

Erosion of I.A.F. Offensive Capability

475. SHRI A. K. KISKU: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Shri Pushpinder Singh has given an opinion in his book "Aircraft of the Indian Air Force (1933-73)" that during the last three years there has been a steady erosion of I.A.Fs. offensive capability;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the action taken by Government thereon?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI SWARAN SINGH): (a) to (c). Government have seen the book written by Shri Pushpinder Singh entitled "Aircraft of the Indian Air Force (1933-73)". In the foreword written by the previous Chief of the Air Staff the following two portions are relevant:

(1) "The 1971 war wave proof if proof were needed, that the IAF is now a mature, strong and versatile force, fit to take its place alongside other world air forces" and

(2) "...and lacking access to official information in some cases has ventured his own opinions as to why certain things have been done the way they have".

The opinion expressed by Shri Pushpinder Singh is his own. Government keep the whole position under review almost continuously and as and when necessary, suitable steps are taken to maintain our defence preparedness.

Setting up Polytechnics for Training to Soldiers in Service

476. SHRI BANAMALI BABU: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to set up two Polytechnics controlled by Armed Forces within the activi-

ties of the regimental centres for training during the service of soldiers; and

(b) if so, the outlines of the proposal?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI SWARAN SINGH): (a) and (b). The matter is under consideration. The idea is to impart vocational training in technical trades like Electrician, Mechanic Motor Vehicle, Sheet Metal worker, Welder, Painter, Carpenter, Cutting and Tailoring etc. capable of providing both employment and self-employment, to soldiers on verge of release from the Army. These training institutes are intended to be made a part of the regimental centres in order that the training will be disciplined. The institutes will be on the pattern of the industrial training institutes and their syllabi and training will, however, be a little more intensive as many jawans may not have the minimum educational background necessary for admission to industrial training institutes and they have to appear in the same All India Trade Test.

Expansion of Transport Facilities in Gujarat

477. SHRI D. D. DESAI: Will the Minister of SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether any proposal to expand transport facilities during the 1st Year of Fifth Plan has been finalised for Gujarat, and

(b) if so, the broad outlines thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING AND TRANSPORT (SHRI H. M. TRIVEDI): (a) and (b). An outlay of Rs. 3.23 crores is envisaged for expansion of road transport facilities in Gujarat during First year (1974-75) of Fifth Plan.