

The Minister of Shipping in the Ministry of Transport (Shri Raj Bahadur): (a) to (c). The Bridge has got 48 spans of 160 ft. each and each span has 5 prestressed Concrete beams to support the deck carrying the roadway. The prestressed Concrete beams are cast on the bank and launched on to the spans, starting from one end, by a launching truss weighing 140 tons, with a length of 330 ft.

2. Prestressed Concrete beams had already been launched on 14 spans (4 in each.) On 2nd March 1964 evening, the launching truss was being launched from the 14th to 15th span, travelling on the 4 prestressed Concrete beams already put on the 14th span. The Divisional Engineer was at that time standing on the beams on 14th span and supervising the operations. The Craftsmen operating the winches were on the launching truss. After the truss had moved about 70 ft. from the 14th pier, the Prestressed Concrete beams suddenly gave way with a terrific sound, and all the persons on the beams fell down to the river bed. As a result, the men engaged on the operations, including the Divisional Engineer, came down along with the beams. In spite of the first aid rendered, 7 people died on the spot, including 5 operators, the Divisional Engineer, Sri A. N. Damodaram Naidu, and another gentleman by name Shri A. S. Raju who was watching the operations, standing by the side of the Divisional Engineer (Highways). Three other men who were injured were rushed to the General Hospital at Kakinada, and they are progressing well in the Hospital.

3. Immediately on hearing about the accident, the Superintending Engineer (Highways), Kakinada, the Deputy Chief Engineer (Highways) and the Divisional Engineer (Designs) rushed to the spot. As per their investigation, there is no defect either in workmanship, or designs or launching arrangements. The only possible cause for the failure of the beams

according to the State Chief Engineer could be a sudden slipping of the trollies from the rails, i.e. a derailment similar to a train derailment, and producing severe impact loads on the prestressed Concrete beams leading to their failure. A very large number of prestressed concrete spans have already been constructed in this country and no such derailment has been reported before. Hence such an accident could not have been anticipated.

4. The State Government have set up an enquiry Committee, on which there is a representative of the Roads Wing of this Ministry also. The Committee has started its work and is expected to conclude its findings very shortly.

Explosion at the Railway Yard at Ajni

***726. Shri Hari Vishnu Kamath:** Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to refer to the statement made by him in response to a Calling Attention Notice on the 3rd December, 1963 and state:

(a) whether the inquiry into the explosion at the railway yard, Ajni, near Nagpur, has since been completed; and

(b) if so, the result thereof?

The Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Railways (Shri S. V. Ramaswamy) (a) Yes.

(b) The Committee have come to the conclusion that the explosion was caused by the wrong loading of consignments of detonators and Potassium Chlorate into the wagon. The exact cause of ignition could not, however, be established.

Pakistan-China Air Agreement

***727. Shri Maheswar Naik:** Will the Minister of Transport be pleased to state: