

priority, I know, in my State. There is one seat kept reserved for officers coming on duty to Delhi. That is all right. But there is absolutely no priority for Members of Parliament. It has happened so often that we have not been able to come to a committee meeting here because at the last moment we are not able to get the seats. If there is a priority for officers, there is none for the Members of Parliament.

**Shri Hem Barua:** Members of Parliament have to wait for days together.

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members are speaking with different voices. There is no harm. The House and the Members of the House enjoy certain privileges to come here. About eight lakhs of people send a representative here to discharge their duty—it is on behalf of those persons. Why should hon. Members be touchy? I know that if he can afford the time, no hon. Member will try to take the plane, except on occasions. Two seats, I understand, are kept with the Government or vested in the Government to be utilised for whomsoever they want. As a matter of fact, if I had not been helped I would not have been here day before yesterday to open the Parliament. Therefore, let us not get rid of this concession. I would urge upon the hon. Minister, whenever an hon. Member has to come here in connection with the work of Parliament or in connection with a committee meeting and he applies, let him be treated at least as good as any officer of importance, if not better. Let one of these two or three seats be reserved for this purpose. Let one seat be reserved for Members of Parliament. There is no harm in doing so. Hon. Members ought not to become touchy about this. Let them enjoy this concession. I want it in the interests of the community.

**Dr. Sushila Nayar:** Is there any objection to one or two seats being reserved for this public purpose, for the Members of Parliament as they

are reserved for the officials of Government?

**Mr. Speaker:** That is what I have suggested. Let the two be increased to three, and let one be reserved for Members of Parliament.

#### Heron Aircraft

**\*25. Dr. Samantsinhar:** Will the Minister of Transport and Communications be pleased to state:

(a) when the Indian Airlines Corporation had decided to sell the Heron aircrafts;

(b) if so, how many of them have been sold by now and at what price each;

(c) when it was known that these aircrafts are uneconomical; and

(d) what was the difficulty in making an earlier decision to dispose them of?

**The Deputy Minister of Civil Aviation (Shri Mohiuddin):** (a) In November, 1957.

(b) One for Rs. 5,19,870.

(c) In November, 1957.

(d) The Heron aircraft were purchased in the context of the need for developing new feeder routes. The Corporation took only about two years to assess their utility.

**Dr. Samantsinhar:** May I know at what price these aircraft were purchased?

**Shri Mohiuddin:** About Rs. 8 to 9 lakhs each.

**Dr. Samantsinhar:** Why did it take about two years to dispose of these aircraft when they were found to be uneconomic?

**Shri Mohiuddin:** Well, it takes time to adjust the routes, in the first place, and to calculate the costs. When it was purchased it was thought that this four-engine aircraft was a good aircraft for the feeder routes. But

ultimately, in the two years' time, the cost proved to be too high.

**Dr. Samantsinhar:** Was there any offer earlier to purchase these aircraft by any other country or firm?

**Shri Mohiuddin:** Since 1957 the I.A.C. has been trying to sell these aircraft but has not so far succeeded in doing so.

**Shri Vidya Charan Shukla:** What is the total loss incurred by the Government in this Heron deal, of purchasing aircraft and selling them off without using them?

**Shri Mohiuddin:** I am afraid it is not possible to give a reply to this question, because the loss is part of the total loss of the I.A.C. every year since 1957. The hon. Member may see what was the loss in 1955, 1956, and 1957. But no loss could be allocated to a particular aircraft.

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Minister is not in a position to give immediately the loss on this item. If a separate question is put, he will gather the information regarding the loss and give it to the House.

**Shri Vidya Charan Shukla:** This is a question about Heron aircraft. As commercial accounts are maintained in the I.A.C. it should be mentioned item-wise like this and the hon. Minister should be in a position to give a reply to this.

**Mr. Speaker:** He is not in possession of all the facts here. If the hon. Member wants to pursue the matter I will allow a separate question.

**Shrimati Renu Chakravartty:** Which country has bought this aircraft, and which party?

**Shri Mohiuddin:** No, it has been purchased in India.

**Shrimati Renu Chakravartty:** Which is the party?

**Shri Mohiuddin:** The Indian Steel Corporation.

**An Hon. Member:** Only one.

**Shri Hem Barua:** Why should Government make itself a laboratory for experimenting with different types of aircraft that ultimately prove to be not of very much use?

**Shri Mohiuddin:** It sometimes does happen that a purchase which is a commercial purchase may prove a failure. The question has been asked so many times about this, and it has been stated very clearly that it was a mistake, and it has been found to be a mistake.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, order. He wants to know whether there is any research department attached to this Ministry which goes into this matter in advance of purchase.

**Shri Mohiuddin:** Yes, Sir. It was fully examined and reports from other countries where the aircraft is used were examined and it was recommended by various experts. But, ultimately it was found to be a failure.

**Shri Vidya Charan Shukla:** How many of these aircraft were purchased initially, how many of them have been sold and how many remain in possession of the I.A.C.

**Shri Mohiuddin:** Eight were purchased, one sold and seven are still remaining.

**Shri Hem Barua:** This is not the first time with the Heron type of aircraft. It happened with Skymasters also.

**Shri Mohiuddin:** The Skymaster is a very useful plane and has been giving service very economically and nicely for the last so many years.

**Shri Hem Barua:** But, ultimately it was found that it does not cope with our weather.

#### Conversion of Narrow Gauge Lines into Broad gauge

\*26. **Shrimati Ha Palchoudhuri:** Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the question of conversion of all Narrow