

that I would be coming in five minutes, I did not want the matter to wait.

MR. SPEAKER: Three other Members have sent a written letter to me saying that it may be taken up tomorrow. Anyway, there are hardly five minutes more. One need not decide about the matter. We shall take it up.

Prof. Sher Singh to make a statement.

17.54 hrs.

STATEMENT RE. PURCHASE OF
TRANSPORT AIRCRAFT G-222
MANUFACTURED BY AERITALIA

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE
MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (PROF.
SHER SINGH): Mr. Speaker, Sir,
Hon'ble Member, Shri Mallikarjun,
made a reference in the House on 2nd
March, 1979, about an Italian transport
aircraft, G-222, manufactured by
Aeritalia.

I regret to have to point out that
the Hon'ble Member's statement is
based upon obvious mis-information.

It is not at all true that Government
have taken any decision about the
purchase either of G-222 aircraft, or
for that matter of any other transport
aircraft, to replace the existing fleet of
Packets and Dakotas. The question is
still at a stage of examination far
removed from that of any such
decision.

We have need for a transport air-
craft to provide for the ultimate
replacement of the Packets and
Dakotas. Half a dozen offers have
been under consideration in this behalf
involving as many countries.

A team of experts composed of
representatives of the Army Head-
quarters, Air Headquarters, HAL and
the Defence Research and Develop-
ment Organisation, has been set up to
evaluate all possible options. The
team has yet to collect and put
together all the necessary information

about various types of aircrafts in
terms of their operational character-
istics; prices; costs, and other impli-
cations of production in India, delivery
schedules; and other connected mat-
ters. Its report will then be consid-
ered at an inter-Ministerial level by
senior representatives of the Ministry
of Defence, Ministry of Finance, Army
HQrs, Air HQrs, HAL and the Defence
Research and Development Organisa-
tion. It is only thereafter, that some
recommendations will emerge and the
matter will be ready to be placed
before the concerned Cabinet Com-
mittee.

It will thus be seen that far from
any decision, no recommendation even
in favour of any particular aircraft
has been evolved yet, at any level. The
reports which have appeared in
certain sections of the Press on the
basis of which the Hon'ble Member
seems to have thought it fit to mention
the subject in the House, therefore are
—to say the least—erroneous and mis-
leading.

There was a demonstration of the
Italian G-222 recently. Following
requests made jointly by representa-
tives of the Italian Embassy in New
Delhi and manufacturers for the
demonstration on the ground that the
aircraft for which they sought per-
mission to demonstrate was much
superior to and an improved version
of the aircraft considered earlier. They
claimed that it would meet the
requirements we had in view; it would
be competitive with the other aircrafts
under evaluation, and merit considera-
tion along with them. The demonstra-
tions were allowed on the clear under-
standing that they would not only be
at the manufacturers expense but
wholly without any commitment on
our part. The reports of experts who
witnessed the demonstrations have yet
to be drawn up.

Similar demonstrations have been
given in the past by certain other
competing parties.

[Pro. Sher Singh]

I need hardly assure the House that there will be no question of making any decision or choice in this matter without giving equal opportunity to all competing parties; and without the most careful, thorough and comparative evaluation of all the competing proposals in the light of expert scrutiny.

MR. SPEAKER: The House now stands adjourned till 11 A.M. tomorrow.

18. hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Tuesday, March 6, 1979/Phalguna 15, 1900 (Saka).