

In subsequent budget statements, the entry appears under the head of "Integral Coach Factory at Perambur"; the estimated cost for the factory and the approximate cost incurred year by year has been given as follows:—

Year	(in lakhs of Rs)	
	Anticipated cost	Expenditure incurred
1951-52	380	6
1952-53	379	78
1953-54	373	144
1954-55	466	388
1955-56	734	228

The progress of the factory can be judged only from the progress of expenditure. But there is one unique and very creditable feature about Perambur. While, as in other Government projects, the cost estimates have gone up from year to year, whether because prices of materials have risen or because the plan of the factory itself had to be expanded has not been explained, the Railway Minister has all these years stuck to the end of 1955-56 as the approximate date for the factory to go into production. In view of this consistency on the point, one has to accept his statements at its face value that progress has been "according to schedule." No earlier date had been promised for the completion of the factory and no explanation had therefore to be offered why the time table could not be adhered to.

In his last budget speech, the Railway Minister repeated his assurance that construction was proceeding according to schedule and that procurement of machinery for the factory has kept pace with it. But while reaffirming that the factory was to go into production in 1955-56, he modified the earlier promise to the extent that the annual production will have to be "phased", from 20 coach shells in 1955-56 to 350 in 1959-60. So, after production begins, it will take the factory another five years to attain its full capacity.

Apart from imports, production of passenger coaches within the country has been considerably increased, from 120 coaches in 1946-47 to 479 coaches in 1950-51 and 806 in 1953-54. The Railway workshops are turning out many more coaches than before and the possibility of further expansion of their coach-building capacity is being examined by the Workshop Reviewing Committee. But even after all that, the annual requirements of coaches being put at 1,157 in the first Five-Year Plan period, and this demand being likely to increase substantially with expansion

of railways, until Perambur steps into the breach, no balance can be struck between passengers and coaches and overcrowding in trains will remain a permanent feature. To wait till 1959-60 for Perambur to get into full production appears to be too long a period to wait. Is coach building a much more complex and difficult problem to handle than the building of locomotives? Members of Parliament casting their eyes about for a question to ask, might consider tabling this one.

Storm Over Tea

IN his well meaning attempt to pacify irate housewives in Britain who are pretty sore about soaring prices of tea, the Prime Minister of Ceylon has landed himself in a pretty mess. He had blamed the trade for pushing up prices, but quite inadvertently, it seems, he had also mentioned offhand a price which he said should be a reasonable price. Mincing Lane retorted by putting the blame squarely on the Ceylon Government for raising the price of tea by raising the export duty on it and made fun of him by starting its bid on the following day at the price mentioned by Sir John Kotelawala. This, of course, only raised a round of laughter. What people in Ceylon said about their Prime Minister is unprintable.

Though earlier, the Food Minister had told the House of Commons that the British Government had no intention of interfering with tea prices, a Labour peer brought up the issue in a poignant manner by urging the Government in the House of Lords to start a campaign to make the British people drink less tea. Indeed Lord Kalverly, the Labour peer, went so far as to suggest that the Prime Minister should ask all Government departments to stop the habit of having 'elevenses' drinking tea at 11 a.m.

Considerable feeling has been worked up in Britain over the high prices of tea. Blenders and retailers have come out as angels by professing to withhold a price rise which they were on the point of announcing in order to help the consumers. This, they say, would mean a loss of 8d to a shilling per lb of tea that is sold in retail. But they sportingly offered to bear this loss in the hope that the Government would take note and that the hint would not be lost on Mincing Lane. Actually, after all these hulla-baloo, auction prices in London have come down but whether this is a tempo-

rary decline or not, would be known only in the next few months when shipments of India are seasonally slack.

Backward—Even in Crime

INDIA lags behind the civilised West even in cognizable crime. The incidence of such crime per 1,00,000 of the population in this country is only 165 according to the Secretariat of the International Criminal Police Commission, as compared with 1,342 in UK, 1,322 in USA, 1,484 in France and 2,002 in West Germany. The next backward country in this respect is Turkey where the incidence is 240 per 1,00,000 of the population. The figure for Japan, in keeping with its progress in other spheres is, relatively high, in fact, higher than in UK, USA or France. It is 1,605 per 1,00,000.

But why is crime against property so low in this country? Is it because the Penal Code is extremely severe on crime against property and less so in the case of crime against person? In respect of theft, India's figures are the lowest in the world. This may be as much due to the rigours of the law as to the efficiency of the police; but the point will not be cleared unless statisticians work out the incidence of theft recorded as against theft committed. Whether it is simple theft or serious theft, the figures are telling, the incidence of the former being 69 in India against 911 in UK and 986 in USA.

It is only in wilful murder that India holds her own against the rest of the world, the incidence of such murders being 2.9 per 1,00,000 of the population as against 0.8 in UK and 2.0 in West Germany. Whether wilful murder means premeditated malice or not, the subject must engage the serious attention of social scientists. On a superficial reading, the figures suggest that the economic and social transition through which the country is passing has not created such problems of adjustment for the individual as to provoke anti-social activities coming under the law. It may be that the pace of change is taken to be higher than what it is; but the higher incidence of wilful murder also suggests the reaction of an unsophisticated mind to a situation which it is not able to handle objectively. Suicide unfortunately does not figure in these records. It would probably be a better index to social adjustment than any other. But it may be that for the police in every country it is not a problem of serious concern.

