.2.1. The Inland Water Transport has no administrative machinery to stop plying of private ferries. The Deputy Commissioners and Sub-Divisional Officers of the respective Districts are the authorities to take action against such activities. Government is initiating action to bring such ferries under control as per the law. As regards improvement of facilities and safety of passengers, the provisions of law shall be enforced gradually.

2.2.2. The Department has already leased large numbers of ferries to the lessees and also has taken action to maintain separate accounts showing the expenditure made for maintenance of approach roads and operational costs thereon. As mentioned in reply as above, attempts shall be made to reduce losses and make the Inland Water Transport Service economically viable.

2.2.3. The Directorate has already proposed to run Commercial Services from Karimganj to Calcutta and vice-versa for the benefit of the people of Barak Valley. Necessary action has also been taken to improve the ferry services in river Barak and Katakhal.

2.2.4. The expenditure incurred for the maintenance of approach road both in Jogighopa and Pancharatna under Inland Water Transport Division, Guwahati for the year of 1980-81 to 1987-88 is as shown below—

1980-81

Rs. 1.71 lakhs

1981-82

Rs. 1.95 lakhs

1982-83	...	Rs. 2.25 lakhs
1983-84	...	Rs. 2.56 lakhs
1984-85	...	Rs. 2.80 lakhs
1985-86	...	Rs. 2.09 lakhs
1986-87	..	Rs. 3.30 lakhs
1987-88	..	Rs. 2.29 lakhs

The bridge (Naranaryan Setu) over Brahmaputra is likely to be completed by 1994-95. As such permanent Docking arrangement and requirement of approach road at Jogighopa-Pancharatna-Goalpara ferry ghat will no more be required.

2.2.5. The Department has maintained required numbers of Muster Roll workers in addition to regular establishment because of the dearth of experienced staff to cope with the increasing nos. of ferry services. As per norm for the Vessels, Inland Water Transport Department need 1348 Class III & Class IV employees while we have only 1030 Class III and 126 Class IV Posts. However, to avoid such recruitment of Muster Roll workers necessary proposal has already been submitted to the Government for according sanction to regularise the Muster Roll workers as per Rules and Procedures.

OBSERVATION/RECOMMENDATION

2.3.1. The Committee before commenting upon the action taken or proposed to be taken by the Department on the Recommendations of this part, feels it necessary to re-collect that the Transport (I.W.T.) Department being a revenue earning organ of the Government sustained loss in their activities which would be clear from the following statement. :-

Year	Number of services operated	Revenue earned	Expenditure incurred	Net result. (Rs. in lakhs)
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
1980-81	18	39.92	108.87	(-) 68.95
1981-82	17	43.08	116.96	(-) 73.88
1982-83	17	36.44	106.84	(-) 70.40

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
1983-84	18	34.42	117.98	(—) 83.56
1984-85	19	42.92	125.75	(--) 82.83
1985-86	38	51.35	132.28	(—) 80.93

It is ample clear from the above statement that the expenditure of the Department is two to three times, more than their earnings. Under the circumstances, this revenue earning organ, instead of raising revenue to the State coffers, spend two to three times more than their incomes.

2.3.2. The Public Accounts Committee undertook a spot study tour on 6th May 1992 to see the implementation of their recommendations in so far as Pancharatna-Jogighopa Ferry Ghat is concerned. The proceedings are quoted below—

Chairman : Mr. Verma, What is your view about this ?

Secretary Transport : Sir, this is a fact that the Private Parties are running their Vessels. The Director, Inland Water Transport has no administrative power to stop.

There is no infringement on the part of the Officer to enforce this law and so far law is concerned, it is very clear that every vessel have its own license. Because the D. C. and the S.D.O. (Civil) have allowed the Private Parties to run their vessels. After getting the motor vehicle certificate the private parties run their vessels without any hesitation.

Sri K. Deb (Member) : Whether it was for Commercial purposes ?

Secretary, Transport : Yes Sir, after getting the certificate they have used it for commercial purposes. In this regard, we cannot register all the vessels and also cannot inspect them. These people are fitting the engine locally on the boat and run the vessels. Sir, in this ghat one incident took place that one private passenger carrying vessel sunk down when it was carrying passengers few months ago and as a result one man died. After the incident, when it was brought to the Notice of the District Authority, then the practice of carrying passengers in such vessels

were stopped. Sir, it was mentioned in the report that it was losing revenue. But now the Department is trying very hard to cope up with the losses faced by the ferries by revising the rates of ferry tolls and by giving maximum number of ferries to the Lessee.

Chairman : Whether this ferry Ghat is directly operated by the I. W. T. or anybody ?

Secretary, Transport : It is not operated by I.W.T. It is operated by a Lessee.

Chairman : Whether lease was given through tender system and what was the tender money ?

Secretary, Transport ; Yes Sir, the tender money was Rs. 6,56,000.00.

Shri K. Deb. : Whether it is a fact that extension was given to the same Lessee without calling any fresh tender ?

Secretary, Transport : Yes Sir, it is for the 4th times that the same Lessee has got the benefit.

Sri A. Sarkar : Whether the Lessee is present have ?

Dy. Director : Yes, Sir.

Sri A. Sarkar : What is the last bid money ?

Lessee : Rs. 3.00 lakhs. Earlier I gave 10.00 lakhs bid money and I am getting for last five years.

Shri K. Deb : Why it was given at a reduced rate ?

Secretary : Sir, the Department does not incur any expenditure for running this ferry. All the floating Staff are to be paid by the Lessee. Only the Department is responsible for maintenance of vessels and approach road. When the P.O.L. rate is increasing in a high rate then we accepted the proposal.

Sri K. Barua : It is not clear to me. Who could make me clear? How many vessels are there?

Deputy Director : Total 5 (five)—4 (four) R.P.F. and 1 (one) modern.

Chairman : What is the total revenue you have collected?

Deputy Director : 6.5 Lakhs

Chairman : What is the total strength of employees in this ferry Ghat?

Deputy Director : 50 numbers.

Sri K. Deb : How many Muster Roll employees are there?

Deputy Director : 40 numbers. Muster Roll labour are required for maintenance as regular employees attend work during office hours.

শ্রীকোমেশ্বৰ বৰুৱা : আৰ্শ্বলৈগৈ ১৯৯১-৯২ চনৰ অল বিলেভেণ্ট বেকড'ছ অৱ শ্বেটমেন্ট আৰু গডাৰ্ণমেন্ট ডেহিকুলচৰ আৰু প্ৰাইভেট ডেহিকুলচৰ হিচাপটো আমাৰ পোষ্ট কৰি পঠিয়াব। লগতে ইয়াৰ বিদ মানি ১০ (দহ) লাখ কোতিমা আৰু ৬ (ছয়) লাখ কোতিমা, এই সকলোখিনিৰ এটা কপমাৰেটিভ্ শ্বেটমেন্ট বনাই ২০ মে'ৰ ভিতৰত পোষ্টকৈ আমাৰ পঠিয়াব।

Chairman : Please submit all relevant records as stated by the Hon. Member Shri Barua on or before 20th May, 1992.

2.3.3. It will be seen from the forgoing proceedings that the Department was due to furnish some vital informations which they have not produced even on the day of finalization of this Report. The Committee therefore, recommends that the required information may be furnished within a period of one month from the date of presentation of this Report before the House.

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS IN FIFTY-THIRD REPORT

3. 1. 1. The Public Accounts Committee observes that some of the Ferry Services are run departmentally for years together sustaining loss every year. The reasons for not letting out of such Ferry Services to individual by auction or tender system should be reviewed and the outcome may be intimated to the Committee.

3. 1. 2. The Committee feels that there is nexus between some delinquent officials and a section of leases to corner leases detrimental to the interest of the State.

3. 1. 3. It is recommended that in all future cases of floating tenders wide publicity must be given through local medias specially and through D. I. P. R. when the value of the lease exceeds Rs. 50,000. If necessary amendments or addition may be made in the existing rule applied for calling of the tenders.

REPLY OF THE DEPARTMENT.

3. 2. 1. From the record it appears that tenders have been called for in every year for the settlement of ferries in local dailies, but in some cases if no tenders are received, the Department, considering the suffering of the people, runs these ferries by itself. However, efforts will be made to settle these ferries through tenders in the coming years.

3. 2. 2. If any case of collusion between lessee and the Offices comes to the notice of the Government, appropriate action will be taken in the interest of Government revenue.

3. 2. 3. We are following the practice of calling tenders for all ferries for settlement and only when no suitable tenderer is found it is operated departmentally.

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

3. 3. 1. The Committee regrets to note that the reply adduced by the Department is not found satisfactory.

The Committee after studying few cases reported in the 53rd Report, that there were not only delays in the processing and publishing of tender notices, the intending tenderers were allowed only 8 to 13 days time to submit their offers. As a result the same group of few persons responded to the tender notice on each occasion, thereby leaving with settlement authority very little choice in selecting the parties for operation of ferries while the bids received exceeded the Government valuation only marginally. The study of the Committee was based on 3 cases of Brahmaputra and 2 cases of Barak. This apart, it was also found that there was a case, when despite of receiving bids, the Ferry Ghat was operated Departmentally.

3. 3. 2. Now, the Committee would like to know the action taken by the Department for setting out by auction or by tender system of the following Ferry Services during the years from 1986-87 to 1991-92.

- (1) Dibru-Sonari Ferry Service,
- (2) Guwahati-Rajaduar Ferry Service,
- (3) Guwahati-North Guwahati Ferry Service, and
- (4) Guwahati-Kurua Ferry Service

All necessary papers viz. Notice inviting tenders, paper-cuts of publication in News papers, comparative statement etc. may be furnished within one month from the date of presentation of this Report before the House.

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS IN FIFTY-THIRD REPORT

4. 1. 1. In the case of Dibru-Sonari-Burisuti ferry for the year 1978-79 as seen from the audit para, highest bid was offered by the commercial wing of the Department itself and the second offer of Rs. 5,25,777/- only was rejected. The Departmental operation fetched Rs. 4,68,358/- only which resulted in loss. The same ferry service received an offer of Rs. 5,55,555/- from a private party during the year 1980-81. This time also Government decided to run the ferry service departmentally and thus suffered loss of revenue of Rs. 3,06,508/-.

4. 1. 2. When the Government suffered loss by departmental operation of ferries on 1st occasion, the settlement of ferries on the subsequent occasion, should have been given to the private party offering a good bid on tender basis. Why did the Government wait for the result of second experience of departmental operation and in the process suffer substantial loss is not clear.

4. 1. 3. In respect of Saikhowa-Paglum Ferry Service for the working period from October, 1984 to March, 1985 the Second highest bid was valid and as such the settlement should have been offered to him. But, instead the settlement was offered to the highest bidder and on refusal the second highest tenderer was approached to accept the offer at the highest bid. He also refused to operate. Ultimately, the ferry service was operated departmentally at a loss. It is not made clear why the second highest bid was not accepted.

4. 1. 4. The Committee could not understand how the Department had to enter into a competition with the public.

4. 1. 5. The Public Accounts Committee therefore, strongly recommends that when a Ferry is run departmentally in preference to private bidders, for loss sustained in such operation, concerned Official should be made accountable and responsible to the Government.

REPLY OF THE DEPARTMENT

4. 2. 1. As per decision of the Government the Dibru-Sonari-Burisuti Ferry Services were run by the Department on experimental basis. It is also true that it resulted into loss. Reasons for such decisions cannot be given as the concerned files are yet to be traced out.

4. 2. 2. Government is aware that the Directorate of Inland Water Transport has a commercial wing and carrying business on commercial basis. The settlement of ferry in favour of commercial wing if considered beneficial can be allotted to it. Basically it amount to running a ferry departmentally.

4. 2. 3. Departmental operation is resorted to, normally if tenders are not received; and this itself indicate that ferry may be a loss making one. As such action against departmental officer may not perhaps be warranted.

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

4. 3. 1. The Observations/Recommendations of this part in the 53rd Report was given after thorough discussion of two cases as brought out by audit, where Government sustain loss of revenue. The two cases were Dibru-Sonari-Burisuti and Saikhowa-Paglam ferries. In both the cases Government sustained heavy loss due to their preference to run the ferries departmentally over the private parties going against the tendered price. The Committee accordingly recommended for shouldering responsibility and accountability for such lost suffered by departmental operation by the Departmental Officers. The Committee therefore could not accept the contention that departmental operation is resorted to normally in absence of tenderers.

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS IN FIFTY-THIRD REPORT.

5. 1. Now that the revised fare structure has become operative from first April, 1988, the Committee would like to have a report from the department about the improvement made in the running of the Ferry in relation to the lost and profit involving all major Ferries whether run through lessee or departmentally. The report should be furnished within 3 months of the presentation of this report before this House.

REPLY OF THE DEPARTMENT

5. 2. During the period of 1976-77 to 1983-84 a proposal for enhancement of toll charges were submitted to Government and subsequently the rates have been revised with effect from 1st April 1988. As the market value and cost of operation and other allied materials have gone up by this time, the revised rates of 1988 have brought no profit to the ferry services. Apart from this expenditure on maintenance approach etc. cannot be recovered from the toll and as such profit cannot be expected inspite of toll revision.

OBSERVATION

5.3. The Committee would like to insist on the Report as called for earlier showing the details of all the major Ferries.

OBSERVATIONS / RECOMMENDATIONS IN FIFTY-THIRD REPORT

6.1.1. In face of the oral deposition, it is apparent that if somebody is plying a boat within the leased area of a ferry 2Kms either way he is liable to pay a penalty because the lessee's interests is hampered whether it is country boat or a power-boat. Another aspect is that when a boat is machanised naturally the question of safety and other things come in; so there is the requirement that it should be duly registred under the I.V. Act or Rules.

6.1.2. As regards illegal operation of boats the Department used to refer the matter to the Deputy Commissioner saying that the boat is illigally plying because it is not registered; and do not posses a fitness certificate as required and these boat should not be allowed to operate. The part played by the Deputy Commissioner after having the information is not made clear. The Public Accounts Committee would be interested to know if the penalty leviable in these 189 cases as referred to in the Audit para has been levied. The Committee feels that the Department should follow a system in detecting illegal operation.

6.1.3. The Committee feels that the Inland Water Transport Authority should be in a position to initiats proceedings in respect of illegal playing instead of routing them through Deputy Commissioner which caused delay. The Transport Department may take up the matter with the Law Departement and get the matter legally examined and submit a report within 3 months of the presentation of this report before the House.

REPLY OF THE DEPARTMENT

6.2.1. Though the Directorate of Inland Water Transport is aware of the practice of running private vessels/

boats within the leased area of a ferry 2 Kms without obtaining prior permission of the authority, it has no administrative machinery to take legal action against such practice. However, Deputy Commissioners and Sub-Divisional Officers are being approached by us to take action on such practice. To check such illegalities and enforcement wing is required for which department is making attempts.

6.2.2. To stop illegale plying of boats it is proposed that there should be a traffic control or Enforcement cell under Inland Water Transport like traffic police. This will help in streamlining the private water transport business as per Law and Rules. Action to amend rules/laws etc. is being initiated.

OBSERVATION/RECOMMENDATION

6.3.1. The Committee want to have a specific reply if, the Law Department was consulted to get it legally examined and to have the report thereof. The same is wanting. If the Department's proposal for an Enforcement Wing is the out come of the consultation the same may be stated specifically with iota therefore.

RECOMMENDATION IN FIFTY-THIRD REPORT

7.1.1. The Committee feels that Transport and Relief & Rehabilitation Department may draw up a memorandum of agreement to regulate the requisiting procedure of the Inland Water Transport Vessels charges to be paid and the time within which the account to be finalised. The Committee would like to know the opinion of the Department in this respect.

REPLY OF THE DEPARTMENT

7.2. The Department in the Government need not have any formal memorandum of agreement and infact for the purpose of Relief all Departments do work as a team. If payments are not received the amounts involved cannot be treated as loss as the payee is another Government Department and the purpose is public interest.

OBSERVATION

7.3. The Committee would like to know if any amount outstanding against a sister Department is subjected to adjustment either on book of accounts or outright payment and why this reply was not adduced before the audit when the objection was revised initially. The Department earlier replied that they are taking follow-up action to realise the recoverable hire charge. Now the Department has coup-up with a different version which contradict their earlier reply. This position may be explained.

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS IN FIFTY-THIRD REPORT

8.1. The audit in this para point out shortfall of receipts compared to expenditure incurred in departmental operation of commercial services over the river routes. The Department could not adduce convincing reasons as to what were the factors responsible for shortfall in revenue receipts. The Committee feels that the Department should analyse the lacuna, based on their experience, so as to take a correct step to starting services in future.

REPLY OF THE DEPARTMENT

8.2. The shortfall of receipts in comparison with expenditure on commercial service over river routed is because the Department, have to pay a huge amount of D. A. to the floating staff of the commercial Vessel/Cargo etc. The Department have also to pay T.A. and D.A. etc. to the floating staff of the vessel sailing outside the State as per T.A. Rules. Frequent price hike of P. O.L. have made the operational cost high, but since the I. W. T. made of cargo Transport suffers from the problem of multiple transshipment of cargo and slow speed. To attract the cargo for it, it is mandatory to keep the rates sufficiently low as compared to road transport. This constraint will continue to mar the profitability of this Service, though for various other reasons we have to try for its, Populati-
sation.

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMEDATIONS

8.3.1. The earlier Observations/Recommendations was based on the Audit objection that Departmental operation of commercial services over the river routes Brahmaputra, Suvansiri and Barak resulted in net loss of Rs.37.99 Lakhs. The commercial service was started in January, 1975 considering the commercial viability of the three river routes of which they acquired four vessels at a cost of Rs.44.37 Lakhs. From January, 1975 to March, 1986 the total revenue earn amounting to Rs.156.09 Lakhs as against the total expenditure of Rs.194.08 Lakhs.

8.3.2. The Committee find its difficulties to fall on the line of thinking of the Department in the matter of incurring loss for years together. Similar commercial services are also operated by other sister States as well as Central Government. We are not aware if, they are also suffering from loss like our I. W. T. Department. Such matters need study to look at the lacuna and to find out means to overcome those maladies.

8.3.3. The Committee therefore, recommendations that the Department would let us know the amount of loss or gain from the commercial services since April, 1986 to March, 1991. The Department may also study the situation of other States where commercial services are in operation and the result thereof may be intimated.

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS IN FIFTY-THIRD REPORT

9.1. The Committee observes that the Department even after 10 (ten) years could not settle up the matter and realise the outstanding dues. As per Comptroller and Auditor General of India's Report the matter was referred to the Department in September, 1985 and the Report was presented to the House in March, 1988. Even if the Department took any initiative, their asking was not very much effective.

REPLY OF THE DEPARTMENT.

9.2. Action to realise the dues is in progress.

OBSERVATION

9.3. From the earlier recommendation would be seen that the Committee expressed their concern over the matters of realisation of outstanding dues pending since 1975-76. Even now, the Department have come-up with the reply that their action to realise the dues is in progress. The pendency is for 18 years by now. Under the circumstances the Committee is at a loss to comment any thing in this issue.

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

OBSERVATIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS IN FIFTY-THIRD REPORT

10.1 The Public Accounts Committee recommends that the Report of the Committee of the administrative enquiry into the sinking of the vessel shall be made available within the period of three months from the date of presentation of this report before the House.

REPLY OF THE DEPARTMENT

10.2. Though the Government had constituted a Committee with Shri K. K. Gogoi, Chief Engineer-Cum-Administrator MOT Government of India and Shri N. C. Mukharjee, Director, I.W.T and G. S. & C West Bengal to enquire the causes of sinking of M. V. Lanchanjuri, the report is still not received by Government. It may perhaps be appropriate to treat this as an accident only as this stage enquiry may not serve any fruitful purposes. However, the department has taken sufficient steps to prevent such occurrences in future.

OBSERVATION

10.3. The Committee considered it as an act of Laxity.

ANNEXURE—I

COMPOSITION OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE
COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

1. Shri Derhagra Mochahary, M. L. A. Convenor
 2. Shri Kali Ranjan Deb, M. L. A. ... Member
 3. Shri Upendra Nath Sanatan, M. L. A. ... Member
 4. Shri Kosheswar Barua, M. L. A. ... Member
 5. Shri Debendra Nath Barua, M. L. A. ... Member
-

AG. (Mini) Press 190/92—500—10.12.92.