

12.30

DISCUSSION RE: RAILWAY ACCIDENT NEAR ALLAHABAD

MR. SPEAKER: We have got two hours now. The Minister would require about half-an-hour. I would call him at 8 O'clock. I hope we will maintain this strength till 8.30.

श्री जार्ज फरनेन्डोज (बम्बई-दक्षिण) : इस में समय बढ़ाया जाय, यह मेरी प्रार्थना है ।

MR. SPEAKER: Let us see. It all depends on the Members' patience.

श्री जार्ज फरनेन्डोज : यह पेशेस का सवाल नहीं है, लोगों की जान का प्रश्न है ।

MR. SPEAKER: No; even before we begin all this question arises. Let us see. I suggest to hon. Members to make only useful suggestions as they would certainly make, and not make long speeches. 8.30 is long enough. We have been sitting here from 11 O'clock, and it is not so easy. Therefore, I appeal to you to conclude by 8 O'clock. The Minister will be given half an hour. At 8.30 we shall try to adjourn.

श्री हरदयाल देवगुण (पूर्व दिल्ली) : अध्यक्ष महोदय, भरवारी स्टेशन पर 30 मार्च को जो रेल दुर्घटना हुई उस के सम्बन्ध में रेलवे मंत्री जी ने कल जो वक्तव्य दिया है उस पर आप की अनुमति से मैं चर्चा उठाना चाहता हूँ ।

जैसा कल मंत्री महोदय ने बतसाया, 30 मार्च को भरवारी रेलवे स्टेशन पर एक ट्रेन की दूसरी ट्रेन से टक्कर होने के कारण 19 व्यक्ति मारे गये और अनेक घायल हुए उस से दस दिन पूर्व दक्षिण में याविलगी रेलवे स्टेशन पर दफन एक्सप्रेस की एक दुर्घटना हुई, जिस में 53 व्यक्ति मारे गये । दस दिन के इस अल्प काल में रेलवे ने 72 हत्यायें

की । यही नहीं कि यह हत्यायें हुई, बल्कि उन के कारण देश में चिन्ता और अतंक की एक लहर फैल गई है । रेलवे की यात्रा जो अनुपाततः सुरक्षित समझी जाती थी उस के बारे में यह आशंका पैदा हो गई है कि यह यात्रा सुरक्षित भी है या नहीं : रेल दुर्घटनाओं में जहां इतने लोगों की हत्यायें हो रही हैं उन के अतिरिक्त रेल यात्रा करते हुए चारियों में हत्यायें, डकैतियों में हत्यायें, राजनीतिक कातिलों के हाथों हत्यायें जो हो रही हैं; अगर उन को भी इस में शामिल कर दिया जाये तो मैं कह सकता हूँ कि आज देश में यह भावना व्याप्त है कि रेल यात्रा सुरक्षित नहीं है । इसलिये आज हमको इस समस्या पर बड़ी गम्भीरता से विचार करना चाहिये ।

1967 से रेल मंत्रालय श्री पुनाचा के हाथ में है । उससे दो वर्ष पूर्व तक यह मंत्रालय श्री एस० के० पाटिल के मंत्रित्व में था और ऐसा समझा जाता था कि उन के आने से रेल दुर्घटनाओं का एक क्रम शुरू हुआ है और यह भी अनुमान था कि आम चुनाव में उन के साथ जो दुर्घटना हुई उस के बाद शायद यह क्रम भी बन्द हो जाय । आप देखेंगे कि इस काल में क्रमशः रेल दुर्घटनाओं की संख्या बढ़ती गई । 1962 से 1967 तक के जो आंकड़े उपलब्ध हैं उन से पता लगेगा कि किस तरह से दुर्घटनायें बढ़ी हैं । 1962-63 में 1770 रेल दुर्घटनायें हुईं जिन में 118 आदमी मारे गये और 523 घायल हुए 1963-64 में 1893 दुर्घटनायें हुईं जिन में 26 आदमी मारे गये और 302 घायल हुए, 1964-65 में 2015 दुर्घटनाएं हुईं जिन में 130 लोग मारे गये और 290 घायल हुए । 1965-66 में 2105 दुर्घटनायें हुईं जिन में 42 आदमी मारे गये और 484 जख्मी हुए । 1966-67 में मार्च तक 2212 दुर्घटनायें हुईं जिन में 509 लोग मारे गये और 760 आदमी घायल हुए । 1966-67 में इन घटनाओं

का रेकार्ड था क्योंकि पिछले पांच सालों में इतने लोग रेल दुर्घटनाओं में कभी नहीं मारे गये थे। इन वर्षों में यह अधिकतम संख्या थी। उस के बाद जब से श्री पुनाबा के हाथ में यह मंत्रालय आया है अर्थात् मार्च, 1967 से लेकर अब तक जितनी रेल दुर्घटनायें हुई हैं उन की संख्या अब तक की सभी मर्यादाओं को लांघ गई है। उस ने सभी पिछले रेकार्डों को तोड़ दिया है। मैंने समाचार-पत्रों से जो आंकड़े इकट्ठे किये हैं उनके अनुसार पहली अप्रैल 1967 से लेकर 31 मार्च, 1968 तक एक साल में 230 आदमी मारे जा चुके हैं इन रेल दुर्घटनाओं में। यह उन रेल दुर्घटनाओं के आंकड़े हैं वह रेलों की टक्कर से, रेलों के पटरियों से उतरने के कारण से या मैनड और अनमैनड लेवल क्रॉसिंग पर रेलगाड़ियों के बसों से टकराने से हुई थीं। उन के कारण 230 आदमी मारे गये हैं। अगर पिछले छः सालों की रेल दुर्घटनाओं से मिलान करें तो यह अधिकतम संख्या है। इतने आदमी कभी पिछले सालों में रेल दुर्घटनाओं से नहीं मरे।

यह गम्भीर परिस्थिति है क्योंकि यह संख्या दिन प्रति दिन बढ़ती जा रही है। पिछले साल बड़ी बड़ी दुर्घटनायें हुई हैं। मई में जालारपट (कुम्भम) में 62 लोग मारे थे, सिलिगुड़ी कटिहार में 23 लोग मारे गये थे, असम मेल दुर्घटना में अलीपुरद्वार में 16 आदमी मारे गये थे, लखीमपुर में 9 आदमी मारे गये, लखीसराय में 18 आदमी मारे गये इसी तरह से इन दो दुर्घटनाओं में जो अभी हुई हैं, इतने लोग मारे गये हैं। सवाल यह है कि जिस मंत्रालय की या जिस मंत्री की जिम्मेदारी है रेल को सुरक्षित रूप से चलाने की क्या उन्होंने अपनी जिम्मेदारी पूरी की है, क्या वह अपना कर्तव्य पूरा कर रहे हैं? और यदि अपना कर्तव्य पूरा नहीं करती तो उनके प्रति क्या ब्यवहार होना

चाहिये? आज देश उनसे क्या मांग करता है, यह मैं यहाँ पर बतलाना चाहता हूँ।

1962 में एक एक्सिडेंट कमेटी बनी। उस ने करीब 377 सुझाव दिये कि रेल दुर्घटनाओं को किस तरह से कम किया जा सकता है। रेल मंत्रालय ने अपनी वार्षिक रिपोर्ट में यह बतलाने की कोशिश की है रेलवे दुर्घटनायें कम हो रही हैं विस्मयः रेलों के बढ़ने के हिसाब से। लेकिन रिपोर्ट को पढ़ने के पश्चात् मैं एक ही परिणाम पर पहुँचा हूँ कि पिछले दो सालों में ज़ब्त से नया रेलवे बोर्ड बना है उस ने अब तक दो काम किये हैं, उसने रेल दुर्घटनाओं में नरहत्यायों की हैं और रेलवे को घाटे में डाला है। इस के सिवा उन का और कोई काम नहीं रहा चूँकि इस मंत्रालय ने एक साल में सब से ज्यादा नर-हत्यायों की हैं, इस लिये मैं समझता हूँ कि मंत्री जी के लिये इसके सिवा और कोई सम्मानपूर्ण रास्ता नहीं है कि वह खुद इस्तीफा दे दें और रेलवे बोर्ड को एक दम मुभत्सित कर दें। सवाल यह है कि इतनी सिफारिशों की गई, उस के बाद बजाय इस के कि रेलवे में एफिशिएन्सी लायें, रेलवे में सुधार करें रेलवे एक्सिडेंट्स को कम करने की कोशिश करें, रेलवे में एक्सिडेंट्स बढ़ते जा रहे हैं आज लोगों के दिल में शंका पैदा होती है। जिस प्रकार कुछ समय पहले वायु याना करके समय लोगों को यह शंका पदा होती थी कि हवाई जहाज से जाने के बाद वह जिन्दा बापस लौटेंगे या नहीं, उसी प्रकार से आज रेल यात्रा करने समय उन के मन में शंका पैदा होती है कि वह जिन्दा लौटेंगे या नहीं। यदि पंडित दीन दयाल जैसे व्यक्ति की हत्या रेलगाड़ी में हो सकती है तो अनुमान किया जा सकता है कि रेल यात्रा कितनी असुरक्षित है, हिन्दुस्तान के विभिन्न भागों में जिस प्रकार से रेल गाड़ियां पटरियों से उतर जाती हैं और दुर्घटनायें होती हैं, उसे देखते हुए रेलों में यात्रा करना चाहिये या नहीं, यह प्रश्न उठना स्वाभाविक है।

[श्री हरदयाल देवगुण]

मैं समझता हूँ कि इस के लिये जो भी सिफारिशों की गई थीं, सरकार ने उन पर अमल नहीं किया, और उस के बहुत से प्रमाण हैं। उन की अपनी रिपोर्ट में भी ऐसा बतलाया गया है, उन्होंने कहा कि 377 में से 305 पर उन्होंने अमल किया है, बाकी पर नहीं किया है, उन में मुख्य मुख्य सिफारिशों यह थीं कि सिग्नलिंग टेकनिक में सुधार किया जाये, उन में कोई ऐसी व्यवस्था की जाये जिन से घटनाएँ रुकें, और इस के लिये जो भी कर्मचारी हों वे योग्य हों, ट्रेन्ड हों, जो अनमैनुअल लेवल क्रासिंग्स हैं उनके लिये व्यवस्था की जाये उनके लिये अधिक आदमी रखे जायें और इस सारे प्रबन्ध को बदला जाय। लेकिन रिपोर्ट में कई ऐसी बातें थीं जिन पर आज छः साल के बाद भी न रेलवे बोर्ड ने अमल किया है और न मंत्रालय ने अमल किया है। यह कह कर टाल दिया गया कि अभी उन पर अमल करने की जरूरत नहीं है। कुंजरू कमेटी ने 1962 में जो सिफारिशों की उनसे भी ज्यादा जो महत्वपूर्ण सिफारिश है और जो कि 1966 की रेल दुर्घटना के बाद 1967 में कमिश्नर आफ रेलवे सेप्टी ने जांच के बाद की थी, उसकी और मैं आपका विशेष ध्यान दिलाना चाहता हूँ। उनका यह वक्तव्य 18 जुलाई, 1967 के समाचार पत्रों में प्रकाशित हुआ था। उन्होंने इस में कहा था :

"The Commissioner of Railway Safety wants the responsibility for all railway accidents to be extended to high levels and not merely confined to the lowest."

अब कभी रेल दुर्घटना हो जाती है तो अगर इन्डियन जिन्दा बच जाता है तो उसको सजा दे दी जाती है, अगर प्वाइंटसमैन पकड़ा जाता है तो उसको सजा दे दी जाती है और लीपापोती कर दी जाती है। मैं जानना चाहता हूँ कि ऐसा करके क्या दुर्घटनाओं को आप कम कर पाएँ हैं? ये तो बढ़ती ही गई हैं। इस

वास्ते आपको इसकी तह में जाना पड़ेगा और जो असली कारण हैं उनको ढूँढना पड़ेगा। कमिश्नर रेलवे सेप्टी ने कारण बताया है और कहा कि इनकी जिम्मेदारी बड़े आदमियों पर डालें अर्थात् आप ऊपर से जिम्मेदारी डालना शुरू करें। इसका कारण यह है कि रेलवे बोर्ड ने ऐसे नियम बिना दिये हैं जिन की वजह से दुर्घटनायें होती हैं। जब तक उन नियमों को बदला नहीं जाएगा तब तक दुर्घटनायें कम नहीं होंगी। उन्होंने कहा है।

"The Commissioner found that subsidiary rules of railways had become very cumbersome and create confusion in the minds of officers and staff. The Railway Board should review these rules and incorporate those useful ones in the general rules and discard others. Therefore, the formulation of subsidiary rules should be forbidden. The operating officers are conversant with the safety rules, but not with the technicalities and complicated working of modern safety aids."

इस प्रकार से और भी बातें उन्होंने नहीं है।

आप ने कहा है कि आप ने एक हाई पावर्ड इनक्वायरी कमेटी बिठाई है और इसमें इस सदन के माननीय सदस्य श्री मसानी भी हैं और दूसरे लोग भी हैं। लेकिन मैं समझता हूँ कि बुनियादी बातों में जाने की जरूरत है। जब तक आप ऐसा नहीं करते तब तक ये दुर्घटनायें होती ही रहेंगी, ये बन्द नहीं होंगी। सब कुछ देखने के बाद मैं इस नतीजे पर पहुँचा हूँ कि 1962 में कुंजरू कमेटी ने जो सिफारिशों की थीं उन पर गम्भीरता से अमल नहीं किया गया है और यही कारण है कि दुर्घटनाओं की संख्या उत्तरोत्तर बढ़ रही है।

दूसरी ज़रूरी बात यह है कि जिम्मेदारी छोटे लोगों पर डालने के बजाय बड़े लोगों पर डाली जानी चाहिये। मैं समझता हूँ कि लोकतंत्र में श्रीर संसदीय प्रणाली में छोटे से छोटे काम की जिम्मेदारी भी बड़े से बड़े आदमी पर आती है। हमने अपने देश के लिए लोकतंत्र को अपनाया है। हमें इससे मतलब नहीं है कि भरवारी स्टेशन का स्टेशन मास्टर कौन था, कौन गाड़ी चलाने वाले थे। देश इस बात को नहीं जानता है। देश एक ही बात जानता है कि गाड़ी चलाने वाला रेल मंत्री है, श्री पुनाचा हैं या उनके साथी हैं रेल दुर्घटनायें होती हैं तो उनका उत्तरदायित्व इन पर आता है। अगर कोई मिसहैप होता है और गवर्नमेंट सुधार नहीं कर सकती है तो उनको गद्दी छोड़ देना चाहिये। गद्दी छोड़ने की यह परम्परा श्री लालबहादुर शास्त्री जी ने डाली थी। अपना त्यागपत्र दे कर एक बहुत स्वस्थ परम्परा का उन्होंने श्रीगणेश किया था। संसदीय लोकतंत्र में ऐसा किया भी जाना चाहिये, ऐसी जिम्मेदारी अब पुनाचा साहब को लेनी चाहिये। मंत्री अपने महकमों के प्रश्नों के उत्तर खुद देते हैं। कमी वे जिम्मेदारी अपने लोगों पर डालने की ज़रूरत नहीं समझते। आप यह भी देखें कि अमरीका के राष्ट्रपति ने उत्तरी वियतनाम में जंग की जीत में अपनी असफलता को स्वीकार किया है और दिलेरी से काम ले कर गद्दी छोड़ने की घोषणा की है। उसी तरह से पिछल दस सालों से जो नर हत्या कांड रेलों पर हुए हैं, उसका एक ही प्रायश्चित्त है इस सरकार के लिए, कि रेल मंत्री आज यह घोषणा करें कि वे अपने पद से त्यागपत्र देते हैं और रेलवे बोर्ड को अपदस्थ करते हैं अगर वह ऐसा काम करेंगे तो आने वाला रेल मंत्री जो होगा उसको मालूम होगा कि हिन्दुस्तान का कोई भी कोना हाँ, यात्रियों को उनके गन्तव्य स्थान तक सुरक्षित पहुंचाने की जिम्मेदारी उस पर है। मैं समझता हूँ कि अगर बड़े आदमी इसकी

जिम्मेदारी लेने के लिए तयार होंगे तो एक्सीडेंट्स कम हो जाएंगे, रेल यात्रा सुरक्षित हो जाएगी। बड़ी दुर्घटनाओं की जिम्मेदारी छोटे लोगों पर डालने से काम नहीं चलेगा। लोकतंत्र में छोटी से छोटी गलती के लिए भी बड़े से बड़े आदमी को माफ नहीं किया जाना चाहिये। परन्तु होता यह है कि बड़ी से बड़ी गलती बड़े से बड़े आदमी को माफ कर दी जाती है लेकिन छोटी गलती भी छोटे आदमी को माफ नहीं हो सकती है। इसलिए मैं समझता हूँ कि जो रेल दुर्घटनायें वर्तमान मंत्री महोदय के कार्यकाल में हुई हैं उनका प्रायश्चित्त उनको त्यागपत्र दे कर करना चाहिये। यही आज देश की मांग है और आपको इसे स्वीकार करना चाहिये।

MR. SPEAKER: The opening speaker, naturally, has got this much time but other Members will have to keep to the time schedule. With six parties on this side and six on that side—I have to call one from that side also—it will be 10 or 12 people. With only one hour and fifteen minutes left, even if 6 or 7 minutes are given for each Member, it cannot be completed by 8 O'clock. Therefore, I appeal that hon. Members should be brief and to the point.

श्री क० ना० तिवारी (बेतिया) : रेल दुर्घटनाओं को लेकर जो सवाल अभी पूर्व वक्ता महोदय ने उठाया है इसमें कोई शक नहीं है कि हम सभी को दुख है। जब इस तरह की कोई दुर्घटना हो जाती है तो सभी को चाहे वे किसी भी दल से सम्बन्ध रखते हों या किसी भी तबके के लोग हों, तकलीफ होती है, दुख होता है। जो इन दुर्घटनाओं में मारे जाते हैं या घायल हो जाते हैं उनके परिवार वालों के साथ सभी की हमदर्दी होती है।

[श्री क० ना० तिवारी]

लेकिन मेरी समझ में एक बात नहीं आई है। रेल दुर्घटना अगर कोई हो जाती है तो वह चूक केन्द्र का विषय है, इस वास्ते यहां आ जाती है और उस पर चर्चा हो जाती है। लेकिन आप देखें कि आज के वैज्ञानिक युग में जब हम हवाई जहाज से यात्रा करते हैं, या मोटर चलाते या सार्किल चलाते हैं तो कोई भी प्रान्त ऐसा नहीं है, कोई भी नगर ऐसा नहीं है जहां पर कि एक्सीडेंट न होते हों। हर रोज हमें पढ़ने को मिलता है कि दिल्ली में इतने लड़के दब कर मर गये, सड़क दुर्घटनाओं में मर गए। यह भी हम कई बार पढ़ते हैं कि कहीं किसी स्थान पर हवाई जहाज टकरा गया और इतने आदमी मर गए। यहां हमारे देश में भी इस तरह की दुर्घटनायें हुई हैं और विदेशों में भी होती हैं। हमारे अपने देश के मिलिटरी के आदमी जब काश्मीर की तरफ गए हुए थे और फ्रंटियर की तरफ जा रहे थे और जिनमें बड़े बड़े जनरल भी थे, उनके साथ भी एक्सीडेंट हो गया और उस एक्सीडेंट में वे मर गये थे।

अभी श्री देवगुण ने जो कहा है उस में मैं उनके साथ एग्री करता हूं और वह मेरी सजेशन को भी मान लें। उन्होंने कहा है कि अगर कोई छोटे से छोटा आदमी भी गलती करे तो बड़े से बड़े आदमी को उसकी सजा मिलनी चाहिए। मेरा ख्याल है कि अगर इस रूल को एप्लाइ किया जाए और डेमोक्रेसी का नाम भी आपने लिया है तो इस लाहज़ से अगर किसी के घर चोरी हो जाए तो जेल में उस घर के बड़े से बड़े आदमी को भेजना चाहिये चोर को या नौकर को नहीं। घर का मालिक होशियार नहीं था इसलिये उसके घर पर चोरी हो गई। उसके घर में नौकर सोता रह गया इस वजह से उस पर तो यह जिम्मे-दारी वहीं आनी चाहिये लेकिन मालिक पर यह अवश्य आनी चाहिये।

उन्होंने कुछ फिगरज़ भी दिये हैं। मुझे पता नहीं कहां से वह इन फिगरज़ को लाए हैं। मेरे पास जो फिगरज़ हैं उनके अनुसार 1948-49 में टोटल नम्बर आफ एक्सीडेंट्स 24120 थे और 1949-50 में 20623। लेकिन घटते-घटते 1966-67 में 5889 रह गए। जहां तक मृतकों की संख्या का सम्बन्ध है, वे फिगरज़ न तो उनके पास हैं और न ही हमारे पास।

जहां तक एक्सीडेंट्स का सम्बन्ध है यू० आई० सी० की रिपोर्ट को आप देखें। डिरेलमेंट जो होती है या एक्सीडेंट्स जो होते हैं उनकी फिगरज़ इस प्रकार हैं। इटैलियन स्टेट रेलवे : 0.32, फ्रेंच नैशनल रेलवे : 0.90, जर्मन फीड्रल रेलवे : 1.96, स्वीडिश स्टेट रेलवे : 2.52, बेलजियन नैशनल रेलवेज : 2.53, नोर्वेजियन स्टेट रेलवेज : 2.85, डेनिश स्टेट रेलवेज : 3.36, कैनेडियन पैसिफिक रेलवेज : 3.44, जैपेनीज़ नैशनल रेलवेज : 3.93, फ्रिनिश स्टेट रेलवेज : 4.46, कैनेडियन नैशनल रेलवेज : 4.60, यूगोस्लाव रेलवेज : 5.83, पोर्टुगीज़ रेलवेज : 5.85, साउथ अफ्रीकन रेलवेज : 58.46।

इन फिगरज़ से यह प्रकट होता है कि संसार में कोई भी ऐसा देश नहीं है, जहां कम या ज्यादा एक्लिटेंट नहीं होते हैं। इसलिए अपाञ्चीशन की और से केवल प्रापेगेंडा के लिए यह मांग की जा रही है कि रेलवे मिनिस्टर रिज़ाइन कर दें। मैं यह पूछना चाहता हूं कि जब दिल्ली में बस आदि के इतने एक्लिटेंट होते हैं, तो यहां के लेफ्टिनेंट गवर्नर या चीफ एक्सीक्यूटिव कौंसिलर रिज़ाइन क्यों नहीं करते हैं। अगर यू० पी० में किसी इसी तरह की कोई दुर्घटना होती है, तो यू० पी० के चीफ मिनिस्टर क्यों न रिज़ाइन कर दें? अगर बिहार में कोई दुर्घटना होती है, तो वहां के चीफ मिनिस्टर क्यों न रिज़ाइन कर दें?

श्री कंबर लाल गुप्त (दिल्ली सदर) : श्री लाल बहादुर शस्त्री ने क्यों रिज़ाइन किया था ? क्या उन्होंने इलैक्शन की ज़रूरत से रिज़ाइन किया था ?

श्री क० ना० तिवारी : “कहीं की ईंट, कहीं का रोड़ा, भानुमती ने कुनबा जोड़ा।” माननीय सदस्य ने श्री जानसन के इस्तीफे और रेलवे दुर्घटनाओं को मिला दिया। कानों को तो यह बात अच्छी लगती है, लेकिन फ़ैक्ट्स से उनका कोई सरोकार नहीं है।

माननीय सदस्य ने कुंजरू कमेटी की रिपोर्ट का भी ज़िक्र किया है। उस रिपोर्ट में इस बारे में ये फ़िगरज़ दिये गये हैं :

“There are over a million railway workers. . . .”

“Dr. Kunzru has stated that the staff who were responsible for accidents constitute only 0.13 per cent of the total number of staff.”

मैं रेलवे मंत्री महोदय से यह निवेदन करना चाहता हूँ कि रेलवे प्रशासन में जो स्लैकनेस आ गई है, उस को यथाशक्ति दूर किया जाना चाहिए। ख़ास तौर पर जिन यूनियनों के लोग पापुलेरिटी हासिल करने के लिए इन दुर्घटनाओं के कलप्रिट्स को डिफेंड करते हैं और शलत काज को लेकर लड़ने लगते हैं, जो रेलवेज में डिसिप्लिन नहीं रखना चाहते और उसमें डिसिप्लिन नहीं रखने देते हैं, उनकी रीकगनीशन को छीन लिया जाना चाहिए।

मैं समझता हूँ कि सभी माननीय सदस्य इस बात से सहमत होंगे कि आज तक रेलवे की दुर्घटना की कोई जूडिशल एन्क्वायरी नहीं हुई है और मंत्री महोदय ने ही पहले-पहल यह कदम उठाया है कि मैसूर की रेलदुर्घटना के सम्बन्ध में एक जूडिशल एन्क्वायरी की व्यवस्था की है। यही नहीं, उन्होंने इस

कमिशन में इस सदन के सदस्यों को भी शामिल किया है। यह कमीशन इस बात का पता लगायेगा कि इस दुर्घटना के संबंध में किसने गलती की ; किसी बड़े अधिकारी ने गलती की या छोटे ने की। उसकी रिपोर्ट इस सदन के सामने आयेगी। मैं समझता हूँ कि अगर आगे भी कोई रेल दुर्घटना हुई, तो वह जूडिशल एन्क्वायरी कायम करने की इस परम्परा को जारी रखेंगे। मुझे आशा है कि रेलवे के काम में जिस इम्प्रूवमेंट की आवश्यकता है, वह पूरी शक्ति के साथ उस को लायेंगे।

श्री हुकम चन्द कछवाय (उज्जैन) : अध्यक्ष महोदय, मैंने भी अपना नाम दिया हुआ है। मुझे केवल पांच मिनट दे दिये जायें।

अध्यक्ष महोदय : नाम तो बहुत हैं, लेकिन पहले सभी पार्टियों को चांस देना होगा।

SHRI TENNETI VISWANATHAM (Visakhapatnam): I shall be very brief. A number of accidents have been read out by my friend on the right, and a number of accidents have been read out by my friend on the left, and here we are left in the centre in a sort of confusion. Convenient numbers have been read out by both the sides and both may be right. But what is necessary is to see that technically the railways are improved. It is all right to say that the Minister must resign. It is true that, in 1962, late Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri resigned. There are some people who are very emotional like myself and very often we resign whenever there is an earliest opportunity to resign. But resignations will not solve these questions. There must be something more which must be seriously looked into.

The Railway Minister is helped by a secretariat which is a technical one. He has no independent method of

[Shri Tenneti Vishwanathan]

inquiring into what the Railway Board says, because the Chairman himself happens to be the Secretary to the Railway Minister. Therefore, what I feel is that, in these technical matters, the Railway Minister must have some independent advice and independent secretariat, and then he can have a technical commission, as it were, functioning all through.

Now, from the reports read, we find that very often these trains telescope into the other trains and several wagons get crushed almost. Is it not possible for these people to devise a method of constructing in-built shock absorbers which do not cause such a heavy damage? These are technical matters, no doubt. Therefore, what I submit is that, taking a lesson from what is happening, the Railway Minister should constitute immediately a technical commission to go into not merely the signalling system and the various things which are subjected to human agencies, but also a new design of construction of these various wagons. This is all that I want to submit.

SHRI NAMBIAR (Tiruchirappalli): I would like to go a little deeper into the subject. The point is that there must be a comparative study of the period first before the 2nd Plan and during the last ten years of the Second and the Third Plan periods which will throw some light. We will find that, during the last ten years, the railway capital-at-charge has increased by 200 per cent, i.e., from Rs. 975 crores in 1956, it has come to Rs. 2,848 crores. So also, the passenger kilometre has increased by 66 per cent, i.e., from 63,000 million kilometres, it has come to 103,000 million kilometres. The freight tonne kilometre increased by 100 per cent i.e. from 59,000 million kilometres to 117,000 million kilometres. The gross earnings have increased by 144 per cent, i.e., from Rs. 317 crores to Rs. 776

crores. I am giving the figures upto 31st March, 1967. But the total route kilometre has increased only by 5 per cent; the total number of employees increased only by 33 per cent, i.e., from 10,23,000 employees on 31st March, 1956, to 13,66,381 employees today. You will find here that the workload of the railways has increased to such a great extent: if you put an index figure that on 31st March, 1956, the workload was 100—some figure you calculate—it will be 200 by now; that means, it is just double, but the employees have increased only by 33 per cent. That means; for doing all these increased works, the number of employees has increased only by 33 per cent, and the work that they have to turn out is 100 per cent more. There, you will find the actual lacuna, and I am supported here by the recommendations of the Kunzru Committee. With the new budget proposals you will find that another 6 to 7 million tonnes of originating traffic would come. This means that next year the traffic will be more, and thus the workload is terribly increasing at a rapid pace.

19 hrs.

The Kunzru Committee in its report of 1962 has stated that there is shortage of staff and inadequate refresher course. This was the position in 1962. The situation has not at all improved. The number of staff has not increased. The committee says:

“There appears to be heavy shortage in almost all the important categories of operating staff like assistant station masters, drivers, loco-shed maintenance staff etc. A very high proportion of those workmen were neither sufficiently educated nor adequately instructed in their duties. Owing to heavy shortage in staff, it has not been possible to send them for refresher course.”

The committee has further said:

"One district operating superintendent told us that in his district there were as many as 93 vacancies against a sanctioned strength of 338 assistant station masters. Due to the unhealthy climate in his own areas casualties due to sickness were often more by 25 per cent, while the relieving strength was generally fixed at 20 per cent. This caused difficulty in sparing the staff for refresher course and even for leave."

This was the position in 1962. The position today is almost the same.

With regard to maintenance also, the committee has a sorrowful comment to make. The committee says that maintenance has not improved. It is a long quotation and, therefore, I do not want to read out the whole of it. But I would only like to point out that in para 75 the committee says:

"In the evidence tendered before us, the drivers complained that the booked repairs were not given due attention. They particularly spoke of passenger trains running with inadequate brake power."

What has happened near Allahabad may be a case where the brake power may not have been sufficient. We see from the newspapers that the driver's hand was on the brake, but the brake did not work. The wagons did not have sufficient vacuum brake power and so he could not stop it. This state of affairs was found out as early as 1962, but nothing has been done to improve the position. Of course, the hon. Minister may say that after 1962 things have improved, but I can prove that the contrary is the case with the same lot of material which the railways themselves have supplied, but unfortunately I do not

have much time at my disposal. The committee says:

"A loco foreman of an important shed on the railway accepted the correctness of the complaint and stated that there was shortage of essential materials etc."

In this connection, I would like to point out to you what has been stated in a recent hand-bill issued by the South Central Railway Drivers' and Firemen's Council, dated 1st March, 1968, just a few days before the accident, in which they have stated the correct position in regard to the working hours. They say:

"Today when the world working class is demanding 40 hours a week, we Indian running staff are working 30 to 50 hours at a stretch."

It is shameful that they should work 30 to 50 hours at a stretch, and yet, four Government and railway officials are not satisfied with the inhuman working conditions; when the crew demands relief after 13 or 15 hours of work, they are not only threatened with dire consequences but they are also arrested and suspended." This is what the workers have stated just a few days before the accident took place.

Even the Kunzru Committee has stated in paragraph 61 of Vol. I of its report that:

"A recent survey undertaken by the Railway Board to assess the correct position in this respect showed that there was an appreciable number of cases where drivers remained on duty for over 20 hours at a stretch."

This was found out by the Kunzru Committee even in 1962. From the above hand-bill dated 1st March this year, you will find that the same situation continues even now. When that is the case, how is it possible

[Shri Nambiar]

to avoid accidents? It is not possible. As I suggested the other day, those responsible in the administration for the entire railway running should be held responsible. After all, technically we can say that the Railway Minister must resign, but the persons who should quit must be the Railway Board because they had failed to provide the adequate number of staff.

The Railway Ministry says that it has implemented 326 out of 353 recommendations. But what are those 326 recommendations dealing with? Have they implemented this one main thing? So many specific instances have been given. I would like to know whether the recommendations in this regard have been implemented. This is a very sad story. The railway is run by the Board at the top. The powers of the general managers are very little. You may say that tomorrow if another Board comes, what is the way out? We do not want the present system of this Board sitting on the top like a big octopus. Our railway is the third biggest in the world.

AN HON. MEMBER: A British legacy.

SHRI NAMBIAR: We have today 11,193 locomotives, 23, 744 Coaches and 2,55,107 wagon units on the line. Our railway runs throughout the country. Such a mighty organisation is presided over by bureaucrats here who are not prepared to listen. Even the report of this Committee has been discarded in essential matters. Today as a result accidents are on the increase.

I am not trying to score a political or debating point. My submission is that we must have a safe railway system in the country. That can be ensured only by a radical change in the present set-up. I have no anger or animus against anybody. Why should I have? I am looking at it from the realistic safety point of view, not to score a political point.

Passengers are being killed. This is not a pleasure to see. There is no politics in it; we do not want to play politics with dead bodies.

Railway Ministers come and go. After all, their supervision is general and political. The executive and operational responsibility is on the Railway Board and the general managers. It is their failure with which we are mainly concerned and it is they whom we accuse. There is no dearth of capital and equipment. During the last 10 years, Rs. 1900 crores have been ploughed in the railways—never heard of such an investment in any system in the world. We borrowed this from the IMF and the World Bank. In spite of this, why has efficiency gone down? Every possible equipment has been imported; there is nothing which could not be imported with so much money. The so-called experts sitting at the top must answer.

Secondly, they have an utterly false sense of economy which is another factor only to cover up lavish and wasteful expenditure and the corruption that has crept in. I am sorry there is corruption, but there is no time for me to give you instances.

Then they have failed to implement the spirit of the Kunzru Committee recommendations. Their economy is penny-wise and pound-foolish. If they had implemented the Kunzru Committee recommendations, these accidents would not have occurred and things would have improved.

My finger is again at the bureaucracy. The bureaucracy is so rampant that from top to bottom at all levels of the administration, there is favouritism, nepotism, groupism and regionalism—with all the consequences that these evils breed. That is the unfortunate situation today. Very little attempt is made to look into the real needs of men and material on the lines. The railway administration has grown like an octopus.

I have my concrete suggestions. We have enough, enough equipment. We have enough traffic potential. But we have a corrupt bureaucratic administration incapable of delivering the goods. That is to be changed. You may ask, what is the alternative? An expert committee of engineers and technicians can advise the Minister. A non-official standing committee of MPs and other interests may also be there to advise him. But the body which can only be an expert committee should not have any power of administration to decide the policies. The general managers must be given more powers of administration.

Lastly at the divisional levels, there must be Joint consultation between employees and the administration in Joint Councils to solve problems that crop up. With regard to the proposed high-power Inquiry Committee, we are not satisfied with the personnel. It must be a little more comprehensive and broad-based. We want a genuine attempt made to get at the root of the present situation.

SHRIMATI VIJAYA LAKSHMI PANDIT (Phulpur): Mr. Speaker, Sir, the debate this afternoon arises from the tragic loss of life which has taken place in a series of swift-moving railway disasters during the last few months. We are so far away from these disasters that although we may shed a tear or two when we read our morning paper, yet, by the time we move into this House and a debate of this nature begins, we are inclined to forget the realities of the situation and talk of superficialities.

There has been a reference to the much larger number of railway accidents in other countries. How does it matter to us how many people die elsewhere or how many accidents take place in some other country? We are not going to compare our accident rate with theirs and increase

our accident rate if theirs is greater. The thing that concerns us here today is that in this unhappy country where human life is so cheap, we should not allow it to get any cheaper. I have before my eyes a tragic incident of the other day: when Rs. 200 was offered to one of the people who had lost a member of his family, the poor man began to cry and he said:

क्या मेरी श्रौत की 200 रु० की ही कीमत थी ?

AN HON MEMBER: Shame.

19.10 hrs.

[MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER in the Chair.]

SHRIMATI VIJAYA LAKSHMI PANDIT: That Rs. 200 was only a little interim assistance, but the point is that the people who suffer largely in such accidents are people who have nobody behind them, nobody to speak for them and nobody to care for them. I overheard a remark at Bharwari station which chilled my heart. Somebody said—I am sure it was not meant to be overheard—“Thank God, there were no first-class passengers.” Our minds seems to be governed by the wrong motives. Instead of giving priority to what is important we practice our oratorical skills and thus lessen the value of the very thing we speak to remedy.

I was in Allahabad at the time of the Bharwari disaster. The disaster took place sometime at night, and it was only in the morning when I read my newspaper that I knew about it. The scene was so close and the obvious thing to do was to go to the scene. I telephoned the District Magistrate and he and the Superintendent of Police who were leaving for Bharwari kindly called at my house and took me along with them. I cannot tell you the scene that we saw at Bharwari. The impact of the two trains must have been absolutely phenomenal, because the great steel engine was twisted like a piece of paper; it was cut into ribbons as if one had taken a carving knife and slashed it up. What had happened

[Shrimati Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit.]

to the coaches and the wagons, you can well imagine. Some from the goods train had jumped on the opposite platform. Most of the bodies had been extricated by the time we arrived, and I would like to pay a sincere tribute to the swiftness and the efficiency with which those who came to help, both the staff and the officials and the volunteers, managed to get the people extricated. I believe one little child was even saved in spite of the fact that the position in which he was caught was a very dangerous one.

Passengers who had died were also twisted like the engine. They must have died a most terrible, agonizing death. The engine-driver himself—I did not see him—his body was there and I confess at that point I could not stomach any more, but I was told by those who had seen him that not only was he clinging and pulling the brake towards himself but the agony on his face showed that he must have been aware that something terrible was going to happen which he could not prevent. This accident has happened and other accidents have happened before this, one after the other, in which valuable human lives have been lost, which you cannot replace by any amount of money you give to the survivors. The scene in the hospital in which three people were lying was horrible—Subsequently two of them died and so far I have not seen the report of the third—who was also very badly injured. There were two or three men whose relatives had not been found. There was one man, seemed to be conscious and I asked him how he was. He said, "Don't bother about me. Where are my children?" One child had died in the most gruesome manner—the whole skull was crushed to pulp. There was another little one who had been brought to the same hospital and later identified, who had received serious injuries, but who was out of danger. The third child was alive.

But the wife had died, I am just saying these things to make the mood of the House more in keeping with the occasion.

In response to this series of accidents, a Commission has been appointed. As has been pointed out, this judicial commission is the first of its kind. The purpose of a commission or enquiry or any form of research is that the recommendations may lead to the stoppage of the things that have been occurring. But that does not always happen. We have had commissions which produced some extremely valuable reports like the Kunzru Report. But the recommendations are either not wholly accepted and implemented or if they are, there is some slackness somewhere else which comes in the way of change. A commission is going to sit and they will find out, I hope, what the real reasons were for this tragedy. But it seems to me that no great intellect and effort is required to know that a number of things are wrong in the railways. Mr. Nambiar has read those figures from the report, which confirms what one sensed about the situation in the railways. There is no doubt that with all the outstanding people who have been appointed to it, the commission will produce another report. I hope it will be read and implemented swiftly before more accidents take place.

I do not believe there is any special need for the Railway Minister to resign over this. Resignation is something which is prompted by one's own conscience; it is not to be dictated by anybody. If he resigns through pressure, that could not be in keeping with the spirit of what has happened. Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri resigned because he was sensitive to what had happened and I think he took those accidents as a personal thing which of course they were not. So, I see no reason why we should demand the resignation of the Minister. But I do entirely endorse the

claim that has been made that something is very wrong with the Railway Board which must be remedied. I would very humbly suggest that when the time comes for the commission to give its report, due emphasis should be given to priorities. Unless this is done, the less important recommendation might well be implemented and the important one bypassed. We are becoming accustomed to railway accidents but fears of them is there. It is not fair on the public not to know, when they get into a train, whether they will reach their destination safely. Even a person like myself, who travels so frequently, who never bothers about the mode of travel, who has the means to travel in luxury, when I get into my train that night, said to myself "I do not know if I will reach Delhi." The citizens of a free country have a right, to demand security for themselves on all levels including on the railways. I know that the Government is doing a great deal in order to try to bring about these changes. But it is not enough. And there are many things which, if they are doled out in small quantities, become a question of too little and too late and the objective is not served.

So, I would like to say with great respect to the Minister, to the Government, let us use this inquiry for the sake of a really deep research into what is necessary to prevent all the death and tragedy which these accidents cause instead of apportioning blame, let us try to see that accidents are prevented in future.

I would like to joint my voice with those who have said that it is no use blaming the little man at the bottom. To begin with, in the railways, like many other things, the man who holds the greatest responsibility is entirely uneducated but he suffers while the people higher up go scot-free by virtue of their position.

So, I would like to suggest that ~~Kungra~~ ~~Committee~~ ~~Report~~ be re-read only to find out if neglect to follow

its recommendations was the cause of some of the recent accidents. It is necessary to give the people a feeling that everything that can be done is being done to ensure safe travel and I am sure nobody in their senses would want the Railway Minister to resign because two, three or four accidents however serious have taken place. Perhaps, the Railway Minister is more heavily burdened in his conscience than any of us are.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Before I call the next Member I would like to state one thing. The Speaker has already announced that the Minister of Railways will be called exactly at 8 O'Clock. So, we have got 40 minutes with us. Since we had a discussion on the Railway Demands for Grants only recently, I would request each hon. Member to condense his remarks to five minutes.

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE (Kanpur): No, Sir. Five minutes is not at all sufficient. We require more time.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: In any case, he will not participate.... (interruption). I am making this request to all hon. Members. Let them be very brief.

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE: If that is the attitude, we are not going to take part in the debate.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: If he does not want to participate, let him not participate. I cannot help it.

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE: Why this restriction, I cannot understand. We can sit a little more time and have a detailed discussion.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: He can sit till tomorrow, if he wants. But I must look to other factors. I am calling the Minister at 8 O'Clock.

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE: If you have some other work, you can ask somebody else to preside. Why should you restrict the debate?

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: I have already given the decision.

श्री जाजं करनेबीब : स्पीकर साहब ने कहा था कि जब डिबेट शुरू होगी तब देख लेंगे।

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE: If you are so strict, why did you allow Shrimati Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit more than five minutes? You should have stopped her . . . (Interruptions).

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: I will not tolerate this . . . (Interruptions). She rarely participates in discussions. Then, she had gone to the scene of the accident. So, I am justified in giving her that much time.

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE: When so many people have died and there is a discussion you are restricting the time to five minutes.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: So far as the question of regulation of time is concerned, I am not going to ask for the sense of the House.

श्री तुलसीदास जाधव (भारामती) :
अगर श्रीमती विजया लक्ष्मी पंडित ने ज्यादा टाइम ले लिया है तो अब हम लोग नहीं बोलेंगे।

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: I have already said that. Please resume your seat . . . (Interruptions).

SHRI G. VISWANATHAN (Warid-wash): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, the series of accidents in the last 45 days, killing 100 people, has created a crisis of confidence in the public mind. There is a fear, a scare, that rail travel is no more safe in this country. When a passenger boards a train, he is not sure of going to his destination but, most probably, he will attain nirvana before reaching his destination in this mundane world.

Who is responsible for this tragedy? One Congress Member, Shri Tiwary, denied that the railway administration is responsible. What does the

Kunzru Committee say about this? I quote:—

“The responsibility for improving the safety record of the Indian Railways rests squarely and forever on the railway administration.”

So, the railway administration is responsible and they cannot shirk it.

Who is really administering the railways? As Shri Nambiar pointed out, the Minister is like Indra. Indras come and go but Indrani remains the same. The Railway Board is in actual, *de facto*, control of the railway administration. Even a powerful railway minister is only the liaison officer between Parliament and the so-called Railway Board. So, they have to pay the price and the price must be the immediate dismissal of the Railway Board. I demand the immediate dismissal of the Railway Board as a price for all these accidents.

AN HON. MEMBER: They are man-eaters; they are murderers.

SHRI G. VISWANATHAN: The other day the tenor of the argument of Shri Parimal Ghosh in the other House, was that as the traffic goes on heavily increasing, the number of accidents is bound to increase. It is not the case. Actually, the Kunzru Committee went into this matter and they have stated categorically—I quote:—

“As such, the railways either wilfully or perforce relegate safety to a secondary position giving overall priority to movement.”

This is a serious charge against the railway administration by the Kunzru Committee.

Now, they will come and say, “We have appointed another committee with Shri Wanchoo as the Chairman.” What are we going to achieve then?

We have appointed so many committees before. They are not at all implementing the reports of the various committees. Before the Kunzru Committee's report there were so many study teams and committees. About the reports of these committees the Kunzru Committee has stated—I quote:—

“From the study of the limited issues undertaken by the committee so far, we have gained an impression that some of the purposeful recommendations on matters of safety, made by the previous study teams and committees, have not received the consideration they deserved.”

Then, what is the railway administration doing? They are keeping quiet, doing nothing. So, they have to pay the price.

This committee has recommended various measures for safety on railways. Usually, railway accidents are of four types—collision, derailment, level crossing accidents and trains passing danger signals. There are, we are told, about 1,200 unmanned gates which have to be manned. The Minister has to look into this matter also.

Due to heavy traffic the track is not in good condition. The track has to be maintained in a better condition. These things are there but the railway administration is not doing anything. Power is concentrated in the Railway Board. They are having all sorts of control over the railway administration whereas the general managers in various parts of the country are only like servants. Mostly all the orders they have to get from Delhi. Power must be decentralised and more powers must be given to the general managers. The ultimate control should be in the hands of the Minister and not with the Chairman or members of the Railway Board. Only then can we have the Minister held responsible for all accidents wherever they happen, either in the south or in the

north. So, I require the immediate dismissal of the Railway Board and the Minister must take full responsibility of the whole administration of railways in this country.

SHRI H. AJMAL KHAN (Periakulam): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, it is perhaps not possible to shame the railway authorities with its record of accidents which have become endemic. At frequent intervals they occur with no end of damage to the morale of the travelling public. There is thus little that is surprising in the latest accident that occurred on 30th March at Barwari station of the Northern Railway where more than 20 people are reported to have been killed. This, Sir, added one more in the tragic list which has rocked the country in the recent years.

The Deputy Minister of Railways in his instant reaction indulged in typical official sophistry. Unfortunately, for all of us who travel so frequently the authorities have done pretty little excepting in a very routine way sending condolences to the next of kin and they took a step further this time to announce throwing some pittance of a few hundred rupees as if that would bring the dead back to live.

Sir, during 1968 itself, in spite of the boasting of Mr. Poonacha's junior, Shri Parimal Ghosh in the Lok Sabha on 25th February, 1968 that accidents in the recent past have been falling by giving out an array of facts and figures, in the current year itself we have had several major accidents. On 15th February, it was near Lakhiserai station when scores of passengers were run over by the mail train. Then, it was on the 20th March when near Mysore a train ran into a stationary train killing several people, and then the Sircar Express ran into a bus and now it is the Barwari accident. This accident near Allahabad occurred 12 days after the disastrous collision between two trains near Hubli where 54 persons were killed.

[Shri H. Ajmal Khan.]

I have been looking through the papers this morning and for the current year, there were no fewer than six collisions and 17 derailments in the past three months only. I would not waste the time of the House by giving details of the loss of human life, property, etc. In most cases, human failure is responsible for these accidents. In 1966-67, of the total 5,889 accidents, 3,225 accidents were due to human failure. Failure directly or indirectly on the part of the railway staff is lack of care of railway equipment, engines, rolling stock, lack of overhead bridges, blind curves, signals, unmanned level crossings, etc. If we see from the figures of accidents as between 1957-58 to 1962-63, the number of accidents from 1,729 rose to 1,851. Deaths due to accidents as between 1965-66 to 1966-67 have increased from 41 to 209.

It is most unfortunate that the railways do not seem to be learning from the past experience as we find there is similarity of accidents, similarity of causes in many cases. Enquiry Committees are appointed, recommendations are made but they are never implemented. They are only for public consumption, for getting headlines in the newspapers and make bold statements on the floor of this House.

Some two years back at a conference of senior officials it was pointed out that one of the causes of the accidents was the manning of safety organisation by non-technical men. There is nothing to indicate that this situation has been remedied. Though it is an old story, I would like to repeat the accident at Lakhiserai station in Bihar. The type of accident last month was almost the same as happened in 1967. There is a blind curve near Lakhiserai where neither the engine driver can see what is ahead of him nor the pilgrims crossing the railway track in the absence of the railway bridge can see when the train is coming from the other side. It was this which was responsible for

killing several people last year and the same factor responsible for accidents last month. In 1967, an enquiry committee was set up and several simple preventive measures were recommended by the commission, for example, to set up a fence between up and down lines, straightening out of curves, etc. Unfortunately, no action was taken; otherwise repetition of this accident could have been avoided.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please conclude now.

SHRI H. AJMAL KHAN: One minute only.

We talk of monopoly in the private sector as if monopoly in the public sector should be condoned. The Railway Board is the biggest monopoly in our country. During the Third Plan, its capital assets have increased from Rs. 1,521 crores to Rs. 2,680 crores, representing an increase of 78 per cent in five years. Its corresponding expenditure has increased from Rs. 1,000 crores to 2,000 crores, representing 100 per cent increase.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: He should conclude now. We have had a discussion on the Railway Budget.

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE: Accidents have taken place after that.

SHRI H. AJMAL KHAN: I, therefore, plead with the Government through this House that this monopoly should be broken. Railways, along with the Hindustan Steel and other public sector undertakings, must be brought within the scope of monopoly and action taken to create healthy competition as in private sector.

In conclusion, I would like to quote from the editorial of the *Times of India*.

"Meanwhile, it is necessary to take a hard look at the long-drawn procedures of accident in-

quiry which have neither helped to avoid accidents nor have had a chastening effect on inefficient and indifferent railwaymen who are all too ready to fling meaningless statistics in the face of the public to prove their pet theory that the railways are safer than road transport."

SHRIMATI TARKESHWARI SANHA (Barh): After the hon. Member, Shrinati Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit spoke, the whole House was very much moved, and I would certainly expect a very very senior member, Mr. Gupta, to exercise that sobriety which is needed for this kind of debate.

This is a very unfortunate incident. Surely, the whole House was moved and it feels very sad about it. There is no doubt about it. Yet, we cannot ignore the fact that this matter has to be examined in proper perspective. Everybody knows, every member of this House knows, that nearly 6 million people travel on the Indian railways which has got 7,000 railway stations from Victoria Terminus to flag stations, where the track is more than 68,864 kilometres and the employees that man the railways are nearly 13½ lakhs. It is a very big organisation. Yet, let us examine these two incidents and see what happened. Of course, a Commission of Inquiry has been set up. We cannot go into the details. The Commission will be able to find them out. But from whatever appeared in the papers and what we know of the incidents, we find this.

In the case of Bharwari let us see what happened. I travel through that track very often because when we come from Patna, we come by that track. We know that the track is completely automatic. Since the electrification of that track, the entire signalling system of that track has been made automatic. I cannot, therefore, believe that, when at Bharwari there was a train standing,

there could be any clearance given by any man there, because the automatic signalling operation does indicate the red or green light; when any train is not standing on the platform, automatically clear signal is given. Moreover, electric trains run very fast and they have got completely automatic control, and they do not require so much of manual operation as is required in the case of steam coal engines. As I said, the speed in the case of electric trains is very fast. The entire incident gives the impression that the train was coming with full speed. We know, how powerful the engine is of an electric train. The electric train had been cramped, as was vividly described by Mrs. Pandit. It means that the electric train was coming with full speed. We do not know whether it was due to the negligence of the driver, whether he had dosed off or just had a wink of sleep, but it did happen. But in spite of this, when he faced it, he must have woken up because he was found dead with his hand on the brake. He did react, he did try to stop the train, but the train was running so fast that it could not be stopped. Now what is the element that comes to our mind which has caused this accident? How so end we may complain against the Minister, I would certainly compliment the Minister for his sincerity. A mistake can be committed by any human being. Who is the human-being who does not commit mistakes? If the intention behind the mistake is innocent, we cannot put the blame on anybody; we cannot put the blame for the innocent mistake which was committed and in this case it has also not been committed by the Railway Minister; he is only remotely responsible.

Now what happened in the case of the second accident which took place in Mysore? It took place when the train was standing on the main line. The signalling should have been given for the other train to come to the loop line. But the levers which were pressed were wrong levers, and the

[Shrimati Tarkeshwari Sinha]

train was ordered to come on the main line. The driver of the train did not know whether a train was already standing on the main line. Unless and until he came near the train, he could not see it. Both these accidents occurred at night time. So, it is very difficult to see the train standing on a line from a distance. Unless and until the train just comes in front of the engine, it is very difficult to notice it. The driver tried to prevent a collision, and he tried his best but he could not succeed, and, therefore, we had a very serious accident.

At both these places, it is quite clear that the lineman made a technical mistake. We do not know whether the mistake was made intentionally or consciously or otherwise. The inquiry will reveal that. In the case of the electric train also, it was supposed to stop because the signal was not given and it could not have been otherwise unless and until there was an engineering failure, but engineering failure is something which nobody can help.

Therefore, in these two cases, how can we blame a particular officer of the Railway Board? It is all right that the House is a sovereign body, and we can all condemn the Railway Board and we may say that the Railway Board should be abolished and we may make them joint secretaries or deputy secretaries and so on. But how is it going to improve the situation? I do not understand this. I do not compliment the civil service very often. I do not want to give them undeserved compliment; I do not want to give compliment to anybody who does not deserve it. But here, how does the responsibility of any Member arise? A very serious accident has happened, and we are very sad about the whole thing. Is there any possibility of devising an advanced operational machinery technically, to avoid the possibility of such human errors? When there is a human error, what

can we do about it? In spite of the automatic system we have seen that this particular accident has happened. The Kunzru Committee has given the figures. It is not easy to provide for all the things suggested.

I was a member of the Railway Passengers Amenities Committee. There are so many stations which we had visited and we found everywhere there was a demand for overbridges. Overbridges are not made free. Then in many places which we visited, demands were made for underground tunnels. It is not possible to provide for all these things at all these places simultaneously.

Shri Nambiar had raised the point that there was a heavy operational burden on the staff, and he has said that the staff is not adequate to cope with the work. But if you would go through the proceedings of Parliament you would find that this Parliament has been criticising the recruitment of additional staff year after year. Let the hon. Member kindly recall the past remarks that have been made here before making any such statement. So, it is not proper for us to blame the Railway Minister or the Railway Board in this regard.

In conclusion, I would only like to suggest one thing namely that for signalling and for operational work, instead of the non-technical staff who are appointed now for the purpose, the hon. Minister should see that technically competent staff is appointed. It is a fact that one driver has to face a hundred signals over a track of a hundred mile, and one lineman has to press a hundred to a thousand levers over that distance. This is bound to create a sense of fatigue. I would submit that these are highly important matters, and the hon. Minister should see that things are set right.

SHRI HEM BARUA (Mangaldai):
There have been a series of accidents

of a major nature which have claimed a heavy toll of lives as also damaged a substantial portion of railway property.

The report of the Directorate for Railway Safety, that was given to us along with the railway budget papers shows that there is a decline in Railway accidents. In 1951-52 it was 15142, while in 1966-67 it was 5889. But the fact remains that during the last three months, as many as six accidents due to collision and 17 derailments apart from accidents at level crossings have taken place. There is a jugglery of figures. If they try to white-wash the entire matter with figures and statistics and facts of this nature, they cannot arrive at the right solution. For there have been accidents. During 1968, there have been as many as 3 major accidents, one at Lakhiserai, one at Hubli and one near Allahabad. When an accident takes place, naturally enough there is an inquiry ordered. It submits its report. But unfortunately it is pigeon-holed in the record room of the Ministry. For instance, in the same place at Lakhiserai an accident took place on 23 October 1967. An inquiry was ordered. It revealed certain facts. It suggested measures to be adopted. But what has happened to that report. They have pigeon-holed it in their record room. This is not the way of functioning.

Madam Pandit has given a gruesome description of this disastrous accident near Allahabad. What happens? There is an effort on the part of the Ministry to say that accidents in our country are on the decline. May be. But you cannot restore lost limes to the injured people nor call back the dead to life. The fact remains that accidents take place in this country and human lives are lost.

There is another tendency. All comparisons are odious. There is a tendency to compare the rate of accidents in this country with those of other countries. Shri Tiwary did

it. I did not like the idea. Why should it be done? That would give an encouragement to the administration here. He gave figures for Belgium. Why does he not remember that Belgium is of the size of a district in India? There are people who try to throw dust into our eyes. That is the trouble.

There is another argument generally offered by the Ministry. They say that railway travel is safer than road travel here. May be. But that does not mean that you will allow accidents to occur here. Here is the Kunzru Committee report. I have gone through it. This venerable gentleman has done a laudable service to the country. He has pinpointed the causes of accidents and suggested measures for making the railways free from accidents. What has happened to his report?

As regards the accident near Allahabad, what is happening. The Committee proposed with Shri Masani as a member is asked to do what? See how many of the recommendations of the Kunzru Committee may be implemented. This report was submitted in 1962. What is this?

The report has also pinpointed another thing. There are accidents because of defects on the engines and on the track. These are things that you can improve. But you do not do it.

Yesterday I demanded the resignation of the Minister. Today I have given second thought to it. Why should the Minister resign? I think it is the Railway Board that must be scrapped and disbanded. While the Ministers come and go, the bureaucrats remain eternal. If the Minister goes, the Board should also go. If we do not evolve a convention like that, Ministers may come and Ministers may go, but these people who are responsible for accidents and inefficient management will continue to prosper and flourish. That is the trouble in this country.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Shri Fernandez. Five minutes.

SHERI GEORGE FERNANDES: Ten minutes.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: You must look to the office also. We are sitting from 11 a.m.

SHERI S. M. BANERJEE: Kindly tell me know if I will get time. Otherwise I may go out.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: I am appealing to members.

SHERI S. M. BANERJEE: My name is in the motion.

श्री जार्ज फरनेन्डेज : पहले शाहनवाज का कमेटी बनी थी, फिर कुजूर कमेटी घायन बनाई। अब आप बांच कमेटी बना रहे हैं। मेरा निवेदन यह है कि पहली दो कमेटियों को जो सिफारिशें थीं उन पर प्रायंन धमल नहीं किया और इस बातसे बांच कमेटी की स्थापना की कोई आवश्यकता नहीं है।

एक दूसरी बात भी आज ही यहाँ सदन में होनी चाहिये। हमारे रेल भंत्री महोदय को यह घोषणा करनी चाहिये कि रेलवे बोर्ड के जो अफसर हैं उनको बार्ज शीट दिया गया है क्योंकि उन लोगों के हाथों से ये हत्याएँ होती हैं जिन में बहुत से गरीब मुसाफिर मारे जाते हैं और इन अफसरों को मंत्री महोदय की योग्य सजा देने का भी फंसला है, उसका एसान अभी यहाँ करना चाहिये। तीसरा काम यह है कि रेल मंत्री को खुद भी इस्तीफा देना चाहिये। हम्मी बकले ने पार्लियामेंट के अधिकारों के बारे में अपनी किताब में लिखा है :

"Oddly enough, the strict application of the doctrine of ministerial responsibility which still

exists in theory has actually added to the power and invulnerability of the Civil Service. For the Minister alone to be judged to be accountable to Parliament for actions of which he may have no knowledge (and of which he might disapprove if he had) is another example of the conflict between myth and reality in our constitutional practice which actually prevents Parliament from carrying out one of its traditional functions of redressing grievance, for under our practice, the civil servant who in many cases is actually responsible for decisions cannot be questioned on them."

इस आधार पर मंत्री महोदय से निवेदन कर रहा हूँ कि वह रेलवे बोर्ड के अफसरों को तत्काल बार्जशीट करके उनके खिलाफ कार्यवाही करें। इस देश के गरीब लोगों की हत्या का उन के ऊपर आरोप लगा कर जो सजा किसी भी आदमी को किसी दूसरे की हत्या करने के लिये दी जाती है, वही सजा इन लोगों को देने का काम आप की तरफ से होना चाहिये।

श्री हुकम चन्द कछवाय : फासी देनी चाहिये।

श्री जार्ज फरनेन्डेज : मैं समझता हूँ कि किसी कमेटी की स्थापना की कोई आवश्यकता नहीं है।

आहे आप बतायें या ट्रांसपोर्ट मिनिस्टर बतयें कि कमिश्नर आफ रेलवे-सेफ्टी जो हर साल हिन्दुस्तान की रेलों के बारे में जांच करते हैं, क्या उन की रिपोर्ट को आपने आज तक कभी सभा पटल पर रखा है? कमिश्नर साहब ने अपनी रिपोर्ट में यह लिखा था :

We suggest that the annual report of the Commissioner of Railway Safety should contain

additional information as detailed by us. It should be laid on the table of both Houses of Parliament."

वर्ष तक मेरा क्याल है वह रिपोर्ट वहाँ पर पेश नहीं होती है, इस पर वहाँ बहस नहीं होती है। कई बरसों से कमिश्नर आफ रेलवे सेपटी की रिपोर्ट आ रही है। अगर सरकार उनकी रिपोर्ट को गम्भीरता से ले तो मैं समझता हूँ कि रेलवे बोर्ड के सारे लोगों को फाँसी देने का फंसला स्वयं सरकार ही कर लेगी उन्होंने सीखा बताया है कि जो बर्तियाँ होती हैं वे रेलवे बोर्ड के लोगों की ओर से होती हैं और जो दुर्घटनाएँ होती हैं वे न तो कर्मचारियों के कारण होती हैं, व बंदी के कारण बल्कि रेलवे की व्यवस्था के बारे में जो ढंग अपनाया जाता है और रेलवे बोर्ड के अफसरों के द्वारा अपनाया जाता है उनके कारण होती हैं। इंस्पेक्शन के बारे में उनका कहना यह है :

"Up to the year 1953 periodical inspections of Indian Government Railways were carried out by the Government Inspector of Railways. In 1953 the Railway Board decided that these inspections should be discontinued, as the General Managers were responsible for ensuring safety of operation on their respective Railways."

इसको भी ध्यान सुनिये ।

"No detailed inspection of southern Railway could be carried out... as the General Manager of the Railway did not permit any inspections in company with the Assistant Commissioner of Railway Safety during the year under review."

पिछले साल की रिपोर्ट में ध्यान धारण से बर्तियों के क्या कहा गया है :

"Due to shortage of officers in the Inspectorate, the kilometrage

of the inspections was lower than what was expected."

ट्रेक के इंस्पेक्शन का जहाँ तक सम्बन्ध था यह इंस्पेक्शन का कर्तव्य था। लेकिन रेलवे बोर्ड वालों ने कहा कि तुम मत करो, हम करेंगे। लेकिन न तो वे खुद करते हैं न ही उनको करने देते हैं।

ह्यूमन फेल्डोर की बात भी कही जाती है। श्रीमती तारकेश्वरी सिन्हा बोल कर गई हैं। हमारी विजय लक्ष्मी फीडब भी बोली हैं। वह ऐसे बोली हैं जिस तरह से कोई लोक सभा में बोला करता है और उस तरह की बातें ही उन्होंने कही हैं। लेकिन हम लोक सभा में नहीं बैठे हुए हैं। धिन लोगों की धक्कती है उसको बताने के लिये यहाँ खगे हुए हैं। धाय देखें कि ह्यूमन फेल्डोर वाली जो बात है उसके बारे में कमिश्नर, रेलवे सेपटी क्या कहते हैं अपनी रिपोर्ट में ।

"It may be stated that too much dependence on human element in these days of heavy traffic and at high speeds is undesirable and even unjustified."

"Although the adoption of track-circuits at stations was accepted in principle by the Railway Board it was not implemented for one reason or the other despite the fact that scarcity of wooden sleepers did not impose a special problem in those days. Had this been done, the majority of the accidents caused by reception of trains on occupied lines might have been averted."

कमिश्नर आफ रेलवे सेपटी की जो सिफारिशें हैं उनको प्रयत्न में नहीं लाया जाता है। प्रसल में इन लोगों का क्या है।

[श्री जार्ज फ्लेन्डेल]

ये लोग एक रियासतदार बन कर बैठे हुए हैं। जिस तरह से 1947 के पहले भी रियासतदार हुमा करते थे उसी किस्म के रियासतदार ये आज बन कर बैठे हुए हैं।

उनकी रिपोर्ट में ही एक्सीडेंट्स के बारे में पांच दस बातें दी हुई हैं वहां एक बात यह भी लिखी है :

"The Commissioner of Railway Safety held a statutory enquiry into this accident and his finding is the accident was caused by failure of railway staff."

यह जगह पर यह बात लिखी जाती है कि जो एक्सीडेंट हुआ यह रेलवे स्टाफ की फेल्योर के कारण हुआ। कमिश्नर आफ रेलवे सेफ्टी की रिपोर्ट को आप पढ़ेंगे तो 40 पन्ने पर उन्होंने अलग अलग सुझाव दिये हैं। अगर उनको पढ़ने का कष्ट करेंगे तो एक बात साफ हो जाएगी कि कोई भी यहां पर रेलवे स्टाफ की गलती का जिक्र नहीं आता है।

उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, आखिरी एक जुमला पढ़ कर मैं खत्म कर दूंगा। उन्होंने कहा है :

Principal features affecting safety—
On account of the limited time and opportunities for detailed inspections in company with General Managers and heads of departments, it was not possible for Additional Commissioners of Railway Safety to inspect the various components of permanent way, rolling stock, signalling and interlocking etc. more extensively. However, the nature of defects noticed during the inspections that were done may be summarised below:—

(a) Unsatisfactory state of sleepers,

(b) Inaccurate alignment of track, particularly on curves and incorrect superelevation,

(c) Unsatisfactory packing and lack of knowledge on the part of gangmen in the correct method of packing,

(d) Lack of care in the relaying of track,

(e) Inadequacy in the maintenance of Points and Crossings,

(f) Improper construction of a 'catch siding' and its provision at a location not warranting the same,

(g) Use of Sub-Standard and undesirable track fittings,

(h) Crack in bridge masonry, loose fittings and non-provision of guard rails on several bridges,

(i) Wide expansion joints on the approaches of a bridge and crushed bridge timbers,

(j) Unsatisfactory up-keep of level crossings,

(k) Inadequate maintenance of Signalling and Interlocking Installations,

(l) Unsatisfactory maintenance of insulated block-joints in track-circuited stretches, etc.

कहीं भी कर्मचारियों पर आरोप नहीं किया गया है।

मैं चाहता हूँ कि मैंने जो सुझाव दिया है उन पर आप अमल करें। एक और प्रश्न है जिसका उत्तर मैं उन से चाहूंगा। मसूर में एक रेलवे एक्सीडेंट हुआ था और उसकी खबर अखबारों में आई थी। यह कहा गया था कि 58 लोग उसमें मरे हैं। लेकिन जो लोग वहां जा कर आए थे उनका कहना यह था कि सी से ज्यादा मरे हैं। उनको कारियों में भर कर ले जाने का काम तब हुआ था।

कि एक बात और है। इसमें जब 58 लोग मरे थे तब तो प्राइम मिनिस्टर के फंड से पैसा देने का काम नहीं किया गया था लेकिन अब जब कि इलाहाबाद में यह एक्सीडेंट होता है तो पच्चीस हजार रुपये देने का एलान कर दिया जाता है और यह एलान भी श्रीमती विजयलक्ष्मी पंडित द्वारा किया जाता है। उन्होंने कहा है कि पच्चीस हजार रुपये दिये गए हैं। मैं चाहता हूँ कि इसका भी जरा खुलासा हो जाये ताकि फर्स्ट और थर्ड क्लास वाली बात जिस का जिक्र श्रीमती विजयलक्ष्मी पंडित ने किया है वह बात यहाँ भी न हो जाए।

श्री हुकम चन्द कलशाय : मेरा नाम भी बेल्ट में था। क्या आप मुझ को भी बुलायेंगे या नहीं बुलायेंगे।

SHRI R. D. BHANDARE (Bombay Central): Sir, I share the sentiments expressed in this House, more especially by Mrs Pandit and I sympathise with those who have suffered. I also share the anxiety for the safety of the lives and property of the citizens of this country. Since we are discussing the accidents that are taking place on railways, we have to probe a bit deeper into the point as to why accidents are taking place. I assign two reasons for accidents and there are two factors which have to be taken into consideration. The first is the human failure and the second is mechanical failure. So far as human failure is concerned, we have again to take into consideration two aspects. If the human failure is due to negligence, then certainly we are entitled to criticise it and, at the same time, demand the resignation of the Minister. If the failure is due to want of proper attendance, then too we are entitled to criticise them. But supposing there is a failure beyond human control. Then, who is to be blamed? That is one aspect... (interruptions). It is a very cheap argument. If it is a mechanical failure

and that failure is due to want of proper attendance or proper supervision, then also we can certainly criticise them. But, after all, the machine is not a human being. Just as human beings commit mistakes, the machines also fall in toto. Therefore, we have to take into consideration to what extent human failure has contributed to the accidents. Now I am going to read from page 2. My hon. friend, Shri George Fernandes, referred to the Director of Safety, Railway Board. He has given the figure. Page 2 says:

श्री जार्ज फरनेन्डीज : मैंने उसका जिक्र नहीं किया।

SHRI R. D. BHANDARE: Since you have mentioned the inspection side..

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES: I referred to the Commissioner of Railway Safety Report.

माननीय सदस्य गलत बात कह रहे हैं।

I was not referring to the Safety Report of the Railway Board. I was referring to a different report which none of them have seen and perhaps most of them are not aware of its existence.

SHRI R. D. BHANDARE: Quoting the reports is their monopoly, it appears. Here I am talking of human failure, which is one aspect. The Report says that attempted train wrecking in 1964-65 was 89 whereas in 1966-67 the figure for attempted train-wrecking is 140. This is the cause. Then, again, I am coming to attempted wrecking by human beings because of political reasons (interruptions)

It has been stated that little has been done ever since the report of the Kunzru Committee was submitted. Let me explain this point. The number of recommendations made by the Kunzru Committee was 377. The Government have accepted 355

[Shri R. D. Bhandare.]

recommendations and so far implemented 308 recommendations.

Now, the new committee which has been appointed, which my hon. friend is aware of, what are the terms of that committee? Two tasks have been entrusted to that committee. One is to study the implementation of the recommendations made by the Kunzru Committee. Secondly, after going through the implementation of the recommendations of the Kunzru Committee, it has to make suggestions to what extent safety could be secured. Therefore, it is totally wrong to suggest that either the Railway Minister or any other human being is responsible for the railway accidents that dare taking place... (interruptions). Of course, I am not justifying the accidents.. (interruptions).

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE (Kanpur): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I rise to support the demand made by my hon. friends that the Railway Minister should resign peacefully and gracefully and that this gang of murderers in the Railway Board should be sacked. Had I any power I would have definitely tried them under section 302 for murdering all these people.

What is their record from 1st January, 1968 to 31st March, 1968? On 2nd January, 1968 two killed; on 13th January, 1968 one killed; on 16th February, 1968 twenty-three injured; on 14th March, 1968 nineteen injured; on 19th March, 1968 fifty-two killed and forty-one injured and on 31st March, 1968 eighteen killed and eleven injured. You can imagine what happened in these three months. Still, I know, either Shri Pooacha or any other minister in this Cabinet has not the guts to ask the Railway Board members to resign because they are the bosses and these ministers are servants in the present set-up.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Shame, shame!

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE: So, I demand that they should be sacked immediately. I would like to know from the hon. Minister, when he replies, what action has been taken against them.

SHRI NAMBIAR: Nobody can sack them. They are all powerful.

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE: My second point is that Kunzru Committee's recommendations were never implemented. About the track, I am extremely happy that my hon. friend Shri George Fernandes, referred to the report. I am sorry, I have no time to refer to that. But I will say that even in the matter of sleepers, 5 or 6 years ago it was decided that we should have concrete sleepers, called RS sleepers. What has happened to that project? Why did that project not come up? We want to increase the speed of these trains on this wretched track, which is not maintained and looked after properly, to the rate of 90 miles an hour. A person wishing to go from Delhi to Calcutta in 17 hours will start from Delhi but God alone knows whether he will reach Howrah or not. If this is the condition, I would like to know from the hon. Minister what arrangements have been made.

On that particular day I got a telephone message from Kanpur that there were rumours in Kanpur that when the relations of those people, who had died or who were said to have died, approached and begged of the railway authorities to allow them to go saying, "We are poor people: we cannot purchase tickets," they were shunted out (Some Hon. Members: Shame, shame) while the General Manager, another murderer, travelled in a special train. The accident took place at 10 o'clock at night and he was waiting for the saloon or air-conditioned special train and then he went. It is disgraceful that such a thing should happen.

Now I come to the composition of the committee. The committee has been constructed. Even here the Railway Minister wanted to play a mischief. What has he done? Shri S. R. Vasavada, a textile expert, because he is the President of NFIR, has been nominated to this committee and not Shri Peter Alvares or anybody of the All India Railwaymen's Federation who has spent a major portion of his life working for the railways. I am sorry that such a discrimination should take place. Then, I have no grouse against Shri Masani, my only grouse is that a person who never travels in a train and who always flies is one of the members of this committee who are supposed to be experts in this. Then another gentleman is Shri Badhwar, a very efficient Chairman of the Railway Board once upon a time but now reaching the age of nearly 70. He is an ex-Chairman of the Railway Board and he is another member. Why did the Railway Minister not take us into confidence? Why did he want only those persons who will give a made-up decision and say that these Railway Board members are like Caesar's wife, above suspicion? I am sorry that such a committee has been appointed. It should be expanded and those who are interested in it and those who know the whole thing should be included in it.

I would only request that the membership of the Committee should be increased and that you should include two or three more members. I request you in all seriousness.

I was happy to hear the last sentence of Shrimati Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit. Otherwise, it was a condolence speech. If the accidents do not stop, it will be difficult for any train to run in this country. A third-class compartment has, unfortunately, been converted into a slaughter house by these murderous people. The people are afraid of them.

I protest against certain observations made by some Members like Shri K. N. Tiwary that accidents are accidents.

बस में भी ऐक्सीडेंट होता है, साकिल से भी ऐक्सीडेंट होता है। बस का ऐक्सीडेंट करने वाला जेल जाता है लेकिन रेलवे बोर्ड के मेम्बर और जनरल मनेजर की तरफकी होती है। जनरल मनेजर रेलवे बोर्ड का मेम्बर और मेम्बर चेयरमन बनता है।

With these words, I again request Shri Poonacha to rise to the occasion, to search his own conscience and heart and resign and dismiss the Railway Board.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Shri Poonacha.

SOME HON. MEMBERS rose—

SHRI DHIRESWAR KALITA (Gauhati): Only one sentence.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: If I allow you, I have to allow others also. There are several Members.

SHRI DHIRESWAR KALITA: The Railway Act should be amended. Just like the Mines Act, the chapter should be included in the Railway Act.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Shri Poonacha.

SHRI A. S. SAIGAL (Bilaspur): This is not correct.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Please resume your seat. Actually, I wanted to close the debate according to the decision of the Business Advisory Committee.

SHRI A. S. SAIGAL: You don't want that we should speak... (Interruption).

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I cannot give opportunity to everyone. That is not possible. Shri Poonacha.

SHRI A. S. SAIGAL: This is not correct.

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI C. M. POONACHA): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, with a heavy heart I rise to reply to this debate and I thank the Speaker for having provided an opportunity for this discussion.

Sir, this debate has, no doubt, brought out the concern and anxiety of the hon. Members with respect to the safety in railway travel. Hon. Members have expressed their views and I do not want to go into certain figures and repeat them over and over again. The literature that we had supplied at the time of presenting the Railway Budget contains all the detailed information and I am glad that some Members have quoted them profusely and I leave it at that because I take it that the hon. Members and the House are in the know of all the statistics and figures which I need not repeat over again.

The main point that has been raised is that in so far as running of the railways in this country is concerned whether adequate measures have been taken to ensure safety and whether the high-power committees which have been constituted from time to time and which have given their recommendations have been implemented and whether particularly the recommendations of Pandit Kunzru have been duly implemented. My hon. friend, Shri Nambiar, said that the recommendations are put in pigeon-hole and then he read out a few portions of them and said that they are not being implemented. Here is a point on which I have to join issues with him. Out of the recommendations, as has been already mentioned in this pamphlet, we have accepted 353 recommendations. 303 recommendations, have been fully implemented and 50 are in the process of being implemented because they either extend to all the stations or

such safety works are time consuming.

My hon. friend Pandit Kunzru himself is heading a study team of the Administrative Reforms Commission with five other members. The working of the Railway Board is not left to itself. Let my hon. friends realise the fact that this decision has been taken not yesterday but, some time after my coming to this Ministry, I personally felt that there needs to be a look at the working of the Railway Administration. It is better to have such studies by experts. This self-introspection is good to everybody including the Railway Board, myself and the general public. We have said that the Railway Board's working in all its aspects should be gone into by an independent authority and the Administrative Reforms Commission is seized of it. They said that they wanted to go into the working of the Railways and we decided that this also should be done. There were no doubt consultations and the name of our revered friend, Pandit Hirday Nath Kunzru, was mentioned, and we accepted it because he is the competent person to tell us whether the Board has failed in implementing his recommendations. We are going to have his report. Pandit Kunzru has visited some zonal railways. He has been visiting important places with his team and they are seized of the matter. Mr. Nambiar need not worry about this. Pandit Kunzru himself will come out with a report as to how this Railway Board and the Ministry have taken the recommendations of his Committee. Whether they have failed, whether there has been any lapse on the part of the railways or not, is a matter which will be in the possession, and knowledge, of this House very soon.

Last month the other accident took place at Yalvigi. I myself said, 'Let there be a judicial Inquiry'. (Interruptions). On this accident we felt that there should be a high level

inquiry, so that nothing need be covered; nothing need be kept out of the knowledge of this hon. House. As such, a high level committee has been constituted to go into the series of accidents that have taken place in recent times and to suggest as to how best we can prevent the occurrence of such accidents. I may submit that I am prepared to expose myself to the examination of this high-powered body. I would certainly welcome that. I would like to formulate some details of the terms of reference after taking the advice of the ex-Chief Justice of India. I propose to suggest to him that he should feel free to call for any file that he wants from the Railway Board, even those files which have been dealt with by the Ministers, and satisfy himself whether there has been any slackness on the part of the Railway Board, whether there was any interference by the Minister, any interference by any political party for that matter. Let this be gone into and the hon. ex-Chief Justice of India will certainly apply his judicious mind to this question and give his considered views. He is being assisted . . . (Interruptions) by two technical experts also. After all, there should be some one to give the technical advice. Therefore, the Commissioner for Railway Safety is a member of this Committee. The ex-Chairman of the Railway Board who knows the working of the Railways is there. I do not want . . . (Interruptions).

SHRI NAMBIAR: Our complaint is against the Railway Board and you are putting the Railway Board man there! Keep that ex-Chairman out of it.

SHRI C. M. POONACHA: I do not want, at this stage, to go into . . .

SHRI NAMBIAR: You are burning our hearts. We are accusing the Railway Board and you are putting the same man, the Chairman who has just retired, as a member of the committee. That means, you do not want

a real inquiry to be made . . . (Interruptions).

SHRI C. M. POONACHA: I take exception to this. It is wrong on the part of the hon. members to say So. I take exception to this kind of thing. This is not correct. This is not the way we should approach this question.

SHRI NAMBIAR: The Railway Board should be kept out. They should not come anywhere near the committee. (Interruptions).

SHRI RANDHIR SINGH (Rohtak): There is substance in his proposal. They must hear him, Sir.

श्री जार्ज फर्नेन्डो : अध्यक्ष महोदय,
पूनाचा साहू से मैं एक ही प्रश्न करना चाहता हूँ। अपनी गलतियों पर अपने खिलाफ फौजदार बहकने दोगे ? (इन्टरप्शन)

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Order, order. Let us hear the hon. Minister without any interruptions.

SHRI C. M. POONACHA: It is very unfortunate that the hon. Member deems it proper to go into the question of personalities now. I have only been giving an account of how we have made it incumbent on our part to have a thorough inquiry into the working of the railways so far as the safety aspects are concerned. It is difficult to satisfy persons who have their own angularities. I am certainly not here to oblige anybody's angularities. I am here to look into the matter objectively and I am satisfied that I have taken the correct decision and in a very objective manner. We are not trying to hide or cover anything, but we want to have an independent and objective look into the whole matter. When a person of high standing like the ex-Chief Justice of India is at the helm of the inquiry, we should certainly try to appreciate the fact that there would be an objective analysis of the whole question.

श्री स० मो० बनर्जी बघवार
को हटाओ।

SHRI C. M. POONACHA: Now, I come to the other question. My hon. friends had referred to the operational working of the railways. It is very sad that accidents are happening. I do not want to rely on the argument that in other countries also accidents are happening, and, therefore, they could happen here also. That is not my intention at all. Unfortunately, accidents have happened and accidents are happening. Let us go into the question a bit more objectively and with some calm thinking. In an operation like the running of the railways, nearly one million people are concerned. They are connected with running the trains in one from or the other at various levels, at the engine workshop level, at the servicing level, at the maintenance level, at the signals level, at the operation level and so on. The station masters, signalman, Driver etc. are all directly connected with the running of the railways. In this huge undertaking 1.3 million people are engaged, and out of them about one million are connected in one way or the other with the safety of running of trains. That is the magnitude of the operations.

According to the Kunzru Committee's recommendations made in 1962, we have introduced various measures to educate the railwaymen and to give them the necessary training by way of refresher courses etc. and over and above that given them engineering aids, exercised the necessary supervision. And last but not the least, we have also seen to the enforcement part of it. There are now four things which are important. They are: Education, for educating the railwaymen as to the correct methods of safety operations, Engineering aids, Supervision and Enforcement. There are the four important categories of recommendations made by the Kunzru Committee and almost all of them have been implemented. If there is any important recommendation which have not been fully implemented, one

such is in regard to track circuiting of all the important stations.

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE: Of all stations.

SHRI C. M. POONACHA: Track-circuiting of all stations. We have about 7000 stations. If we are to introduce track-circuiting at all these 7000 stations then we would need Rs. 100 crores.

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE: But you want to bring in computers?

SHRI C. M. POONACHA: Let us meet point to point raised, not get diverted.

We have completed track circuiting in quite a large number of stations. Last year's programme was 224 stations which we have completed. This year's programme is another 200 which we are going to complete. There are certain difficulties. We cannot do all stations at a stretch. It has got to be done in stages.

This is the break-up of expenditure on signalling including implementing the Kunzru Committee recommendations from 1962-63 is as follows:— the first two years we spent about Rs. 11 crores each, the third year Rs. 13 crores, the next year Rs. 16 crores, the following year Rs. 12 crores, last year 22 crores and for next year it will be Rs. 21 crores. A total of Rs. 106 crores will have been spent to modernise signalling equipment, and introduce modern methods of control, signal and various other engineering aids needed by the railwayman to use. As has been said, we should not completely burden the man on the spot. He has to be assisted with engineering aids, the latest of them.

Take, for instance, the Barwari accident. This station has all the modern equipment, signalling and track

circuiting. If there is an obstruction in the track, the signal will automatically show red. Even if a crow-bar is placed across two rails, the signal will show red. It is to that extent automatic. When a train is standing on the track, naturally the signal would remain on. As to what happened at that particular point of time, on the spur of the moment one does not know and the man is not there to tell the story. Somebody said the vacuum brake must have failed. It is not so. This train had earlier passed through five stations at all of which the brakes worked all right. It is not as if this was the first station it stopped after departure from its starting point.

SHRI RANDHIR SINGH: We should leave these things to the Committee.

SHRI C. M. POONACHA: Since these points have been raised, it should be cleared. All said and done, with all the latest engineering aids, with all the sophisticated modern tools and so on, the man on the spot will be the man to operate it and with a small slip on his part somewhere something might happen.

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE: 30 hours work.

SHRI C. M. POONACHA: Even there, I can explain that it is not so. At a place where all modern equipment of signalling and track circuiting are there, it is really a tragedy that this accident happened at Bharwaria. We are not happy. It only indicates that even with modernisation you are not able to avert accident totally. This is the conclusion that could be drawn. I am not trying to take cover under that.

Take, for example, Yalvigi. It was standard one type of control—a rudimentary type. I can understand something happening there on account of that. It is between three people. The inquiry will bring out the facts. There is the Station Master, two

pointsmen and the driver. Where the slip occurred and by whom we cannot say now.

When you are engaged in such a huge operation as that of the Indian railways, a slight error somewhere results in some accident. A moment's slip is enough for that.

The hon. Member, Shri Devagun referred to the number of deaths. I am not trying to explain away. Under a certain set of circumstances an accident might happen at Place X and another accident might happen at place Y. The death roll may be heavy in one case and may not be so in the other.

SHRI RANDHIR SINGH: What about the proposal of Shri Viswanatham?

SHRI C. M. POONACHA: I am coming to that. So, under the given set of circumstances, the same set of circumstances, in one place the accident may be very serious leading to very heavy toll of life and in the other place it may not be so. It depends on the terrain; it depends on the exact point where the unfortunate accident takes place. These things are unpredictable. Therefore, it does not mean fewer accidents numberwise the death would be correspondingly less. The accidents may be fewer but the death rate may be more. These are very capricious.

I now come to the telescoping of the coaches. The integrated type of coaches that we have—the steel body—are anti-telescopic. We have still the old ones. Our replacement programme is also going on at a fast rate. Unfortunately, we have not been able to fully put on track the most modern steel type coaches. The modern steel type coaches have certain safety aspects in so far as telescoping is concerned and these are more safe. But that takes sometime, because our capacity to produce these integral type of coaches is about 850 to 900 per annum. As the hon.

[Shri C. M. Poonacha.]

Member said, we have about 33,000 coaches on the Indian Railways. The programme is on hand, and we are endeavouring to do our best. What I wanted to submit to the hon. House—

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: There is one point which might clarify the position. For how many hours was the driver on duty? That point was raised.

SHRI C. M. POONACHA: This driver left the starting station at about 6 P.M. or so, I think. He had his weekly rest: 30 hours or so. He had just come on the foot-plate after that. This was about four to five hours' run. That is all.

श्री कान्वर लाल गुप्त (दिल्ली सदर) : क्या यह ठीक है जैसा कि जनरल ने कहा, जनरल मैनेजर सैलून के लिए इन्तजार करते रहे और जो मरे हुए लोगों के रिस्तेदार थे उनको बैठने तक नहीं दिया गया ? अगर यह सही है तो क्या इसकी इन्क्वायरी करवायेगी ?

SHRI C. M. POONACHA: The General Manager left at 2.10 in the night and then en route I do not know what had happened. This information is not readily available with me. Anyhow, he did rush to the spot by a special train because he had to take all the necessary steps and attend to necessary things. Naturally he had to rush to the place and he was there personally supervising over all the other arrangements that needed to be done.

SHRI KANWAR LAL GUPTA: He has not replied to my question.

मेरा कहना यह है कि 4 घंटे तक जनरल मैनेजर सैलून के लिये इन्तजार करते रहे और उसके बाद, मरे हुए लोगों के रिस्तेदार थे उनको उठाने दिया

भी नहीं, क्या यह कैलस एटीट्यूड नहीं है और क्या इसके बारे में इन्क्वायरी करवायेगी ?

SHRI C. M. POONACHA: I do not have the information readily with me now. Let me find out; I will try to find out.

SHRI NAMBIAR: I am on the point of the driver: there is no enquiry for this accident. The driver is dead and we do not know anything except what they will give us. The enquiry which is instituted is of a general nature and not for this particular accident. My submission is that according to the electrical system, if the driver was sleeping—granting that he was asleep and was keeping his hand—if he was asleep his hand goes and automatically it stops. That is the system. Therefore, it requires a deeper study. Even if the driver was sleeping the accident would not have happened, because automatically his hand goes out of the brake and it stops. Therefore, it requires deeper study. Will he kindly institute an enquiry into this so that it will also be enlightening to the whole country and such things can be avoided in future?

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE: Only one clarification, about the hours of work. Is there any round-trip like this—allahabad to Moghulsaraj, Moghulsaraj to Kanpur and Kanpur to Allahabad? Is it a fact that unless the driver completes the whole thing he does not take rest?

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: I asked the question and he has clarified that.

SHRI C. M. POONACHA. This high-power committee is a committee which will go into the entire case of accidents. This Committee is not with reference to this particular accident only. The Additional Commissioner of Railway Safety is conducting an enquiry into this accident separately

and we will know exactly what were the technical flaws.

It is a very curious thing, sir,—I do not have any explanation for this that somehow or other during a certain period, a bunching of accidents takes place. For instance, according perhaps to the figures we supplied to the House in answer to a question in 1966, accidents occurred on the following dates: 16th April, 1966, 20th April, 1966, 23rd April, 1966, 25th April, 1966 and 30th April, 1966. The way these things happen it looks as though fate also intrigues at times. I am very sorry for this, but it does happen at times.

All said and done, I must say that with the implementation of the Kunzru Committee's report, with the modernisation of train control, train parking, signalling, etc. and with modern equipment, the incidence of accidents on the railways is coming down. There is no doubt about it. It may be that at a particular time, we may have the misfortune or bad luck of a series of accidents taking place.

SHRI NAMBIAR: The Railway Board is wrongly advising you. They will put you into hot waters.

SHRI C. M. POONACHA: I am prepared to face it; I am not trying to hide. Nobody is misleading me, but, I am expecting myself and making an open statement in this House that the incidence of accidents on the Indian Railways has come down and is being controlled. It is not as if there should not be examination where there we cannot improve our methods to ensure safety further. In all humility and sincerity, I have myself suggested that there should be this high level committee to go into this matter. They will take the objective view and we will have the benefit of their report.

There are two sets of studies. There is the Administrative Reforms Commission. Dr. Kunzru himself is the

competent man to see to what extent the railways have failed to implement the recommendations and to what extent they have been implemented. These matters are now under study.

SHRI DHIRESWAR KALITA: Are you prepared to amend the Railway Act?

SHRI C. M. POONACHA: There are a few sections which have to be amended. That is also engaging our attention. I might assure the House that we will not be found wanting in doing everything possible to see that railway travel is made safer.

SHRI M. N. REDDY (Nizamabad): Would you consider enlarging the personnel of the commission?

SHRI C. M. POONACHA: About that, I am unable to say anything now.

SHRI RANDHIR SINGH: I have a feeling that trade union activities are in a way responsible for inefficiency in the railways.

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE: No. We protest, protest, protest.

SHRI A. S. SAIGAL: In my speech on the cut-motions, I requested the Minister that this old Act of 1890 may kindly be revised and proper action taken so that these things may not occur in future, will he kindly enlighten us on that?

SHRI S. C. SAMANTA (Tamluk): I want the hon. Minister to answer one question. He is perhaps aware that in the Mines Act there is one chapter about accidents. Under that chapter, whenever any accident occurs in a mine an inquiry is instituted and the head of the inquiry is a High Court Judge. Two assessors are there. But none is connected with the Department. Here, in this case, there is the Commissioner for Railway Safety. I would request the hon. Minister to see that he is not taken

[Shri S. C. Samanta.]

as a member of the inquiry committee because he has to give evidence before this committee, if required. So, such a person should not be included in the inquiry committee. Further, the Railways Act should be amended accordingly.

SHRI C. M. POONACHA: The Railways Act needs certain improvements. We are looking into the matter. If certain amendments are found necessary, they will be taken for consideration. The Commissioner for Railway Safety is the authority who

has the charge of overall supervision and enforcement of all the safety regulations, so far as the railways are concerned. But he is not a railway man. He is under the Civil Aviation Ministry. He is not under my Ministry. The entire organisation of Railway Safety is under the Civil Aviation Ministry.

20.42 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Wednesday, April 3, 1968/Chaitra 14, 1890 (Saka).