

Boeing Aircraft for Air India

*353. **Shri P. C. Borooah:** Will the Minister of Transport and Communications be pleased to state:

(a) whether Air India propose to purchase two Boeing Aircraft; and

(b) if so, the cost thereof and the period over which the payment will be made?

The Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Transport and Communications (Shri Ahmed Mohiuddin): (a) and (b). The Government have approved of the purchase of one Boeing 707-320B aircraft by Air India at a total cost of Rs. 5.5 crores on the basis that the Corporation would secure necessary credit abroad to finance the cost of the project.

Shri P. C. Borooah: What is the reason for going in for only one aircraft when it was proposed to go in for two?

Shri Mohiuddin: The reason for going in for only one aircraft is that at the present moment it is desirable to keep the liability in foreign loans within a restricted limit.

Shri P. C. Borooah: What is the present strength of Boeing aircraft of Air India, and may I know whether the aircraft that was damaged by oxygen leakage has been repaired?

Shri Mohiuddin: That has been repaired. The present strength is six, and the aircraft that is proposed to be purchased will be the seventh.

Shrimati Savitri Nigam: What would be the price of this aircraft?

***Mr. Speaker:** That has already been given. The Member was not attentive.

Shrimati Savitri Nigam: I am putting another question. May I know

whether Government has got any scheme to purchase one or two Boeing during the Third Plan?

Shri Mohiuddin: One Boeing is being purchased.

Shri Morarka: Is it a fact that formerly the cost of these Boeings was about Rs. 4 crores each and now we are going to pay them Rs. 5½ crores, and if so, may I know the reasons for this increase?

Shri Mohiuddin: There is a difference in the price of the two aircraft. The previous one was 707-420, and this is 707-320B. There may be some difference, but there is not much of it.

Shri Morarka: Rs. 1½ crores.

Shri Mohiuddin: No.

Shri Morarka: Formerly it was Rs. 4 crores, and now it is Rs. 5½ crores.

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. Does he want to give further explanation as to why there is this difference?

Shri Mohiuddin: I am not aware of the break-up of the increased price. There is an increase in the price, but the main or one of the reasons is cost of spares etc., for a large number of aircraft like six at a time, the cost for store would be less, while for one it would be more.

Mr. Speaker: That is not the information that he is asking.

Shrimati Sharda Mukerjee: In view of the shortage of foreign exchange, have Government considered closing down one or two of the lines which are uneconomical, for instance from Delhi to Moscow or London-New York?

Shri Mohiuddin: They are not uneconomic.

Shri Indrajit Gupta: How do Government reconcile these new additions to the Air India fleet at such enormous cost with the almost crippling restrictions on foreign travel which are being imposed by the Government for other reasons?

Shri Mohiuddin: The restrictions are not on world travel. The restrictions are for Indians going abroad, and Air India serves the world. Moreover, from past experience it is found that the traffic emanating from India has not come down considerably.

Shri Harish Chandra Mathur: In permitting only one aircraft to Air India instead of two, may I know what are the routes which they hoped to cover before and which they would now curtail? When they wanted to purchase two, they must have certain traffic and certain routes for two. May I know what routes or traffic they have curtailed so that they may do with only one?

Shri Jagjivan Ram: No routes have been curtailed. When they made a proposal for the purchase of two Boeings, they thought that during slack periods, they may utilise the capacity in India. That was not viewed with good favour by the IAC. We also thought that in view of our exchange difficulties, it was not quite advisable to have two Boeings when we could do with only one.

Shri Joachim Alva: Has due consideration been given to this project in the sense whether there will be adverse or favourable effects in buying the Boeing aircraft in view of the active co-operation of a British aircraft company and a French aircraft company which will fly the supersonic jet with the fastest passenger plane over the Atlantic on the same route over which this Boeing will fly?

Shri Mohiuddin: I think the supersonic will come sometime after five, ten or fifteen years. I do not know when. But all these considerations have been taken into account.

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P. & T. Advisory Committees

*354. **Shri Hari Vishnu Kamath:** Will the Minister of Transport and Communications be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have constituted or propose to constitute P&T Advisory Committees for every Circle;

(b) if so, the basis or criteria for the membership of such committees; and

(c) the functions and powers of the Committees?

The Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Transport and Communications (Shri Bhagavati): (a) to (c). A statement is placed on the table of the House. [Placed in Library, See No. LT-934]63].

Shri Hari Vishnu Kamath: Before I proceed to the supplementaries; will you kindly permit me to have two obscurities in the statement here clarified? I will request you not to debit it to my account. Without getting them clarified, it is difficult to put supplementaries. The obscurities are: first, in the annexure, in column 3, headed 'States and Administrations against West Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, Delhi and U.P.', there is a blank. That is the first. The second is this. There is an asterisk mark against the third entry against column 5. It reads like this: "West Bengal... I plus 1*: Madras 2*". But there is no footnote as to what this asterisk stands for. If these could be clarified up I can proceed to the supplementaries.

The Minister of Transport and Communications (Shri Jagjivan Ram): Shri Kamath has not read the statement fully. He will find that in column 2, against West Bengal . . .

Shri Hari Vishnu Kamath: I am talking of the blanks in the statement. Is there any significance in that?

Mr. Speaker: Is that his first supplementary?