

LOK SABHA DEBATES

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LOK SABHA

Friday, 28th February, 1958.

The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the Clock

[MR SPEAKER in the Chair]

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Defective Construction of Ships in Hindustan Shipyard

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*570 { Shri Gajendra Prasad Sinha:
Shri V. P. Nayar:
Shri H. N. Mukerjee:
Shri M. Elias:
Shri Vajpayee:
Shri Mohamed Imam:
Shri V. C. Shukla:
Shri Raghunath Singh:

Will the Minister of Transport and Communications be pleased to refer to the reply given to Starred Question No. 1312 on the 19th December, 1957 and state:

(a) whether the Committee appointed to investigate the circumstances leading to the defects noticed in the construction of 'Andamans', the Excise launch 'Vidyut' and the survey vessel for the Calcutta Port have since submitted their report;

(b) if so, what are their findings;

(c) what action has been taken against those who were responsible for the defective construction; and

(d) what is the financial loss involved?

The Minister of State in the Ministry of Transport and Communications (Shri Raj Bahadur): (a) No.

(b) to (d). Do not arise.

Shri Gajendra Prasad Sinha: May I know on what basis the French consultant was appointed in preference to the German or Japanese consultants?

Mr. Speaker: It is an old story.

Shri Raj Bahadur: It is very difficult to draw comparisons in this respect, particularly between nations which have been seafaring and which have established their reputation for ship-building industry. The French have got a very high reputation. Our experts chose this particular firm because this also had a very good history.

Shri Gajendra Prasad Sinha: Last time in reply to Starred Question No. 1312, the hon. Minister said that a separate enquiry committee will be constituted to go into the detailed working of the Hindustan Shipyard. May I know whether that committee has been constituted and if so, what are its terms of reference?

Shri Raj Bahadur: I will have to refer to the answer to that question I require separate notice, because I am not quite sure about it.

Shri M. L. Dwivedi: This concerns directly the Shipyard, and so the hon. Minister should have been seized of the matter.

Mr. Speaker: There are some Parliaments in the Commonwealth where without getting previous notice, questions are asked on the floor of the House and answered. So far as such matters are concerned, the Ministers must be in full possession of fact.

The Minister of Transport and Communications (Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri): The question is on a.s. Andamans. But in regard to what the hon. Member said, I do not remember to have made any announcement in

this House that an enquiry committee will be set up to go into the matter of the shipyard itself.

Shri Raj Bahadur: That is what I also said; I said I will have to check up.

Shri V. P. Nayar: May I know whether it is a fact that one of the Indian designers pointed out the defect in the designing of the s.s. *Andamans* and that after the construction, the engineer has been borne out by the fact that ship required an extra load of several hundred tons to keep it in the proper position in water?

Shri Raj Bahadur: It is a fact that after the ship was launched, the defect about this thing was noticed. But the order for the manufacture of the ship was placed as far back as 1954. The entire ship was built and when it was launched, the defect was noticed.

Some Hon. Members rose—

Mr. Speaker: I will allow one question to every hon. Member. **Shri Raghunath Singh.**

श्री रघुनाथ सिंह : हम यह जानना चाहते हैं कि क्या एंडमन के मन्व-व में कोई एनक्वायरी हो रही है कि इसका कंस्ट्रक्शन ऐसा क्यों हुआ ?

श्री राज बहादुर : जी हाँ, एक्वायरी हो रही है और एनक्वायरी कमेटी की रिपोर्ट आज कल में ही मिलने वाली है ।

Shri H. N. Mukerjee: May I know if the Mercantile Marine Department of the Government of India at Calcutta have given a certificate of sea-worthiness last December to s.s. *Andamans* for only six months and if so, whether this is being taken into consideration for fixing responsibility?

Shri Raj Bahadur: So far as sea-worthiness is concerned, the Lloyds, who were the established firm in this behalf have given a certificate of highest sea-worthiness. The Chief Surve-

yor of the Government of India also has certified it to be highly sea-worthy.

Shri Ramanathan Chettiar: May I know whether **Shri Jal Patel**, an engineer in the shipyard had given advice in regard to the s.s. *Andamans* and whether that advice was rejected by the French consultants?

Shri Raj Bahadur: It will be premature for me to go into the genesis of the construction of the ship. That will be a matter which I think will be taken note of by the committee which is already going into this question.

Shri Goray: Is it not a fact that this said architect had submitted a written note detailing the defects in the ship and had warned that if they were not repaired, the ship will not be sea-worthy?

Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri: I have also heard so, I have not seen anything in writing that **Mr George Patel** said something on the lines that the hon. Member has said. But the enquiry committee has completed its report. Its report may be reaching here either this evening or tomorrow morning. I think—I am not quite sure—that that gentleman might have been invited to give evidence before that committee. So, it would be advisable to wait for the committee's report which will be in our hands by tomorrow.

Shri M. L. Dwivedi: In reply to parts (b) to (d) of the question, the Minister said, "Does not arise". There must be some financial loss involved and this question should have been replied to in some other manner. In the meanwhile, may I ask the Minister to place the report on the Table of the House?

Shri Raj Bahadur: The report has not yet been received.

Shri Tyagi: The loss is not a matter of report.

Shri Raj Bahadur: What we can say at present would be the cost of manufacture of the ship. The loss would be what additional items of work will

have to be undertaken in order to remove the faults. That cannot be assessed at the moment.

Shri H. N. Mukerjee: May I know if the original design of s.s. *Andamans* which was drawn up by an Indian naval architect was altered to its detriment by the French consultant and that the defect was noticed much earlier than Government took any steps to rectify it in 1957?

Shri Raj Bahadur: My information on the point is as follows I better read it out:

"The classification plans for this vessel were obtained from the Shipyard's technical consultants A.C.L. The basic designs and the working drawings were, however, prepared by the Shipyard under the supervision of their technical consultants."

Shri Gajendra Prasad Sinha: May I know whether this French consultant is still working there and if so, when the term is going to expire?

Shri Raj Bahadur: The term is going to expire soon; at the moment they are working.

Shri Tyagi: May I know the total cost of the defective ship which has been manufactured?

Shri Raj Bahadur: Rs. 144 lakhs.

Indian Shipping Companies

*571. **Shri Shree Narayan Das:** Will the Minister of Transport and Communications be pleased to state:

(a) in how many cases the applications of Indian Shipping Companies for admission to various Shipping Conferences were rejected during the last year and the circumstances in which they were rejected; and

(b) the names of such Shipping Conferences which rejected the applications?

The Minister of State in the Ministry of Transport and Communications (**Shri Raj Bahadur**): (a) and (b). A statement is laid on the Table of the Sabha. [See Appendix III, annexure No. 66.]

Shri Shree Narayan Das: From the statement it appears that some of the distinguished shipping conferences have been indulging in discrimination against taking any Indian shipping company?

Shri Raj Bahadur: I will not be able to say whether it is discrimination as such; but it is a fact that our applications for admission to those particular routes have been rejected.

Shri Shree Narayan Das: May I know whether it has been a regular feature that Indian shipping companies have not been admitted to such conferences and if so, what steps have Government taken in this regard?

Shri Raj Bahadur: No; it is not a regular feature. On some important routes, we have been admitted to this conference. As a matter of fact, the shortage of our tonnage is a factor which operates against the expansion of our shipping companies.

Shri Joachim Alva: Has the Government of India at any time addressed a letter or communication to the British Ministry of Shipping stating how the conferences are working like closed clubs, excluding our shipping lines and stressing the desirability of our lines being admitted to these conferences?

Shri Raj Bahadur: We do make full use of the diplomatic channels in this regard and we shall do so in future also.

Shri Tangamani: The hon. Minister stated that we are not allowed to these conferences because we have not got sufficient tonnage. But in the statement laid on the Table, we find that the reason for not allowing the India Steamship Company Limited and the Eastern Shipping Corporation Limited is that the trade has already been adequately covered by the existing members. May I know which of the two answers is correct?