

*The Lok Sabha re-assembled after Lunch at forty-four minutes past Fourteen of the Clock.*

[SHRI CHANDRAJIT YADAV in the Chair]

#### MATTERS UNDER RULE 377

(i) REPORTED DECISION TO DISCONNECT THE HOT-LINE TELEPHONE LINES LINKING DIFFERENT AIRPORTS.

SHRI K. LAKKAPPA (Tumkur): There have been distressing reports that aircraft safety has been in jeopardy in our country.

It has been reported that the Civil Aviation Department has recently decided to disconnect the hotline telephone lines which link the different airports in our country and also our airports with the airports in the neighbouring countries.

India is at present divided into four air space control regions, under Bombay, Delhi, Madras and Calcutta. With the hot line system, when an aircraft is ready to take off, say from Palam, (Delhi) to Santa Cruz, (Bombay), flight details are flashed from the former airport to the latter and clearance for the flight is obtained within minutes. Such a precaution is necessary to avoid collisions of aircraft flying in opposite directions. If two aircraft are to take off from different airports at almost one and the same time and are to cross each other, the heights at which they are to fly and avoid collisions are determined in advance through the exchange of hotline message and the crew of the aircraft adjust the flying heights of their planes suitably. The flashing of news in advance of an impending flight from the respective air control region to the region which the flight will enter is mandatory under the regulations of the International Civil Aviation Organisation.

Now the reported decision of the Civil Aviation Department to do away with the hotline linking different airports poses a serious threat to the safety of aircraft.

It would appear that these hotlines are provided by P. & T. Department and the Civil Aviation Department has to pay some lakhs of rupees to P. & T. Department for their maintenance.

In recent months, the hotlines provided to the airports were found to be out of order and the air traffic control found it difficult to exchange messages through those hotlines. The equipment used for those lines was obsolete and complaints made from time to time to the Civil Aviation Department did not improve matters.

It is reported that the Civil Aviation Department found it to be waste of money to keep such unserviceable hotlines and decided to do away with them. It is also reported that in future the air traffic controls would make use of the aeronautical fixed telecommunication network which is a Morse code system and which takes nearly an hour to transmit a message. In an hour's time the aircraft would leave one air control region and enter another risking itself and risking the lives of passengers.

Safety of aircraft and of passengers should always be the primary consideration of the Civil Aviation Department. The Government should pay immediate attention to this problem. The hotline telephone connections between airports should not be done away with and they should be maintained properly with sound equipment. (Interruptions) This has to be immediately conveyed to the Ministry and action taken should also be reported to the House urgently, by tomorrow.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think the Ministry take note of this urgent matter.

(ii) INSTITUTE OF ADVANCED STUDIES, SIMLA

SHRI ARJUN SETHI (Bhadrak): It is tragic that the prestigious Institute of Advanced Studies at Simla is in the doldrums. It has not awarded any fresh fellowship since 1978 and today where there are only two scholars at