

to these places. I, therefore, would like to know from the hon. Minister whether he will extend the Vayudoot service up to Falna which is located in between Ranakapur and Dilwara?

**SHRI ARIF MOHAMMAD KHAN:** Sir, I will consider the request of the hon. Member for providing air link for the places in Rajasthan keeping in view their historical importance. We will also consider the suggestions made by him. But the present question is related to Tamil Nadu. As such, I am not in a position to give any information about it.

[English]

**Compensation to Victims of Island Express Accident in Qullon**

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\*208. **SHRI A. CHARLES:**  
**SHRIMATI GEETA MUKHERJEE:**

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of persons killed in the accident of the Island Express in the Ashtamudi Lake in 1988;

(b) the number of claims made and the number of cases in which compensation has been awarded; and

(c) the details of the claims rejected/pending for decision and the reasons therefor?

**THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES):** (a) In this accident, 105 persons lost their lives.

(b) 311 claims were preferred and compensation has been awarded in 274 cases.

(c) No claims are pending. Of 37 dismissed cases, 17 were due to claimants not being dependants as per the provisions of Indian Railways Act, 1890 and balance 20

due to insufficient evidence and non-maintainability under the provisions of law.

**SHRI A. CHARLES:** Sir, I am not going to narrate the hardships being faced by the bereaved families. In the answer, under item (c), it is stated that out of 37 dismissed cases, 17 were due to claimants not being dependants as per the provisions of Indian Railways Act, 1890. I was physically present at the site when the Railway Minister came there and declared that an amount of Rs. One lakh will be given in each case to the dependants. Later on, these cases were rejected as per the provisions of Indian Railways Act, 1890. In the Railway Consultative Committee, I pointed out this and I wrote to the Minister also in this regard. There was a categorical statement that whatever be the provisions of the Act, these claims would be honoured. In the last Consultative Committee meeting, we were informed that the provisions of the Act were amended so as to enable these claims to be honoured. Then, I immediately asked whether the amendment will have a retrospective effect. The Minister stated that whatever be the position, whether it is retrospective or not, either as compensation or in any other name the amount will be given. In the last Session of Parliament, I raised this matter under rule 377 but it is unfair, I did not get any reply.

May I know from the hon. Minister whether he will use his good consciousness and see that compensation is given to all the 17 cases—after all Rs. 17 lakhs only would be involved—irrespective of the fact that whether they are deemed as dependants under the law or not.

**SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES:** Sir, in regard to 17 claimants who are not deemed as dependants under the provisions of law, there have been settlements in respect of most of these cases, with the concerned persons accepting ex-gratia payments that the Railways have paid. The only difference is, whereas the ex-gratia payment is not Rs. one lakh that was available under the Act... (Interruptions)

It is not the ex-gratia payment that was made on the spot. I am talking of ex-gratia payment that was made as a kind of settlement in respect of those whose claims could not be justified under the law.

SHRI A. CHARLES: Sir, it is nearly going to be 3 years after the accident. But the real cause of the accident is not known to anybody. First it was told, it was human failure. Then, it was said, it was due to alignment of the track. Finally the report said, it was due to unusual tornado. Kerala is not cyclone-prone area and nobody has believed the report because in that part of the country, there is no tornado.

Therefore, may I know from the hon. Minister whether he will institute a fresh enquiry to ascertain the real cause of the accident so that we may be able to avoid such accidents in future?

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES: This is a much discussed accident and soon after the accident, the Commissioner of Railway Safety of the Southern Division did make a report in which he concluded, there must have been a tornado which caused this accident. That report was not acceptable to a large number of people and the matter came to be debated in this House and it was during the last year's Budget Session, the then Minister of Railways said that he would appoint a committee of experts, scientists, engineers and others. This committee was set up sometime in September last year, it started its work soon after and gave its report on the 28th of February, 1990. Well, this Committee of experts was headed by Air Marshal Naik and its members were very outstanding personalities, namely Dr. A.S. Raja, Prof. of Emeritus, University of Roorkee, Prof. D.R. Sikka, Director, Indian Institute of Tropical Metereology, Mr. Ravindra, Director, Indian Railway Institute of Civil Engineering, Mr. K.P.L. Wadhwa, Director (Standards) of R.D.S.O. and Mr. S.D. Sharma, Executive Director (Safety) of the Railway Board. This committee made a very thorough study of the situation including on the evidence that was available, the report that

was present by the Commissioner Railway Safety. They came to the conclusion that while the tornado theory could not be upheld, they were not in a position to identify the causes of the accident.

An expert committee had already gone into it. I do not think there could be another expert committee to sit in judgement over the findings of this expert committee which have come to the conclusion that they do not know what caused this accident.

[*Translation*]

SHRI KIRPAL SINGH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the hon. Minister as to how claims preferred by the dependants of the deceased with regard to gold and currency etc. possessed by the deceased are settled?

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES: Mr. Speaker, Sir, no such claim was preferred. There were claims of compensation only which was paid to the dependants of the deceased

SHRI SATYNARAYAN JATIYA: A few days ago, Dehradun Express met with an accident at Ratlam. Such accidents take place at other places also. A number of people die in these accidents. But the procedure being followed to settle accident claims is very complex. Due to this, timely help does not reach the sufferers. Will the Department of Railways streamline the procedure so as to provide immediate help to the sufferers?

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES: Sir, accident claims tribunal looks into these cases and there should be no difficulty on their part to settle the cases quickly.

[*English*]

PROF. P.J. KURIEN: Accidents are bound to occur because they are accidents. But the country has a right to know the causes of the accident and hon. Minister has said that he has appointed an Expert Committee and that Expert Committee could not

come to a definite conclusion as to the cause of the accident. May be like that, I agree. But the committee must have certainly found out the possible causes of the accident. May be they have not reached definite conclusion, pinpointed on a cause, but there are possible causes of accident. We have a right to know what are the possible causes of accident and, if so, what are the remedial action taken. Therefore, I would like to know whether you would place the report of this Expert Committee on the Table of the House and also inform us now what are the possible causes of this accident

**SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES:** The report of the Committee has been laid on the Table of the House a day after the opening of the current Session. In so far as the conclusions of this Committee are concerned, this is what it says in the Chapter on 'Conclusions':—

- (i) The Committee does not agree with the conclusion of the Commissioner of Rail Safety that the accident was caused by a tornado hitting the train while it was passing over the bridge;
- (ii) The locomotive was the first to derail of its speeding pair of wheels. There is no point of mount but only a point of drop located at about 132.25 metres away from the north abutment of the bridge on the Ernakulam side.
- (iii) The Committee on the basis of available evidence is unable to determine any precise single cause being responsible for the derailment.

After six months of effort, this Committee of the best possible experts that one could have perhaps identified comes to the conclusion that 'We are unable to say anything.'

**PROF. P. J. KURIEN:** What are the possible causes?

**SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES:** It is unable to come to any conclusion.

**PROF. P. J. KURIEN:** There should be some possible cause.

**MR. SPEAKER:** That is all right.

### **Cement Plants**

\*209. **SHRI BHAKTA CHARAN DAS:** Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have any proposal to set up some cement plants;

(b) whether any proposal in that regard has also been submitted by Government of Orissa; and

(c) if so, the proposals approved for implementation and letters of intent granted so far?

**THE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY (SHRI AJIT SINGH):** (a) to (c). A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

### **STATEMENT**

(a) Government has a policy to encourage creation of additional capacity in cement industry on a selective basis. In order to meet the increase in demand of cement as projected for the Eighth Plan, Government encourages both establishment of new cement plants particularly for deficit areas as well as modernisation and expansion of existing units to bring them to the optimum economic level. With regard to mini cement plants, such plants upto 100/200 TPD capacity based on VSK technology and scattered deposits of limestone are generally encouraged. The existing mini cement plants are permitted expansion of their capacity from 200 TPD to 300 TPD and even upto 600 TPD under certain conditions.

(b) and (c). At present five cement factories in the organised sector with an installed capacity of 12,18,700 TPA are in