

LOK SABHA DEBATES

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LOK SABHA

Tuesday, 6th August, 1957.

The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the Clock

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Ariyalur Railway Accident

*650. { Shri D. C. Sharma:
Shri Tangamani:
Shrimati Parvathi Krishnan:
Shri T. B. Vittal Rao:

Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to refer to the replies given to Starred Question No. 146 on the 20th May, 1957 and Unstarred Question No. 514 on the 31st May, 1957 regarding the Ariyalur Railway Accident and state:

(a) what further steps have been taken towards implementing the recommendations of the Inquiry Commission;

(b) whether steps have been taken against the officials found guilty;

(c) if not, the reasons for the delay; and

(d) the amount so far disbursed on claims in connection with this accident?

The Deputy Minister of Railways (Shri Shah Nawaz Khan): (a) The Southern Railway Administration have taken action on all the recommendations made by the Commission on the lines indicated in the directive

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issued except in two items (i.e. items K. & M.) which are under active consideration. A statement showing the action taken is laid on the Table of Lok Sabha. [See Appendix II, annexure No. 77].

(b) The Commission of Inquiry did not hold any official responsible for this accident.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) Rs. 9,34,940/47 upto 29-7-57.

Shri D. C. Sharma: One of the recommendations made was for fitting a glass to the engines to make it possible for the drivers to see through the glass especially during rain. May I know how long it will take the Railway Administration to fit these glasses in the engines?

Shri Shah Nawaz Khan: There is already a glass fitted. They have recommended a different type of glass. But the matter is under consideration and we feel that the existing glass is quite good enough.

Shri D. C. Sharma: It has been suggested that the Railway Administration should write out notes regarding river training and other things. May I know if the necessary notes with regard to all these rivers have been written out and are they available to the drivers and others for use?

Shri Shah Nawaz Khan: Certain recommendations have been made regarding training and other protection works. Whatever data is there is made available to the persons who need it.

Shri Tangamani: In the statement laid on the Table there are only 16 recommendations.....

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members should always face the Chair.

Shri Tangamani: There are only 16 recommendations mentioned here in the statement. But in the Enquiry Commission's Report, pages 173-178, there is mention about indifference and inaction on the part of officials and that also the Divisional Engineer, and the Assistant Engineer violated rule 1425 of the Way and Works Manual and that the officers of the P.W.D. showed an utter lack of sense of responsibility which attaches to the office etc. These are the observations made by the Commission. May I know whether any action is contemplated against the Divisional Engineer, the Assistant Engineer and the P.W. Inspector and his assistant?

Shri Shahnawaz Khan: The Commission did pass some adverse remarks in respect of certain officials concerned. The explanations of those officials have been called for by the General Manager and they have been forwarded to the Railway Board. The Railway Board are going to act more or less on the precedent of the Bhiha accident and they will appoint an officer to fix definite responsibilities.

Shri B. S. Murthy: Did not the Enquiry Commission have the evidence of all these officers before they passed such adverse remarks? If so, why should another officer be appointed to go into the matter?

Shri Shahnawaz Khan: We are studying their explanations and it has to be established that those officers are really responsible for that accident.

Shri Tangamani: The hon. Minister said that Rs. 9 lakhs and odd have been dispersed. May I know what is the amount claimed and what is the balance to be dispersed up-to-date?

Shri Shahnawaz Khan: The claims are submitted to the Claims Commissioner. I do not know the amount. There are certain rules and regulations for paying compensations.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Minister gave information that about Rs. 9 lakhs were dispersed. Is it not legitimately expected that the hon. Minister may be asked as to what exactly

was the total amount of the claim? From the source from which he gathered the information that Rs. 9 lakhs and odd have been dispersed he must have this information also.

Shri Shahnawaz Khan: Generally, if I may say so and I may be excused for saying so, very exaggerated claims are made. It is for the Claims Commissioner to decide.

Mr. Speaker: Whatever that might be, what is the total amount of the claim? (*Interruption*) He is not able to give that information.

Shri Ranga: Have Government considered the deleterious effects of this inordinate delay in coming to a decision as to the disciplinary action to be taken against those officers against whom the Commission has passed strong strictures?

Shri Shahnawaz Khan: If I may respectfully submit, there is no inordinate delay. The Commission have passed certain adverse remarks against certain officers. We are taking action and we want to be quite sure that those people are really responsible for that accident.

Shri Ranga: Are you going to appoint another Commission?

Shri Shahnawaz Khan: We are in consultation with the Ministry of Law and we will take whatever action is called for.

Dr. Ram Subhag Singh: May I know the nature of the negligence shown by the responsible officers for which the adverse remarks have been passed by the Commission and whether, at the time of appointing the Commission, the Government had thought that the recommendations made by the Commission would be given effect to or not?

Shri Shahnawaz Khan: Whatever the recommendations are, we will certainly try to carry them out to the extent it is necessary.

Shri T. B. Vittal Rao: In one of the recommendations the Commission say that the length of beat patrol men should not exceed 3 miles and a similar recommendation was made by the

Inspector of Railways who enquired into the Jangaon accident. But I find here that it is not laid down absolutely. It is only qualifying; 3 miles in case there is rain fall etc. Other things are being taken into consideration. Why not fix an absolute three mile limit for a beat?

Shri Shahnawas Khan: From the experience that has been gathered by working over such long periods, we are fixing whatever is essential, keeping in view the recommendation made by the Commission.

Mr. Speaker: During rains people may not be able to go all the distance of five miles, but during ordinary time they may be able to go five miles. On the floor of the House we cannot decide whether it is three or five miles.

Salem-Bangalore Rail Link

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*651 { **Shri T. B. Vittal Rao:**
Shri Doraiswami Gounder:

Will the Minister of Railways be pleased to refer to the reply given to Starred Question No. 143 on the 20th May, 1957 and state:

(a) whether the engineering survey of the Salem-Bangalore rail link has since been completed;

(b) if so, whether the Railway Board have examined the same; and

(c) the nature of the decision taken thereon?

The Deputy Minister of Railways (Shri Shahnawaz Khan): (a) The field work has been completed. The recess work is in progress.

(b) and (c). Do not arise.

Shri T. B. Vittal Rao: It took something like two years to complete this survey. May I know when actually the report will be received by the Railway Board?

Shri Shahnawas Khan: It is a fairly lengthy survey of 124 miles and details have to be worked out. I may also submit that there was a certain shortage of trained engineers, and that was to some extent responsible for this delay. We are hoping to receive the report by October.

Shri T. B. Vittal Rao: Every time this question is asked they say, it will be received in May, in July and now in October. There must be some time limit for submission of reports.

The Minister of Railways (Shri Jagjivan Ram): We cannot put any time limit on these things. The engineering survey was commenced on 15th February, 1956. We have shortage of technical staff. In order to have some priority of surveys conducted we had to transfer some engineers from this work. The report is expected to be received by the end of this month and final report by the end of October. I do not think there has been any inordinate delay.

Shri Dasappa: May I know whether the survey of the Salem-Bangalore line takes note of the fact that important places like Anekal, Dharmapuri, Hosur and Krishnagiri are situated in this area and that the railway line will pass through these towns?

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Minister cannot be expected to know all the stations. I myself am not able to know them though I have visited that area very often. Information for such detailed questions may be had by writing to the hon. Minister.

Some hon. Members rose—

Mr. Speaker: Shri Dasappa—I will call people interested in Salem or Bangalore area.

Shri Dasappa: May I know how many surveys are being conducted with regard to connections with Bangalore, apart from the Salem line; when they have been started and how long will they take to be completed?

Mr. Speaker: Is it not enough to have trouble with one link?

Shri Dasappa: Surveys started much earlier than this have been completed.

Mr. Speaker: Does not matter. We are concerned only with this; even this is somewhat loose.

Shri S. V. Ramaswami: Out of the 124 miles, 50 miles will be on the old