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Subject.

Use of Railway Saloons by Hon.  
ministers of the Central Govt.

Previous References.

Later References.

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S E C R E T.

D.O.No. 235 DPM/50,  
New Delhi, 29.9.1950.

My dear Sri Prakasa,

Thank you for your letter of the 24th September 1950, regarding the use of saloons by Cabinet Ministers.

As I said in my last letter, I fully appreciate your situation and have some sympathy with it, but the whole question is one of propriety. As Cabinet Ministers, obviously, we have to set the standard in this respect. Hence the anxiety of both myself and the Prime Minister not to extend the present privileges which Cabinet Ministers enjoy.

You have said that a First Class compartment will cost as much as the haulage of a saloon. I find from enquiries that this is not correct. A broad gauge saloon when occupied costs Government Re.1/- a mile and when not occupied As.-/10/- a mile. Every time a saloon is required by a Cabinet Minister, empty haulage is generally involved. There is no such empty haulage in the case of a First Class compartment. The broad gauge charges for 4 First Class tickets are As.-/8/- a mile. Apart from this difference in the charges, Government has to pay Rs. 30 to 40 thousands a year, if not more, on depreciation and maintenance of the saloons. You will thus notice that the reservation of a 4-berth First Class compartment is definitely cheaper than requisitioning a saloon. Apart from this, normally I should expect that, when a Minister is travelling alone, he could take a coupe instead of a 4-berth compartment.

However, I think the best course would be for us to discuss this matter in the Cabinet and I am suggesting to the Prime Minister accordingly.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

Sd. Vallabhbhai Patel.

The Hon'ble  
Shri Sri Prakasa,  
Minister for Commerce,  
New Delhi.

SECRET.

D.O.No. 756 PM/30,  
New Delhi, 29th Sept. 1930.

My dear Jawaharlal,

You will recall our previous correspondence as regards Shri Prakasa's suggestion that, if Cabinet Ministers take their family with them in the saloons, they should be allowed to do so free of cost. I am sending herewith a copy of his subsequent letter and my reply thereto. You will note that he has now modified his proposal and has suggested that a Second Class ticket may be purchased and that the definition of family may be restricted. I believe the definition of family for purposes of rules is already restricted in the manner he desires. The only question that arises, therefore, is whether we should allow Cabinet Ministers to purchase only a Second Class ticket for each member of the family that he takes in his saloon. If we allowed this in the case of Cabinet Ministers, we would have to allow the same to other officers as well who may travel in saloons or reserve First Class compartments. I suggest that the matter may be mentioned in the Cabinet and the views of our colleagues on this question might be obtained.

Yours  
Sd/- Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble  
Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru,  
Prime Minister,  
NEW DELHI.

G.



2, King Edward Road,  
New Delhi.  
September 24, 1950.

My dear Sardar Saheb,

I am grateful to you for your D.O.'s Nos. 599-DPM/50 and 676-DPM/50 from New Delhi and Bombay dated respectively August 21 and September 6 regarding the use of saloons by Cabinet Ministers. The decision of the Prime Minister and yourself must be final and conclusive in this as in other matters; but I should like, with your permission, to say something in this connection. I fully agree with you that Cabinet Ministers should avoid the use of Railway saloons. I understand that we have a few and we shall have to put them to some use as long as they are there. That, however, is not my present concern. I find that you recommend a compartment. I understand that the cost of the haulage of a saloon is annas twelve a mile and if a first class compartment is reserved for four tickets, the cost, I believe, will be the same.

Then I also find that a saloon as it is, is fitted with arrangements for work while travelling, and it may be that a Minister might have to stay in a saloon in a Railway siding while en tour to small places where he may not have a friend or he may not like to leave himself any more planting himself in the middle. Then, another advantage is that the saloons are better than a compartment in that they are more comfortable and would serve a purpose which a compartment is not detached from the compartment. It is better to have a saloon than a compartment.

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So far as my own portfolio is concerned, I find that I have no need to go out of Delhi too often and I avoid going out also. I have seen your note in the time of my predecessor to the effect that tours should be avoided in the interest of economy. Personally I have very strictly followed your wishes as expressed in that note. Some journeys, however, have got to be made and I do propose to visit various centres of commerce from time to time. I have been only to Bombay so far and am visiting Kanpur at the end of this month. I propose to go to Calcutta and Madras later and should really like to travel by train every time unless I should happen to be in a hurry when the air travel naturally is the best.

The problem that I originally raised was that of permission being accorded to members of the Minister's family being allowed to travel with him. When one goes on travel, a first class ticket has got to be purchased for him or her, which I think is very hard, for ordinarily Ministers like me would travel out just in a second class in private life. I find that the secretary who is travelling with a Minister has to take a second class ticket. My request is that when, as a Minister, a Secretary can travel on a second class ticket, a Minister may also be permitted to buy only second class tickets for members of his family instead of first class tickets. I am informed that ten servants can travel with the Minister in the saloon.

You refer to the possibility of abuse of this privilege. Perhaps the fear is that the Minister may carry a large number of persons in his saloon if he should have the privilege to take members of his family with him. Therefore, perhaps make some sort of rule that in the immediate members of a family like wife, son, daughter and mother-in-law will be permitted. In any case, I am sure that the idea of ticket that a Minister may be required to purchase for those who travel with him should certainly be reduced from the first to the second. *ultimately we shall have to trust to the good sense of the person concerned.*

Hoping you will please consider the matter and doing you, and will also kindly clarify the matter,

With respectful regards,  
Yours sincerely,

*B. Prakash*

(B. Prakash)

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel,  
Deputy Prime Minister,  
New Delhi.

My dear Sri Prakasa,

Please refer to your letters of the 17th and 19th August regarding the use of Saloons by Cabinet Ministers.

2. I have consulted the Prime Minister also. We both feel that though it is some times hard, it is a salutary rule to ensure that a privilege is not abused. We both are against encouraging the use of saloons at all and feel that any further liberalisation of the rules in regard to saloons would be a progress in the reverse direction to what we intend.

Yours sincerely,

The Honourable  
Shri Sri Prakasa,  
Minister for Commerce,  
New Delhi.

PRIME MINISTER.  
INDIA.



No. 1148-P.M.

New Delhi,  
August 22, 1950.

My Dear Vallabhbhai,

Your letter concerning Sri Prakasa's about members of family travelling in railway saloons etc. I agree with you in this matter. It is sometimes hard, but it is a salutary rule to prevent abuse of a privilege. Indeed we should not encourage the use of saloons at all and I have said that more than once as you have done.

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.

D.O.No. 599 DPM/50  
New Delhi, 25.8.1950.

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My dear Sri Prakasa,

Thank you for your letters of the 17th and 19th August 1950 about the use of saloons by Cabinet Ministers.

I myself have strong feelings against the use of saloons by Cabinet Ministers and, until my health made it impossible for me to do otherwise, I never used the saloon or a chartered plane. Even now I avoid the use of saloon whenever rarely I have to travel and I am content with a compartment. However, I appreciate the difficulties pointed out by you and am in correspondence with the Prime Minister. I shall let you know the result in due course.

Yours sincerely,

The Hon'ble  
Shri Sri Prakasa,  
Minister for Commerce,  
New Delhi.

Q.





D.O. No. 602-DPM/50,  
New Delhi, 21.8.1950.

I am sending herewith copies of letters which I have received from Sri Prakasa about permission to Cabinet Ministers to take members of their family in railway saloons or chartered planes. I know that you and I have definite views against the use of saloons by Cabinet Ministers and I myself feel that such use should be discouraged. A concession like this is likely to be misunderstood and misconstrued as an invitation to make more frequent use of the saloons in order to enable the family to travel. However, I should be glad to know what you feel about it and what you would advise me to do.

The Hon'ble  
Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru,  
Prime Minister,  
NEW DELHI.

2.



2, King Edward Road, New Delhi.

August 17, 1950.

My dear Sardar Saheb,

You may perhaps recollect that I had troubled you from Shillong about a Governor's privileges as regards his party when travelling about; and you had very kindly and generously put matters right by your ruling that a Governor could travel about with a party consisting of not more than six members and you also gave him the privilege of choosing his own party. I scarcely travelled in a party of more than three including myself, the others being one personal servant or chaprasi, and one A.D.C. or secretary. Sometimes if any member of my family happened to be there - son, daughter or daughter-in-law - he or she also formed a member of the party.

Here I find that a Cabinet Minister can take a Railway saloon but no one can travel with him. If anyone travels, a first-class fare has to be paid for him. The other day when coming back from Banaras, a member of my family travelled with me and I paid a first-class fare for her. I also understand that when the Prime Minister or yourself travel, and Indiraji or Maniben are also travelling, full fares have to be paid for them. I know it may be embarrassing for you to give a decision on this matter but I do think that the position needs reconsideration.

When a saloon is going where there are various compartments and berths, or when a chartered aeroplane is going, I do not see why if members of the family of Ministers are also travelling, they should have to pay any fares. I can understand that when Ministers are travelling by service planes, they may pay for members of their family who may be travelling with them though I think even there, perhaps a small concession would not be improper.

I do not however press for that but I cannot help feeling that concession might be made where a railway saloon or a chartered plane is used. A chartered plane, in the very nature of things, will be a rarity, for it is only used on very special occasions; but railway saloons will be often in use and perhaps Cabinet Ministers could be permitted to take members of the family to the extent of the berths provided without being charged. *It is not even necessary to pay for the berths.*

You will please pardon me for troubling you but I felt that the rules in this behalf could be reasonably reconsidered. I may state that Sir James Grigg when he was Finance Minister here, told me that before his time, wives of Ministers could travel with them in the saloons free but when Zafarullah arrived with two wives, Government felt that that was a little too much and so they withdrew all concessions and the fares of everybody, ~~besides~~ the Executive Councillor himself, had to be paid for.

With respectful regards,

I am,  
Yours sincerely,

*Sri Prakasa*

(Sri Prakasa).

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel,  
Deputy Prime Minister,  
New Delhi.



2, King Edward Road, New Delhi  
August 19, 1950.

My dear Sardar Saheb,

The other day I sent a letter regarding the desirability of allowing Cabinet Ministers when using railway saloons, to take some members of their families with them if necessary. I forgot to mention therein that in case you should think that this would not be desirable and that Ministers should pay for all members of their families travelling with them, I should like to suggest that they may at least be given the concession of only paying intermediate or at best second-class tickets. So many of us have been used to travelling in those classes in private life and would be going back to them on relinquishing these offices. It is indeed hard to have to pay first-class fares for every member of one's family.

I may also add that Ministers can travel in cars; and when they do so, there is no objection to their having members of their families with them. Perhaps a similar concession could be granted while they are travelling by train. I am very sorry to trouble with such a small matter and I hope you will please excuse.

With respectful regards,

I am,  
Yours sincerely,

*Sri Prakasa*

(Sri Prakasa).

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel,  
Deputy Prime Minister,  
NEW DELHI.