

[Shri Datar]

Shri Saraf made a reference to the conference of members of the Public Service Commissions including the UPSC at Delhi. The UPSC had called this conference for finding out a uniform procedure and it is not a matter with which we are concerned.

It was contended that Indian students living abroad and qualified there were not properly employed. May I point out that on account of the interviews which the Chairman and other members had abroad, 43 candidates were recommended by the UPSC? We have already issued orders for 13 and for the others they would be issued as soon as preliminary formalities are over. In addition to this we have offered appointments to ten more Indian candidates who have qualified abroad and they will be taken into service as soon as they return to India.

Sir, I am obliged to the hon. House for the very detailed discussion that has taken place.

Shri Harish Chandra Mathur: Sir, the hon. Minister has referred only to the points raised in the debate yesterday for which he has notes. Though he has paid me a compliment all right, he has not referred to a single point which I had raised.

Shri Datar: It is because it did not deserve any answer.

Shri Harish Chandra Mathur: I raised general as well as specific questions.

Shri Datar: He raised a question about the unmoded nature of the UPSC. That was not raised by any other hon. Member and I replied to that. Regarding the selection grade in the States, the UPSC had nothing to do with that.

Shri Harish Chandra Mathur: I never said that the UPSC was an unmoded body. I do not know how the hon. Minister has got this idea; he is putting just the wrong thing in my mouth. I never said that.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Order, order. Now, I shall put the motion to vote.

The question is:

"That this House takes note of the Eleventh Report of the Union Public Service Commission for the period 1st April, 1960 to 31st March, 1961, together with the Government's Memorandum thereon, laid on the Table of the House on the 18th June, 1962."

The motion was adopted.

14.11 hrs.

MOTION RE: STATEMENT ON RAILWAY ACCIDENTS

The Minister of Railways (Shri Swaran Singh): I beg to move:

"That the statement regarding Railway accidents, laid on the Table of the House on the 9th August, 1962, be taken into consideration."

It may be recalled that there was a useful debate during the last session, in the course of which the position with regard to railway accidents was reviewed. Some general questions were raised, and some specific cases were also mentioned, and the House had an opportunity to examine the various factors that were involved in this important question of railway accidents.

Thereafter, a very unfortunate and tragic accident took place at Dumraon, and naturally the House feels agitated over that, and there is such a similar feeling in the country also. As I have already mentioned in the House, a regular judicial inquiry under the Commissions of Inquiry Act, has been instituted, and a retired High Court judge is presiding over that commission of inquiry. An hon. Member of this House is also a member of that commission of inquiry, and there is a technical member as well on that commission. As is customary and proper, it will perhaps be not proper

for us to go into the causes or the circumstances of that tragic accident, and we should await the result of the judicial inquiry. We are anxiously awaiting this, and I am sure the House is also anxiously looking forward to the report of that High judicial body that is looking into the Dumraon accident. We hope to be greatly benefited by an analysis of the causes and the remedies that they might suggest.

Some other accidents after the termination of the last session have taken place, and as desired by certain sections of the House, I have already placed on the Table of the House a detailed statement giving the particulars of those accidents, and I have also briefly indicated the causes, in so far as they have been ascertained and also the action taken against the defaulters who were found to be responsible as a result of inquiries.

I think that it will be useful, and will enable the House to offer comments usefully, if I were to give an analysis of these accidents that have taken place after the House dispersed at the end of the last session. This is contained, no doubt, in the statement, but I think that a brief analysis would be useful.

There were 15 such accidents between the period 23rd June 1962 and 3rd August, 1962. All of them were unfortunate, but the most unfortunate of them, as I have already indicated, was the one which took place at Dumraon on the night of 21st July, 1962. My sympathies and those of all other railwaymen go to the bereaved families and to those who were injured in these accidents.

Of the 15 cases shown in the statement, seven were of train collisions, of which three involved passenger trains; three other cases were of derailments, of which two involved passenger trains, one of these two resulting from the train running into a tree which had fallen on the track on account of strong winds, the remaining five accidents were of trains

running into road traffic at level-crossings, three of them being at unmanned level-crossings.

Of the total 72 dead and 164 injured, as mentioned in the statement which was laid on the Table of the House, seven were injured in accidents at unmanned level-crossings. If the casualties in the Dumraon accident were to be excluded, the total number of casualties in the remaining 11 accidents works out to one person killed and 80 injured. I mentioned here that, in the Dumraon accident, another two persons have unfortunately passed away, and now the death-roll stands at 73. I have already mentioned that, so far as the Dumraon accident is concerned, we have already constituted the commission of inquiry.

The House would like to understand, and would like to know, something of what is done to prevent the occurrence of accidents. What are the preventive measures that are adopted, and what is the general approach in dealing with this important matter? That, I think, is a matter of high importance, and as there are certain technical aspects of this, I would like to place, for the consideration of the House, a factual statement indicating the preventive measures that are taken from time to time.

Increasing emphasis has been laid on the improved maintenance of track, locomotives and rolling-stock. Apart from emphasis on proper maintenance of track and rolling-stock, the directions in which action to prevent accidents is aimed are twofold: (a) provision of technological aids to the staff to act as a safeguard against the possibility of human error, and (b) educating the staff in the correct methods of working and making them more safety-conscious. These are the two broad heads under which various preventive measures fall. I shall give some more particulars about these two important categories.

So far as the technological aids are concerned, these consist of provision of

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improved and modern technical devices such as:—

- (i) interlocking of points and signals so that until the correct road is set, the signals cannot be lowered;
- (ii) provision of modified interlocking at non-interlocked stations;
- (iii) raising of standard of interlocking to the required standard;
- (iv) fitting of detectors at non-interlocked stations;
- (v) provision of token instruments on single-line sections in replacement of paper line-clear;
- (vi) provision of last stop signal control through line-clear;
- (vii) provision of lock and block working on double-line sections;
- (viii) interlocking of important level-crossing gates with signals; and
- (ix) provision of track circuiting of certain sections and stations, so that when a certain portion of the line is obstructed, the signals controlling movement of such lines cannot be cleared.

It might be observed that the improvements mentioned above have been carried out progressively depending upon the importance of the section. In taking up the various works, priority has been given first to those sections where the traffic was comparatively high.

These are the technological aids about which I made mention a moment ago.

The other important aspect, to which the railway administrations

and the Railway Board attach the highest importance, is what may be described as the educative aspect. Whatever may be the technical aids provided, the best known safety device still remains a careful man. No matter how foolproof the technical aids which may be given to the staff for safe train passing, the chance of human error still remains the most important factor to be encountered. It is here that the educative aspect assumes vital importance. Railway administrations have kept this aim in the forefront and have been directing their endeavours along the necessary lines—I would now like to place before the House the action that has already been taken and is constantly taken in this direction.

(1) The closest possible personal contact is maintained by the officers and inspectors of districts and divisions with the staff on the lines who are concerned with train passing. These supervisory personnel make every use of the opportunity of personal contact in educating the staff in the whys and wherefores of the rules and in correcting wrong habits and tendencies to short-cut methods. I may mention that this temptation to adopt short-cut methods can be really strong and constant effort has to be made to create the right type of spirit so that this temptation is reduced and the desirability of following the rules strictly is always impressed upon the staff concerned.

(2) Educative propoganda in the form of pamphlets and posters, bringing out how short-cut methods and minor violations of rules may, in combination with other lapses, lead to serious accidents, is systematically disseminated to the staff.

(3) Each Railway Administration issues periodical bulletins in which important accidents and the lapses which led to those accidents are highlighted so that the staff learn from

the defaults of their erring colleagues. The official gazetteers of the railway administrations also carry slogans emphasising the vital importance of safety.

(4) In every important station and yard, accident prevention meetings are organised where the staff get together and discuss the recent accidents, their causes, and problems having a bearing on safe working.

(5) With a view to inculcate a healthy competitive spirit among staff, from the point of view of safe working, Safety Shields are awarded to stations, yards and divisions or districts which, over specific periods, show the best performance from the point of view of low incidence of accidents.

(6) To furnish a yet more direct psychological appeal, some films have recently been made in conjunction with the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting bringing into focus the fact that accidents are avoidable, if only the staff acted a little more carefully and vigilantly.

(7) Railway administrations provide initial courses on theoretical and practical training to all staff concerned with train passing. Even after the staff have been placed in working charge, refresher courses at regular intervals are provided to the staff in which there is special emphasis on the importance of safe working and prevention of accidents. Such training is imparted in centralised schools in each Railway Administration. In addition, for class IV staff, arrangements exist for imparting their training locally in schools organised at important junction stations near their stations of posting.

(8) A pilot project for screening the 'train passing' staff for safety-mindedness, by a process of psychological tests, is under examination of the Government at present. Such schemes exist in some foreign countries like Japan, France, and certain other countries. The utility of the

methods adopted in these countries is being studied.

(9) Tape-recorded lectures and discussions on the theme of safety and prevention of accidents are played back to groups of staff in important stations, yards and loco sheds.

So far as the preventive aspect is concerned, these are the directions in which action is already being taken. I would greatly welcome any suggestions from hon. Members for improving these, or adding other items to these important aspects of having recourse to technological aids which might help the railway administrations in making the educative process more effective.

Now, even with all the preventive measures and educative processes that might have been adopted and are still being adopted, accidents may happen. What does the administration do when accidents happen, apart from attending to the local difficulties that might be there? An important aspect which has been mentioned from time to time is to go very minutely into the causes of the accident which has happened, not only with a view to find out and fix the responsibility, which is important by itself, but more so with a view to find out what are the lessons to be learnt from that accident. In the newspapers and before the public—even before this hon. House—quite naturally only those accidents come for notice and criticism where human lives are involved, where people are injured or unfortunately some of them die. But the definition of 'accident' in railway parlance is a very wide one, and I think, rightly so, the object being that even the smallest lapse should be carefully scrutinised at various levels and by various bodies—sometimes it may be the district investigating committee or there may be a statutory authority to look into the causes of accidents and to suggest appropriate remedies. It is for this reason that the term 'accident' is defined to include a number of lapses which do not even come within the definition of

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accident as we normally understand it. For instance, a locomotive losing time above a certain limit, say, an hour or so, is also regarded as an accident and a proper investigation is held to find out the cause of that and the remedial action that is called for.

From time to time, detailed statements have been placed on the Table of the House. These statements have been supplied to hon. Members along with the budget papers, giving an analysis of the total number of accidents and also a further analysis indicating the various categories under which these accidents fall. It is not my intention to refer to those documents because, I presume, hon. Members have already studied them and have drawn their own conclusions. What I intend to do is to give a clarification with regard to the number of accidents in, for instance, 1961-62 or 1960-61 which might run into 9,000 or even 10,000....

Shri Harish Chandra Mathur (Jalore): It is about 3,000 or so.

Shri Swaran Singh: That is a different category. If you look at the printed pamphlets which were circulated, it runs to as much as that.

Shri S. M. Banerjee (Kanpur): 9,000.

Shri Swaran Singh: 9,000, 9,500—like that. More than 70 per cent of these are of other categories; for instance, some stray cattle coming on the track and being killed, trespassers being injured, or some coupling falling on the way, or some locomotive losing time and the like.

My point in stressing these figures and the various categories under which these accidents fall is to remove any feeling that might exist that we adopt any hush-hush policy with regard to this. If I may say so, we are rather more communicative than would be the case if it were a purely commercial organisation, because we try to place each and every aspect

before this Parliament and before the country, so that the whole matter might be viewed in the correct and proper perspective.

Out of this total number of cases that are termed as accidents we have to see certain aspects, particularly with a view to find out as to whether there is any alarming trend towards increase, whether it is more or less of a recurring nature or whether it involves problems we are grappling with and have not yet completely surmounted the difficulties that confront us. These are important considerations, and it is with a view to finding answers to these that we can have a look at the relevant figures and the attendant circumstances in respect of the accidents that have recently happened.

I would therefore crave the indulgence of the House to refer to one or two things in this regard. It is necessary, because, unfortunately, a scare is sought to be created as if there is an alarming increase either in the nature of these accidents or in their frequency. Each accident, as I remarked on the last occasion, is bad; but still we should view it in the proper perspective and not take an unduly alarmist view of it. Otherwise, we will not be able to tackle the problem. And, tackling the problem is more important than merely trying to find out the various people who might be responsible, or to get into, what may be described as, the punitive aspect.

As I ventured to explain, it is not my intention to give the total number of accidents of what are of a minor character which, in the railway parlance, are important from the point of view of investigation, so that Railways might draw conclusions from those investigations. I have got with me here comparative figures for three years of accidents affecting public safety, namely, train collisions, derailments, trains running into road traffic at level crossings, and fire in trains, during the years 1959-60, 1960-

61 and 1961-62. The total numbers of these accidents for these three years are as follows:

1959-60	1,997
1960-61	2,131
1961-62	1,954

These are the numbers of accidents during each of the years which deserve special mention and special notice. And this is out of the total of about nine or ten thousand, which is described in the printed documents as the total number of accidents on the Railways, in a year.

Shri Sivamurthi Swamy (Koppal): May we know the numbers of human lives involved in these?

Shri Swaran Singh: I will give those figures. So far as these three years are concerned, I will give the figures under these various heads (including passenger trains, other trains and light engines).

Train collisions :

1959-60	111 accidents involving 9 deaths
1960-61	130 accidents involving 30 deaths.
1961-62 (Provisional figures)	124 accidents involving 17 deaths.

Derailments :

1959-60	1,456 accidents involving 6 deaths.
1960-61	1,415 accidents involving 12 deaths
1961-62 (Provisional figures)	1,433 accidents involving 122 deaths (including two serious cases of train wrecking).

The number of accidents, if anything, is slightly on the decrease on the whole.

Trains running into road traffic at level crossings:

1951-60	127 accidents involving no death *
1960-61	181 accidents involving one death *
1961-62	161 accidents involving one death *

(* shown the number of passengers and not other persons in the road vehicles etc.)

Fires in trains :

1959-60	303 accidents involving no death
1960-61	405 accidents involving one death
1961-62	236 accidents involving one death

These figures will show that in 1961-62 the accidents showed a downward trend.

The trend relatively during the recent period, that is January to June 1962, has been as under as compared to the corresponding period of the previous years. This will also be of interest to hon. Members, because from these figures they will be able to judge for themselves I will give figures for the first six months (January to June) for last year as well as for the current year:

Collisions :

1961 .	52
1962 .	53

That is, there is an increase of one during this six-monthly period.

Derailments :

1961 .	646
1962 .	636

That is, a decrease of ten derailments during this six-monthly period.

Trains running into road traffic at level crossings:

Last year	105
This year	119

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There is an increase of 14.

Fires in trains:

Last year the figure was 207, and this year, luckily, there have been only 140. So, there is a decrease of 67.

And, if we take the total, last year it was 1,010 and this year 948. That is, a total decrease of 62.

I am citing these figures, not with a view to create an impression that the Railway Administration is satisfied with what is being done—I want to assure the House that I myself feel that a lot more has to be done—but to suggest that it will not perhaps be quite fair to persist in creating an impression as if there is a rising trend in this direction. We must remember that from year to year the actual quantum of traffic is increasing: the number of trains running on the same track is increasing every year.

An Hon. Member: Number of deaths also.

Shri Swaran Singh: There is an increase in the number of trains, in the number of passenger trains as well as goods trains.

Before I close, I would also give figures about the total size of the problem which the Railways are handling.

Now, Sir, there is one recognised method of calculating, in a statistical manner, the safety factor, as they call it. It is done all the world over and by foreign Railways. And this has been, every year, gone into by the Indian Railways also. It might interest the House to know that, so far as foreign countries are concerned, they also make presentation of, what may be described as, safety factors, and they present them somewhat in this form. The latest figures, authentic figures, available with us, are for 1958 for two highly develop-

ed countries, namely, Great Britain and the United States of America. In the year 1958, the passenger casualties in train collisions and derailments per billion passenger miles—this is the way it is expressed, that is, 100 crores of miles travelled by a passenger; if that were the factor, then what is the number of persons killed and injured and total casualties—are as follows. It will be seen that in British Railways the figure for the year 1958 was 1 killed, 43 injured, total casualties 44, expressed in terms of per billion, 1,000 million, passenger miles. In the United States of America it was 2 killed, 20 injured; total casualties 22. This is an absolute figure, but this is expressed as I have attempted to say . . .

Shri Kashi Ram Gupta (Alwar): What is the intention in comparing these figures with America and Britain?

Shri Surendranath Dwivedy (Kendrapara): He takes inspiration from them.

Shri Swaran Singh: The object in comparing these figures is to see whether the incidence of these accidents on our railways is very much higher or lower, or how it compares with other railways.

Shri Kashi Ram Gupta: But circumstances are quite different there and here. We cannot compare.

Shri Swaran Singh: We can take into consideration the difference between the working conditions, but still one should not feel upset merely to see how these figures work out.

The comparative figure for India for the same year, 1958-59 was 1.04 as compared to 1 in Great Britain and 2 in the United States; 3.44 as compared to 43 in Great Britain and 20 in the United States; and 9.48 as compared to 44 in the British Railways and 22 in the U.S. Railways.

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I am not saying that that is a yardstick and that it is a complete answer, but let us not shut our eyes to the hazards to which railways are exposed all the world over. We should by all means try to find fault to the extent to which that fault may be there, but let us not raise a scare and let us not view the thing in an alarmist sort of background.

I wanted to place before the hon. House the way that we are trying to tackle this problem, both long-range and short-range. So far as the long-range way is concerned, it might be recalled that in 1961, towards the end of last year, there was a full dress debate here on accidents, some of them very tragic, that took place last year, and it was announced that the whole question should be gone into by a committee presided over by Dr. Hriday Nath Kunzru. That committee, unfortunately, could not start work immediately for a variety of reasons, including the general elections that intervened, because there were a number of Members of Parliament on that committee. Dr. Kunzru went abroad and returned. They have already held a meeting and prepared the questionnaire. Technical assessment and technical appraisal of a fairly large number of accidents has already been done by the Committee, and it is hoped that an interim report may be available, which might be helpful.

Shri D. C. Sharma (Gurdaspur): An accident has happened to those Members also as some of them have not been returned!

Shri Swaran Singh: Those are the games in democracy, and some people come and some do not come, but still they are good public men, both from the Opposition and from our side, and I did not have the heart to suggest even remotely that they might cease to be associated with the Committee. There was, for instance, **Shri T. B. Vittal Rao** from the Opposition Benches. There is another Member,

Shri N. R. Muniswamy, and the Chairman himself, **Dr. Kunzru**. Although they are no longer Member of Parliament, they are all public men of considerable...

Shri Hanumanthaiya (Banaglore City): They have greater time at their disposal now!

Shri Swaran Singh: My learned colleague rightly points out that perhaps they have more time at their disposal now and can attend to this work with greater attention. But there are Members of the House also who are in that committee, and let us not even by implication suggest that they cannot find enough time.

Therefore, that is how we are trying to take a long-range view of the thing, and trying to find out the basic causes and the steps that might be taken to minimise the hazard which is involved in these accidents. Maybe something is missing in the administration, and such enquiries are useful.

It is very interesting to note that sometimes a lot of pressure is built up for the holding of enquiries; sometimes they are long-range enquiries, sometimes judicial enquiries. But when these committees are constituted, very uncharitably another argument is put forward, that this is an easy way of explaining away things, that instead of grappling with the problem, it is an easy line to constitute a committee of enquiry or a committee to go into the causes. I submit that is not a correct way. These are problems, difficult problems, and they have to be grappled with both in the long run and in the short run.

When accidents happen, as I said a moment ago, a very detailed enquiry is held, and on the issue which I am going to touch upon now, there is some difference of opinion, that is the punitive aspect, but I think that it is very important that with all the educative processes through which you might put your staff, with all the

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preventive measures of a technological nature and the like that you might adopt to increase the safety factor, those people who might be held responsible for dereliction of duty or of failure in the discharge of their normal functions, must face the consequences. I have detailed in this very statement which I placed on the Table of the House indicating the action that has been taken against or is proposed to be taken against the defaulters. As the House is no doubt aware, the taking of departmental action does take time, with the giving of notices and the like, but still instructions have been issued that these cases should be expeditiously disposed of, and a time limit of three months has been placed for completing all stages of disciplinary actions.

The House would like to get some information about the punitive action that has been taken against those employees who were found to be responsible for dereliction of duty or for gross negligence. While, no doubt, as pointed out above the main emphasis is on educating the staff in correct methods, those of the staff who indulge in unsafe and incorrect working are not allowed to go unpunished. Deterrent punishments are awarded to the staff found to blame for violating the rules, even though in some cases such violations may not have actually resulted in an accident. An analysis of the nature of the disciplinary action taken against the staff held responsible for causing train accidents during the years 1960-61 and 1961-62 shows the following:

Total number of staff punished:

	1961-62	1,648
	1960-61	1,408
Removal from service	1961-62	142
	1960-61	49
Reduced to lower grades :	1961-62	156
	1960-61	107
Reduced in the same grade :	1961-62	29
	1960-61	52

Withholding of increments for various periods :	1961-62	979
	1960-61	832
	1961-62	1960-61
Withholding of promotions	8	6
Lesser punishment (Fines or forfeiture of allowances, withholding of passes and P.O.s, censured or warned)	334	362

I have already mentioned that these cases have to be promptly and expeditiously disposed of. It might be interesting to the House to know that these disciplinary cases are, in fact been expeditiously disposed of. The total number of accidents in the year 1961-62 in which action was started was 3,938 and the number of cases finalised within three months was 2,571 which shows that expeditious and quick disciplinary action was taken in those cases where the responsibility can be fixed upon the defaulters and upon those who might be concerned in this.

This is the picture so far as the broad question of accidents is concerned. Now, it is very painful for all of us, and to me personally, to read of news about train accidents. It is more painful than other accidents, because one is vitally concerned and the impact upon the mind also is pretty heavy. But, when we talk of these figures and the like, we should always keep in our mind the size of the railway system and the size of the effort that is being put in by the railways, so that these figures which might otherwise appear to be pretty large fall in the proper perspective.

These figures are known, but they deserve being mentioned again so that we might have a proper idea of the total size of the effort that is being put in by the railways. Extending over a route mileage of 34,950 miles and a track mileage of 52,013 miles, the Indian Government Railways

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operate 10,629 locomotives, 28,009 coaching vehicles and 309,344 (Units) goods wagons. They run every day about 4,500 passenger trains and 3,000 goods trains. An idea of the gigantic nature of work performed by the Railways can be had from the fact that the Indian Railways operate annually 133 million of passenger train miles and 113 million of goods train miles. About 4.5 million passengers travel every day on the Indian Railways. There are about 6,500 railway stations scattered all over India, ranging from simple flag stations with an ordinary rail level platform to gigantic stations like Bombay V.T. More than 11 lakh railwaymen work in different parts of the country under varying climatic and seasonal conditions to keep 7,500 trains moving daily all over the country. With the day-to-day operations of the railways spread over such an extensive area and performed by such a large number of people, with equipment of varying degrees of complexity, it is not wholly possible to eliminate all accidents.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Motion moved:

"That the statement regarding Railway accidents, laid on the Table of the House on the 9th August, 1962, be taken into consideration."

I think there should be a time limit of 15 minutes for each speaker fixed.

Shrimati Renuka Ray (Malda): One hour has already been taken up. The time should be extended.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: Fifteen minutes for each Member. Shri Dinen Bhattacharya.

Shri Dinen Bhattacharya (Serampore): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, it would have been better for us to participate in the debate if the figures which have just now been given by the hon. Minister had been circulated beforehand. To be, at least, every-

thing has been jumbled up. It is not possible for me, just now, to make any observation on the points and the figures which have been given by the hon. Minister.

Attempts have been made on behalf of the Minister to state that the situation is not so alarming. But, I would request the hon. Minister to mix up with the ordinary people outside this House and watch their impression. The whole country is terribly afraid of the situation. The whole country is panicky. You hear of accidents daily.

Just now we are discussing here and the hon. Minister is trying to prove by some figures that the situation is improving, here is the news published in the Indian Express of today that yesternight at about 9:47 p.m. while the 22 Up Deluxe Express which left New Delhi last evening reached near Morena, it jumped from the rail. There was a serious accident and the line has not yet been cleared, I think. Nowadays, you will find that not a single passenger, while undertaking a journey by train, can put any confidence in the safe termination of his journey. He is always in constant fear that there might be a chance of an accident.

The hon. Minister has finished his duty just now by giving a settlement. He has also expressed his sorrow for the accidents and for the persons who succumbed to the injuries due to the accidents. But, is that all that our country expects from a Minister who is, ultimately, responsible for the whole management of the Railways?

The hon. Minister has laid on the Table of the House a statement and he has just now given some figures. I am dealing with the statement which he laid on the Table of the House a few days back. He has referred to only 15 accidents within a period of 41 days, from 23rd June to 3rd August, 1962. In these accidents, 72 died—and now the figure will be 74 be-

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cause 2 have been added later. While stating what actions were taken, for dereliction of duty or laxity in duty, against persons who were responsible for the accidents, you see a very funny thing. Our Minister and the Railway department are very enthusiastic to take action against persons for lapses in duty and they do not even excuse dead men.

If you see the report, you will find that on 27-6-1962, while BR Up mixed train was on the run between Kuar-munda and Birmitrapur stations, the train engine along with 5 empty wagons next to engine derailed. (S.E. Railway). And, in the next column, action taken, you will find it written, 'Driver killed', and the accident took place due to excessive speed. So, we are very very thankful for the excessive enthusiasm of our Ministry to take action even against a dead man.

Sardar Swaran Singh: May I clarify this, Sir, as this has been referred to? I am sorry. I am sorry for that slip in typing. What was intended to be conveyed was that no action could be taken as the driver was unfortunately killed. . . . (Interruptions).

15 hrs.

Shri Dinen Bhattacharya: In the last Lok Sabha also there had been long and heated discussions on this very subject in last November scathing criticisms were made by Members from both sides and some concrete suggestions were also given. After the conclusion of the debate, the then hon. Railway Minister gave the same assurances about the safety measures and the action proposed to be taken to avoid accidents that are now being given. But in practice the situation has not improved and whatever may be the figures placed here, in reality accident has become a daily feature. Every day in the morning when you open a newspaper, you see somewhere an engine has derailed or a

collision has taken place or some sort of accident had taken place. That is why the whole nation has been alarmed over the present state of affairs in the railway department. Something must be done to check this immediately.

After the last general elections there was a change in the Ministry and a new Cabinet was formed. When hon. Shri Swaran Singh took over the railways people felt that there would be some sort of change in the matter. But the actual performance within this short period has belied all the expectations and perhaps that were cherished by the people. Fares have been increased while amenities have in no way improved; the safety of the journey has not been guaranteed. The number of accidents is increasing. It is impossible to reduce them so long as the policy and attitude of the Railway Ministry are not basically changed and it is functioning in a stereotyped and bureaucratic way, in the traditional way in which the Britishers were functioning in the old days. That is why so many fatal accidents are taking place. An increase in the tonne mileage of freight and the carrying capacity of passengers has been brought about without a corresponding and proportionate increase in the railway staff; in these circumstances the recurrence of accidents and fall in efficiency are inevitable. This has been discussed several times and every year during the budget discussion it is pointed out that the railwaymen are under-staffed and overworked in the lines and locosheds and workshops and it not very unnatural on their part to commit an error. The report of the Ministry presented before the budget discussion states that 68.8 per cent. of accidents are due to engine failures and failures of rolling stock. Is it not because of improper and inadequate maintenance and repairs? Enough was said during the last Budget and some trade unions also

brought the innumerable facts to the notice of the railway authorities but no change was effected and as a result the accidents went up and there is seldom a day without a railway accident. Today when science and technology are so predominant, it is beyond our conception to imagine the Dumaraon accident. The hon. Minister has stated that there is a judicial enquiry and we must not refer to that matter in detail. I do not want to say much on that. But, Sir, how could it happen? The goods train was lying there; it was brought from the up main to the down main line. It was lying there for one hour. In spite of that the clearing signal was given to the ill-fated Amritsar Mail. In the meantime it appears from the newspaper reports that attempts were made to put the blame on the unfortunate cabinman. What was the control doing? The goods train could not be brought to the down main line without the clear instructions from the Control?

Shri Hanumanthaiya: Who was responsible?

Shri Dinen Bhattacharya: I do not know; the enquiry is going on. I am making my observations from the newspaper reports.

Shri Hanumanthaiya: How do you say that the cabinman is unfortunate?

Shri Dinen Bhattacharya: From the reports in the newspapers it appeared to me and that is why I am giving expression to my views; I am not putting the blame on anybody.....
(Interruptions.)

Shrimati Renuka Ray: Could he refer to the details of the case when it is under investigation?

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: The hon. Member should avoid matters which are *sub-judice*.

Dr. M. S. Aney (Nagpur): Will it not be proper to put down the issues which the Commission of enquiry could go into? He can put down the

issues which he wants to be adjudicated by the tribunal. To that extent, I think he can go.

Shri Dinen Bhattacharya: Some suggestions regarding safety measures have been given here. As a layman it is not possible for me to make useful observations on the measures suggested. But I know the history of the railways to some extent and so many assurances were given in the past and some enquiry committees were also set up to enquire about certain accidents. Some departmental enquiries were held and some good suggestions were given. How many of the suggestions and recommendations of the enquiry committees which were set up in the past have been implemented? An overall enquiry committee is needed, not only in respect of accidents, but for a total and thorough enquiry into the railway's functioning so that Parliament and the country may know where the disease lies and so that we can suggest some measures to check this sort of accidents happening regularly. Certain figures were given in the statement and it was said that accidents of minor nature were not mentioned here. Only last week, near Calcutta, at Dum Dum, a peculiar accident took place. Fortunately, it took place at the dead of night, otherwise there would have been catastrophe. Had the accident happened in the day-time, hundreds of lives would have been lost. You know there is a bridge just on one of the main thoroughfares of Dum Dum, the engine of a goods train, pushed against a buffer. There was a ditch or a pit on the bridge and the engine fell down headlong into that ditch, and the head of the engine touched the road under the bridge. The road was blocked for so many hours. This type of accidents also takes place. Is it of a minor nature? If I pass by the road, there is a chance of my being a victim of a railway accident without being a passenger of the train. This is the situation.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: The hon. Member's time is up. 15 minutes are over.

Accidents

Shri Dinen Bhattacharya: I shall finish very shortly. I have two or three things to say. We have heard of unmanned gates. In my area, on the Howrah-Burdwan section, you will find unfenced railway lines. Since the introduction of the electric traction, every day there are many cases of run-over. I know that the railway is not directly responsible for this. But can I not demand that there should be fencing at least in those places which are thickly populated so that there may not be any case of run-over? This is my suggestion and it must be looked into.

The Deputy Minister in the Ministry of Railways (Shri Shah Nawaz Khan): What happened to the fencing that the railway had put up?

Shri Dinen Bhattacharya: There is no fencing. You go there and you will see that I am correct. I live in that area and I know there is no fencing there. You know what the situation is, after the introduction of electric traction. The electric trains come without much sound and the people want to catch the train earlier and very often fall victims to the train accidents. That is why fencing is necessary.

Another thing to which I should like to invite your attention is this. I was saying about the work-load of railway men. I had in my mind the situation of the cabins at Serampore. You will admit that it is the busiest line. There, just three men have to manage the whole affair. There are four main lines, up and down. One cabin-man has to attend to duty for eight hours and it is physically impossible for a single cabin-man to manage four lines. That should be looked into. I hope the hon. Minister will enquire into it and see that things are improved there.

I have heard the analysis and explanation of the statement given by the hon. Minister. I do not know how the people will be satisfied with this statement. But I am not certainly satisfied. That is why I humbly

suggest that our to do justice to the departed souls who fell victims to the accidents under his regime, to give some consolation to the bereaved families, and to keep up the democratic traditions which were created when there were major accidents and Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri the then Railway Minister resigned. That step should be followed by our existing hon. Minister of Railways. I know that the resignation of the Minister is not a panacea, but at least our democratic tradition will be maintained by his resignation. With these few words, I conclude.

Shri Harish Chandra Mathur: Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, we discussed the railway accidents exclusively for two hours during the last session. Now again we are discussing them for five hours. It gives me no satisfaction to abuse or criticise the Railway Ministry or the administration or to shout at the Minister to resign when a major accident occurs and quote Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri's example. If you were to follow that advice, I think each one of us will have a turn to become the Railway Minister!

As a matter of fact, I think nobody must be feeling more unhappy than the railway administration and the Railway Minister himself at the rate of accidents which we are having though in the context in which he presented the entire picture, the Railway Minister wanted to give us the facts and figures to appreciate that nothing abnormal has happened during this period or during this year, and to show that the number of serious accidents and the number of casualties almost remains the same from year to year.

It may be construed from his speech that the state of affairs has to an extent improved, because, though the number of accidents remains almost at the same level, the number of trains which have been introduced and the traffic which is being carried on are much higher and larger. They are rising from year to year.

The hon. Minister also quoted certain figures from the U.K. and the U.S.A. to indicate that we compare quite favourably. I accept all that, though some hon. friends on this side pointed out that conditions in the U.K. and the U.S.A. are not comparable. I do not know in what respect, except that in the U.K. and the U.S.A. they have got highly mechanised things; they have opportunities to improve and they have opportunities for better training and, if in spite of better mechanism and better training, the number of accidents is still larger, the railways can with some justification claim credit on a comparative basis. But I do not know if the hon. Minister realises that even in the U.S.A. the rate of delinquency is three times more than in this country. If you were to take into account the figures for crime or juvenile delinquency in the U.S.A., you will find that there is nothing for us to compare with more prosperous countries where there is a lesser sense of responsibility. I think these comparisons are not very satisfactory and are invidious.

Apart from that, I would like the hon. Minister to tell us what the comparative position from year to year is, and what the comparative position with other countries is. May I ask him this square question: whether he is satisfied that the present position is inevitable, that there is not much scope for improvement and that whatever improvement was possible has been attended to. Is he himself satisfied with it? I want to know whether he is satisfied that all the necessary steps which could possibly be taken have already been taken. I think he will not be able to say that I will not go into these numerous accidents. Of course it is important to have an overall picture.

But I will only deal with those serious accidents of collision, averted collisions, derailments, etc. and try to impress upon the Minister that these are due to causes which, to a very great extent are avoidable. But my view is that we will not get a

correct position if we just examine only one picture of the railway administration, i.e. regarding accidents. My feeling is that accidents are just a symptom of a deeper malady, a deeper disease, from which the organisation is suffering. It is not as if everything else on the railway administration is going on very well and it is only on this particular aspect of accidents that something is really wrong. So what is necessary is not only a probe into these accidents, but to examine the entire working of the railway administration, what it is suffering from and what can be done about it.

There are certain factors which have to be taken note of. The railway administration has been burdened with ever-increasing responsibilities. The other day, I asked a question of the Railway Minister as to what was the work load on each zonal railway. The zonal railways had been carved out on certain standards and their efficiency bureau had submitted a report that each zone has got a particular work load of 160 units and when they found that the load was a little more, they bifurcated the railways. But according to the figures submitted by the Minister in answer to my question, I find that the work load on almost each railway zone is much beyond what the efficiency bureau would consider the level at which they will be able to function efficiently. It is much more and it is going to be much more during the third Plan, when the freight traffic is going to be almost doubled. We have not been told in this House as to how the railway administration is tackling this. This is bound to have an effect on the working of the railway administration. We must be taken into confidence.

I am myself, at the present juncture, not prepared to say much on this subject. The Railway Minister was kind enough to send me the information and material which I had asked for. He was good enough even to offer to me the assistance of some of his officers to let me understand

[Shri Harish Candra Mathur]

the subject more deeply. I am making a little study of the subject and I shall be able to ask for further assistance and material on the subject. But it is obvious to me that the working of the entire organisation has got to be examined in the context of various things.

Talking exclusively about railway accidents, I would submit that the Minister should examine one particular aspect. He has given us an over-all picture that the number of railway accidents is just the same from year to year. But if he makes a deeper probe, he will find that in a railway zone which has taken certain important steps, there has been a considerable fall in the number of accidents. There are certain other zones where the number has increased. I would like the Minister to give us the break-up of these railway accidents on each zone so that we may see whether the number of accidents is even on all the zones or whether the performance of certain zones has gone up and of certain others has gone down.

If my information is correct that the performance of certain railway zones has gone down, it is easily understandable that if the management is tightened and if there is a really sound man at the top, he will be able to improve the state of affairs. If you have a man who takes a *faissez faire* attitude or a routine attitude, in the matter, the number of accidents goes up. So, I feel that the first thing to be done is administrative tightening up and administrative efficiency. If you have the right man at the right place and if you give him proper authority to function freely and take immediate steps at the proper time, he will be able definitely to give you a much better account.

I am concerned only with giving certain suggestions to the Minister, so that he may be able to improve the railways. He should get periodic reports from each railway zone and

see that each General Manager is made to feel that he is under the direct eye of the Railway Minister. Each General Manager should apply the same principle to the Divisional Superintendents. I do not want that in the annual reports written by the General Managers about the Divisional Superintendents, they should only pass remarks about their promotion. I want that in the annual report of a Divisional Superintendent, entries should be made as to how he has conducted himself and what is the state of affairs of that particular division during a particular period when he was there, whether he has taken any personal interest in taking effective steps to see that the number of accidents goes down and efficiency increases. He must not be removed for at least three years. He must be permitted to stay there for a longer time so that he will be able to give a good account of his performance. If you transfer a man after six months, 1 year or 1 1/2 years, you cannot hold him responsible. I believe posts higher than Divisional Superintendent are selection posts. So, these promotions should go to those people who really give a first class performance of their division and not just in the ordinary and natural course. If the Divisional Superintendent knows that his future career is tied down to the performance which he gives of his particular division from year to year. I am sure he will take a personal interest in the matter.

I would also like to appeal to the Minister to strengthen the inspectorate. You will remember, Mr. Deputy-Speaker, that even in the Rajya Sabha I raised this point times without number regarding the Inspector of Railways. There was a move from the Railway Board to take over the Inspector of Railways from the Ministry of Transport under their direct control. I protested against it; I put question after question and eventually while Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri was Railway Minister, he agreed and they gave up that pro-

posal, so that the Inspector of Railways will continue to be under the Ministry of Transport and he could have an independent checking on the railways. That has happened. But, unfortunately, what I find is that his authority has been very considerably diluted. He does not make any impact as before. His inspections are not given that weight and that importance which they used to carry at an earlier time. This is something very wrong.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: The hon. Member should try to conclude now.

Shri Harish Chandra Mathur: Sir, five hours have been allotted for this discussion. I will take another ten minutes.

Shri Sonavane (Pandharpur): He has got many points.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: He has already taken 15 minutes.

Shri Harish Chandra Mathur: Sir, I would not like to repeat the causes which have been detailed by the hon. Minister for Railways. But, if you just divide the causes you will find that they fall into three categories. Firstly, as I said, there is the human failure. Secondly, there are the defects in the mechanical equipments and devices. One thing is very clear in my mind, that so far as the mechanical equipments and their maintenance are concerned, never before were our standards lower than they are today. This is reflected in every aspect of the administration. The maintenance is at its lowest. The mechanical equipments and the mechanical devices which are available to the railways are not maintained properly. It is not due to any lack of funds, but it is actually due to the lack of utilisation of the funds. Let the hon. Minister deny and say that the funds are used in full. They have not been able to utilise the funds that this Parliament has sanctioned. I do not think the Parliament would hesitate even for a moment to give them another Rs. 5 crores or Rs. 10

crores if that is necessary to provide all the necessary equipments to prevent the occurrence of these accidents.

The third thing is the human factor. As I told you, my hon. friend has mentioned about training. Training is absolutely essential. But, disciplinary action, as he said, is equally necessary. There should be power to take immediate disciplinary action on the spot. I do not know why the General Managers whom we pay Rs. 3,500, who are the senior-most men, are not given such powers.

Shri A. P. Sharma (Buxar): They have the powers to deal with these cases.

Shri Harish Chandra Mathur: They have not got the powers; that is the unfortunate fact. I would say that even the Divisional Superintendents, with this increase in the work load, should be made chota General Managers and they must also be given the authority to take immediate action and inject a sense of urgency in the minds of the people.

Regarding the drivers who are primarily to play a very important role in the working of the Railways, I want to point out one thing. Previously, well, I was concerned with the small State of Jodhpur. Though it used to be the fourth largest princely State in India, we had a railway of only 1400 miles. During those days every driver had a sort of attachment with the engine which he was driving. You must inculcate into these drivers a sort of personal attachment for the locomotive which he is manning and he must be made to take care of that locomotive. He will respond to that, but we have not inculcated the right psychology and the right background to our men who are directly concerned with it.

Well, Mr. Deputy-Speaker, I have various other points to make, but in due deference to your wishes and because there are many other hon. Members who would like to participate in this discussion I close my speech.

Accidents

श्रीमती वसंत कुबरी (कंसरगंज) :
उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, भारतीय रेलवे में हुई दुर्घटनाएं, जिन पर आज इस सदन में वाद-विवाद हो रहा है, बड़ी ही दुःखद है। जैसा कि सभी को ज्ञात है, पिछले दो महीनों में कितनी ही रेल-दुर्घटनाएं हुईं, जिन में करीब १५० व्यक्ति हताहत हुए और न मालूम कितने लोगों को इन दुर्घटनाओं के द्वारा क्षति पहुंची।

इन में सबसे भयंकर दुर्घटना ३० जुलाई, १९६२ ई० को पिटार के इमराव स्टेशन पर अमृतसर-दुधड़ा मेल के एक खड़ी मालगाड़ी से टकरा जाने से हुई जिस में अनेकों महिलाओं के माथे का सिंदूर धुल गया और न मालूम कितने माता-पिता अपनी प्रिय मन्तानों से सदैव के लिए हाथ धो बैठे। इस के प्रतिरिक्त दोनों इंजनों और डिब्बों के चकनाचूर हो जाने से देश की लाखों रुपये की हानि हुई। इस तरह हम देखते हैं कि गत दो महीनों में इतनी ट्रेन दुर्घटनाएं हो चुकी हैं कि जिन का औसत हर चौथे दिन एक दुर्घटना का होता है।

गत १० अगस्त को भी उत्तर प्रदेश में नल्हीर स्टेशन के पास एक और दुर्घटना हुई; जिस में रेल के २२ डिब्बे उलट गये और फलस्वरूप १२ घंटे के लिए यातायात ठप रहा। परन्तु इस दुर्घटना में कुशल यह रही कि मालगाड़ी ही के डिब्बे उलटे।

इन दुर्घटनाओं से देश के धन-जन को कितनी हानि पहुंचती है, यह किसी से छिपा नहीं है। हमारी सरकार हर एक दुर्घटना पर एक जांच-आयोग नियुक्त कर देती है। बहुत से आयोग बिठाये गये, परन्तु रेल दुर्घटनाएं दिन-प्रति-दिन बराबर बढ़ती ही जा रही हैं। सरकार और रेलवे मंत्रालय का मुख्य कर्तव्य है कि वे इन दुर्घटनाओं को रोकने का प्रयत्न करें। वे दुर्घटना हो जाने पर केवल जांच आयोग नियुक्त कर के संतोष न कर लें, बल्कि इन ट्रेन-दुर्घटनाओं को रोकें।

दुर्घटनाएं प्रायः रेलवे कर्मचारियों की लापरवाही के कारण होती हैं, जिस का मुख्य कारण शासन का ढीलापन है। यदि शासक ढीला है, तो यह स्वाभाविक है कि कर्मचारीगण भी ढीले हो जायेंगे और काम खराब होगा। इस लिए मेरा कहना है कि जांच के पश्चात् जो कर्मचारी दोषी पाये जायें, उनको बिना किसी भेद-भाव के कड़े से कड़ा दंड मिलना चाहिए, क्योंकि उन की जरा सी लापरवाही के कारण हजारों व्यक्तियों का जीवन तथा धन खतरे में पड़ जाता है।

उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, इन दुर्घटनाओं की जिम्मेदारी से, जो इतने भयंकर रूप में और इतनी अधिक संख्या में हो रही हैं, रेल मंत्री महोदय अपने को कदापि मुक्त नहीं कह सकते। जब रेलवे का प्रबन्ध हमारे रेल मंत्री महोदय को सौंपा गया, तो यह आशा थी कि उन के शासन-काल में इस विभाग का कार्य मुचारू रूप से चलेगा और उन्नति करेगा, परन्तु हमें यह कहने में दुःख है कि हमारी आशाएं निराशाओं में परिणत हो गई और आज आये-दिन रेल-दुर्घटनाएं हो रही।

अब मैं इस विषय पर अधिक न कह कर अन्त में केवल इतना ही कहना चाहती हूँ कि यदि हमारे रेल मंत्री महोदय किसी कारणवश यह कार्य-भार मुचारू रूप से सम्हालने में असमर्थ हैं, तो उन्हें सर्वथा यही उचित है कि वह स्वयं त्यागपत्र दे कर मुक्त हो जायें, ताकि किसी अन्य मंत्री द्वारा यह कार्य ठीक तौर से किया जा सके।

Shri Hanumanthaiya: Sir, as my hon. friend Shri Harish Chandra Mathur said, it is very difficult to make all the points one has in his mind during the course of 15 minutes. Nevertheless, we have to do it. I would, therefore, take only one point. That point, though it was in my mind,

came up very prominently when the hon. Member belonging to the Communist Party opened the debate by already preparing a sort of defence in advance for some categories of railwaymen. As the hon. Railway Minister says, there are 11 lakhs of railways organised into various sectors. There is the sector of management, consisting of the officers of the Railway Board and others, Divisional Managers and upwards. There is a large percentage of railwaymen called railway labourers, organised under various names in various zones. I do not make any distinction between the political affiliations of these organised railwaymen. For the purpose of this debate, I would call them organised labour.

Every one of us is very enthusiastic in blaming the Ministers, the Government, as is easily done. Besides, they are before our eyes. That is the temptation. Whenever we make criticisms or suggestions, they must be, as I have been pleading, on non-partisan basis and in an objective manner so that our administration may improve and the safety and well-being of our people is guaranteed.

This House has passed several legislative enactments, guaranteeing all kinds of rights and amenities to organised labour. I was one of the Members of the Provisional Parliament which passed innumerable laws in this direction. Then we were all happy that we were able to concede so many rights and amenities to organised labour. A time has now come for us to consider whether organised labour has come up to our expectations in the matter of discharging its duties. Many a time organised labour is found to be more interested in trade unionism than in the welfare of the railways, in the proper and efficient management of the railways or in the people at large.

The slogan of the trade union and the political party of my hon. friend, Shri Bhattacharya, is "workers of the world, unite". Against whom? Against the common man. Whenever they

ask for increase in their emoluments, or guarantee for their rights or safeguards against punishment or victimisation, as they call it, in a way, they will be uniting themselves against the common man. I have hardly listened to a speech on the floor of this House, fixing the responsibility squarely on the organised labour. Not that the others are entirely free from responsibility. If Ministers are responsible, if the Railway Board is responsible, much more responsible is organised labour, specially in a socialist pattern of society. Because in a socialist pattern of society the masters are also the people who work. It is also their responsibility. Therefore, let nobody run away with the impression that it is the officers of the railway and the Ministers that are solely to be blamed. Unfortunately, for the last one decade or more, debates have taken place here as though the sole culprits are the officers and the Ministers. We have completely forgotten the responsibility of organised labour, because they have innumerable votes and we were afraid that they may vote against us in the next general elections. These are considerations which ought to be given up from our minds once and for all if we are to play our part truthfully and effectively as representatives of the nation, not of this party or that party, or this political affiliation or that affiliation.

I had to travel by train about two months ago from Bangalore to Coimbatore when some of the railway problems struck my mind forcefully. From that day onwards I have begun to take interest in the working of the railways. Formerly, I never used to travel by train. I used to travel by car if it was a short distance, or by plane if it was a long distance. So, it was years since I ceased to travel by train. During this train journey at a station called Erode, the guard went on whistling three or four times and the train did not start. I was sitting in the compartment. They did not know my identity. I went out and asked the guard why the train

[Shri Hanumanthaiya]

had not started even though he had waved the flag and whistled thrice. He said that the engine had not warmed up. When I asked why, then did he whistle he could not answer. He then told me privately that many a time this happens because the drivers do not obey his whistle. At the subsequent station also I went on making enquiries. There is not that co-ordination which is needed between worker and worker and department and Department even at the lowest level. It may be that by the educational process, as the hon. Minister has stated, we may be able to make the officer class, the educated class, come up to the highest pitch of efficiency but, so far as the workers are concerned, there is a good deal of chaos, a good deal of consciousness of their rights which has led to indiscipline. In many cases, the officers are afraid of the railwaymen. Many a time, railwaymen, the organised labour, may have a grievance or may not have a grievance but the amount of discipline that is necessary is not there, the amount of obedience that is necessary for efficient management of our railways is not there. It is this aspect that ought to be tackled very seriously.

As you know, Sir, very often I do not think in the routine way. It may be my fault but, nevertheless, I venture to make a suggestion to this hon. House which may not be accepted today but will be accepted in times to come. When 74 people die at Dum room if the railway laws and procedure merely permit the appointment of a committee, or issuing of notices, that is not a satisfactory and effective way of making people know their responsibility. I would urge that in the changed circumstances, where there is no longer a capitalist society but a socialist society, guilt is not solely what is called theft or injury inflicted upon another. The greatest guilt is offence against society; the greatest guilt is offence against people who are expected to be faithfully served by the paid class of society. Here are

11 lakhs of people whom we pay to carry us safely and in proper time to our destination. They do not do any charitable work to the rest of the population; they are expected to do their duty. If they do not do their duty, they ought to be punished; not in the way enumerated in the list, namely, that a notice has been issued or they have been suspended. That is not the punishment the tears and sight and sufferings of the relatives of the 74 people call for. As I said on a previous occasion, these offences must be made capital offences.

Shri Bhagwat Jha Azad (Bhagalpur): 302.

Shri Hanumanthaiya: The labour laws, if necessary, and the Indian Penal Code, in particular, ought to be amended and anybody who is responsible directly or indirectly, willingly or negligently, for the death of any person must be held guilty of murder. It should be for him to plead before a court of law if there is any extenuating circumstance. If there is, a lesser punishment. It should be for the court of law to determine. So far as the Government machinery is concerned, so far as the public prosecutors' wing or that branch of Government is concerned, they must haul up everyone who is responsible for the death of a person for murder.

If I give a little piece of advice I may not be misunderstood for vanity. There is a dictum that no government can run efficiently unless there is, what is called, fear and respect for authority or for the person who exercises authority. If it is purely respect, it becomes, what is called, the goody-goody Government of Bharat, as we say.

Shri Harish Chandra Mathur: It can never be respected.

Shri Hanumanthaiya: It is purely fear, it becomes a tyranny. It is a harmonious combination of these two

elements, fear and respect, that will give us good government. It is with this view that I am making this suggestion in all honesty and sincerity that our law should be amended so as to make every offence against life and society a capital offence.

Shri A. P. Jain (Tumkur): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, railway accidents are a matter of grave concern and rightly so as on many an occasion they involve danger to human life. Of late figures have been given in this House which go to indicate that quite a large number of persons have lost their lives and others have been injured seriously or lightly. It is, therefore, but befitting that this House should take serious notice of railway accidents and debate them once, debate them twice over and debate them many a time. In fact, if I have been able to understand the trend of the hon. Minister correctly, he has welcomed this debate because, for one thing, he has been able to put the viewpoint of the railways before this House and, for the other, he has been able to understand the feeling of others.

Having said so much, we must be clear in our minds that no amount of shouting and denouncing will improve the working of the railways. Some hon. Members here interrupted the hon. Minister when he was giving figures of railway accidents in previous years and in other countries. To my mind they are both very relevant figures because when we judge the efficiency of the railways we have to do it in the background of the working conditions that exist, namely, what had been happening in the past and what is happening in other countries. It does not necessarily mean that there is an exact parallel between the railways here and the railways abroad. Nonetheless, the figures which the hon. Minister has given, lead us to one inevitable conclusion, that is that in a mechanised and fast running transport, like the railways, a certain number of accidents are unavoidable.

It should be an endeavour on our part to lessen the number of those accidents; but we have to put up with them against our wishes. Sir, with the modern developments in technology, our machines have reached a high degree of perfection. Even so while the astronauts have circled round several times and come down to earth, while mechanism has reached a high stage of perfection, yet more conditions in which our railways are working. I am afraid, the contention of the hon. Minister that some accidents have to be put up with cannot be ignored.

The Indian Railways during the war were greatly exhausted. I am glad that during the First and Second Plans some renewal and renovation has been done and the railways are in a much better state of repair. Even so, our railways are over-burdened. They have to carry a much larger number of persons than has been provided for. In fact, the expectations of the Planning Commission in regard to passenger traffic have been exceeded and the railways are overcrowded. Sometimes, they have to run more trains than what the track could reasonably bear.

Then, the freight traffic has also increased much beyond expectation. Therefore, you cannot lay the blame wholly on the railways for some of the minor accidents that have been happening. There have been some major accidents about which we feel very sorry, which perhaps could have been avoided and with a better administration which, I think, will be avoided. Even so, I think the picture is not so gloomy as some Members have tried to draw it.

The hon. Member, Shri Bhattacharya said—I will repeat his words—that accidents are increasing daily. We are sorry for the accidents. Even if their number is stationary, we would like it to go down we would like that there should be no accidents; but it is overdrawing the picture, particularly, in the face of the facts and figures which the hon. Minister has given us

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when he said that accidents are ever on the increase. He went on further to say that people who get into the compartment of a train do not know whether they will reach their destination. These are all exaggerated statements which are not going to do any good to the country. They can spread panic but they are not going to improve the administration. We find that the traffic is ever on the increase and therefore this statement to say the least, is overdrawing the picture.

The hon. Member, Shri Bhattacharya, raised a very fundamental question. He said that something must be done to avoid accidents. We are all one with him. The hon. Minister also wants accidents to be avoided. Everyone of the hon. Members present in this House want that there should be no accidents. But what, after all are the suggestions that he has put forward? He has put forward only three suggestions. One is that there should be an overall inquiry. It is a valuable suggestion. I hope the hon. Minister will give full thought to it because accidents are nothing by themselves, they are only a part of the railway administration—some of its failings and weaknesses—and unless the railway administration is tightened in all its aspects and facets accidents cannot be eliminated altogether. The other two suggestions which he made were to put up fencing and to increase the number of cabinmen. If these things could eliminate accidents, it is a very easy thing. But the thing is not so simple.

My hon. friend, Shri Mathur, has made some very valuable suggestions. One of his suggestions to which I would like to lend my support is that the working of the different zones should be studied. It is a fact that in some of the zones the working conditions of the railways are better. There are fewer accidents there while in the other zones there are more accidents. Here is something which can provide us with instances or examples and precept. What one railway zone

is capable of achieving, the other railway zones are also capable of achieving. Therefore I would request the hon. Minister to give some thought to it. He should have a comparative study of accidents and relevant things done in the different zones to find out how or why it is that one zone is doing better than the other zone because, after all, the conditions are almost the same everywhere.

My hon. friend has also made another suggestion and that is in regard to the tightening of the administration. The hon. Minister has said that the penal aspect is an important one. It is an important one. But what happens is that by the time the decision is taken, much of the time has elapsed, and the effectiveness of the penal action disappears.

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The hon. Minister has given us figures of the number of accidents that have taken place in a particular year, I think, 1960-61, and he has also given us the figure in regard to the number of cases in which action has been taken. Proportionately, it was a good performance, but we do not know whether in important cases, action was quickly taken. I think that there is a good case for the devolution of authority not to the minor officials who may victimise the pointsmen, signallers and others, but to fairly well-placed officers who can take a dispassionate view but who can at the same time also take effective action;

There is another thing to which I would like to draw the attention of the hon. Minister. At present, there is a system under which in each accident a separate inquiry is held. The inquiry may be through an inspector; in certain cases, it may be also through a High Court judge. So far as that goes, that is all right. But these inquiries will never eliminate or substantially reduce the occurrence of accidents.

I have seen a press interview given by Dr. Kunzru, chairman of the railway accidents inquiry committee, and who has said that he had collected all the reports of the inquiries and found out the causes of accidents and got them classified. He is trying to work out a report on the basis of the reports which he will discuss with the railway authorities and others and then make his recommendations. The method which Dr. Kunzru has followed gives us certain lessons. I would suggest to the hon. Minister that there should be a bureau of research, which should keep in constant touch with the accidents occurring, and which should function in a scientific and technical manner. This bureau must be manned by very highly qualified persons, men whose position and whose knowledge can exercise influence on railwaymen who and who may also inspire confidence among the public; they should keep themselves constantly in touch with the causes of accidents and suggest technological and other improvements. I make this suggestion in the hope that it will be given proper and due consideration, because I am one of those who believe that modern technology today has reached a stage where almost anything is possible, and accidents and mishaps can be avoided to a very large extent, but only when things are properly organised. I do not think that an inspector, whether he is under the Ministry of Transport or under the Ministry of Railways or even supposing he is put under the charge of some High Court where no influence works upon him, is the proper type of person to find out the real causes or to make a really satisfactory recommendation for the improvement of the working of the railways. So far as personal responsibility of individuals in respect of a particular accident is concerned, it will have to be inquired into separately. But so far as the technical defects and other specialised reasons which account for these accidents are concerned, the bureau of research will do it.

There is also the question of over-worked people. We cannot ignore that fact. Now, with the faster speed and the better mechanism with which the railways are run, better locomotives, better engines such as diesel engines, electrical engines etc., and better and improved signals, superior and more vigilant human skill is needed. If we over-work men, if we over-work a driver, or a signalman, there is always something to be said for them. Therefore, it is essential that railwaymen should not be overworked because they have to handle specialised machinery. They must also get proper training. I am not fully acquainted with the type of training provided to signalmen and others. Initially, as regards the type of men that are to be recruited, since we are having more mechanisation and better types of equipment, it is necessary to recruit educated persons of higher calibre. These persons must have proper and sufficiently long training; there must also be in-service training, so that they may keep at least with the developing needs.

So far as fixing of personal responsibility is concerned, we know that it is not always an easy thing. We have talked about it several times. When an inquiry into a railway accident is made, we try to fix the personal responsibility of individual railwaymen. But I do not think that our methods of inquiry is sufficiently developed to fix personal responsibility. I want that a railwayman should feel that he is the trustee looking after the welfare of millions and millions of passengers who are travel by trains and who have entrusted their life and safety into his hands, and he must feel personally responsible. If he does not, then he must be adequately dealt with.

Finally, I would say a word about unmanned level-crossings. A large number of questions have been asked about this matter. The system of unmanned level-crossings prevails all over the world. Only this morning, we were informed that there were as

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many as 19,000 unmanned level-crossings. While every effort should be made to man the unmanned gates, wherever it is found necessary and feasible, it is necessary at the same time that our motor drivers and lorry drivers everybody who drives a fast-moving vehicle on the road must develop a sense of responsibility. They must also be properly trained. There is no reason why a motor driver or a truck driver should not know that the train is coming.

This morning, I was really surprised to hear a statement from the Deputy Minister of Railways. He said that he was going on the road, and found that one truck driver and one bus driver were standing face to face, humps to bumper, and would not move backwards. So, both were standing on the railway line. And the Deputy Minister had to get down and ask them to move. If that is the sense of responsibility on the part of these motor drivers and truck drivers, how can we blame the Railway Administration? It is a wonderful thing that the truck driver and the bus driver should both be standing on the railway line, with the imminent danger of being crushed.

A suggestion was made that at unmanned level-crossings the motor drivers should halt and proceed. That is a system which is being followed in certain parts of the country. When a bus driver or a lorry driver or a truck driver passes a level-crossing, he must first stop and then only move, and if he does not stop, he must made be legally punishable.

Shri Hanumanthaiya: There can also be another thing, namely traffic islands. Just as we have these traffic islands in the cities and towns, likewise, we can have circles on either side of the railway line, so that the speed of the truck or the lorry or bus would automatically get reduced.

Shri A. P. Jain: There can be various devices, but my point is that in a poor country like ours, we cannot do

away with these unmanned level-crossings. Some simple device should be found out to improve matters, and a greater responsibility must be thrown upon the users of the road also. We cannot blame the railways every time simply because the user of the road has not taken the necessary precautions.

There may be many other points, but my time is up, and I would not like to encroach upon your indulgence any more.

Sri Hem Barua Gauhati: As the House assembled for this session, there came the tragic news of the accident at Dumraon in which 72 persons were killed and 54 injured. I do not want to deal with it because an Inquiry Committee has been appointed and it is inquiring into the matter. But this is one of the major accidents that has taken place in this country, and before the memory of the accident at Dhanbad and Jaipur faded, there is this tragedy at Dumraon.

This shows that there is something rotten, I would say, in the railway administration. I do not want the Minister to indulge in full-throated self-praise and to say that the performance of the Indian railways is one of the best in the world and to produce certificates from foreign sources, British sources or from the World Bank sources or from Swiss sources. I will request him to admit facts, modest as he is, and then adopt measures to remedy this evil. The matter has brought shame and distress so far as this country is concerned. What do we find in reality? Whatever the foreign sources might say, whatever compliments they may pay to the railways for their performance, whether those compliments are related to facts or not, the travelling public know, because they have their own experience and this experience has given rise to suspicions, and these suspicions are deep-rooted in the minds of the people.

Therefore, I do not want this debate to turn into a battle of wits. I do not want the Minister to side-track issues and to try to score a debating point here or there. Therefore, I say that he should admit facts and then try to remedy this cancerous development in our railway system.

It is a fact that accidents have become chronic so far as the Indian railways are concerned. The Minister himself has admitted while introducing the motion that there are 9,000 accidents every year and he has categorised them. This shows that accidents are chronic with our railway system. In 1961, there was a survey conducted into the number of accidents and we find that during the first six months of that year there were as many as 1,893 accidents. There was the Shahnawaz Committee which made a survey. According to that committee, during January 1, 1953 to January 10, 1954, there were as many as 3,282 accidents.

I do not want to waste the time of the House by giving a numerical enumeration of the accidents because they are too well known and the Minister himself categorised them. He has given a very fat number of accidents that annually take place in our country. But I would tell him that somehow or other this has brought disgrace to our railway system. It has brought disgrace to the country itself. Therefore, I want that he should try to gear up his administration to a point where it has to be serious in dealing with these accidents.

He has detailed some precautionary measures. But I do not think these precautionary measures are enough because these have not succeeded in doing away with or reducing the number of accidents that we have in this country.

In the statement the Minister presented to us the other day, there is listed an accident which occurred on the North-Eastern Railway on 30th

June, 1962. What about this accident? It took place because of the 'displacement of spring plates due to absence of set screw on spring buckles'. This pinpoints the question: whenever a wagon is taken out or an engine is taken out, is it properly examined or not? This is a very important point. If it is not properly examined, then I say that it is a crime committed on the travelling public.

Then another matter has to be inquired into; namely, the incidence of accidents consequent on a certain screw missing, a certain bolt missing and so on. Therefore, the question arises whether before an engine or wagon is taken out, these things are properly examined or not, whether it is seen that spare parts exist or not, and if the spare parts exist, whether they are made available to the party concerned or not. I would say that the accidents detailed here could be averted with a little more care and caution exercised on the part of the railway administration. But somehow or other, there is no attempt like that. When I speak of the 'railway administration', I do not mean only those people who are high up at the escalator. According to me, the administration embraces a much wider ambit.

It is a fact that often drivers have been forced to accept engines about which they have complained. They find that there are certain defects. They refuse to take such engines. But in spite of that, they are forced to take out such engines. I remember some years back there was an incident at Calcutta. A railway train that was to carry most of the office-goers came late. What happened? The office-goers missed their offices. As a result, the crowd surrounded the driver of the engine and pelted stones at him. Then he was bleeding. I do not approve of the conduct of that crowd. But a crowd is a crowd everywhere. Then what happened? A reporter of the *Statesman* met the driver and interviewed him. The driver said

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very revealing things. He said: "At the time of taking out this railway engine, I told the loco shed people that there was some pipe leaking. The loco shed people said to me: 'Take it out and just manage'. I tried to manage with this engine. It misbehaved on the way all through. As a result of that, see what has happened to me. As a result of that, I have to face the odium". His head was bleeding.

There are instances like this. You cannot water down the gravity of the situation by making a few statements or by piling up such statistics in this House. The situation remains and the gravity of the situation has to be faced squarely. It cannot be, it must not be, watered down like that. I would say this a hundred times.

It is a fact that there is no major check or major control. The drivers must not be allowed to take out engines about which they complain. It does not matter whether the defect is a major one or a minor one. In any case, the driver must not be allowed to take out an engine whenever there is a disability of the sort of sub-standard vacuum pressure. Minor disabilities can be attended to with care and caution. But what is happening in this country? Even these minor things are not attended to. I have cited the instance of the driver in Calcutta, who had to face the odium because the complaint that he made about the engine he was asked to handle was not attended to. I would say the railway administration does not have the moral right to play football with the destiny of the travelling public. But that is what is happening in this country. 15 accidents in a row in the course of 41 days! It might be said that these are minor accidents. Whatever that might be, accidents are accidents. You do not characterise accidents like that.

Coming to the N.E. Railway accident, it occurred because three

wagons derailed by all wheels and the engine derailed and capsized'. It might be that the wagons capsize or the engine capsizes because of the defective track. What is our experience? The tracks are in a poor state. They are worn out. It is said that upto 31st March, 1960, only 4,173 miles of tracks were renewed. What about the rest? What about providing cushion ballast under the sleepers? What about the sleepers themselves? Will the Minister give us statistics about the renewal of sleepers and renewal of track? I am very happy to know one thing. Very recently, on the 9th July, the Minister made a statement at Madras. This is what he said about the importance of renewal of tracks, which is a very fine thing, and I congratulate him on that:

"We have to keep the wheels moving at a certain speed and the tracks should be able to take heavier loads."

I am glad that the new Minister of Railways has realised the importance of renewing the tracks. Wheels need roads or rails to move on, and even steel is not invincible to the shocks of wear and tear, and that is why this is a problem that has to be attended to with all care and caution, but the precautionary measures that were dished out to us some time back do not contain an iota of suggestion so as to improve the tracks or so as to replace the worn-out tracks.

Now, what about the engines? Some of the engines—I will not say most of the engines because here an engine derailed—are over-aged. On the admission of the Minister I can say that 25.4 per cent of the engines on the broad gauge are over-aged, and 19 per cent of the engines on the metre gauge are over-aged. This is what he himself said some time back while replying to the debate last time. What can you do with these over-aged engines? What about the

repairs? The repairs are entrusted to people who are not technically suitable or who are not technically trained. Here, I would quote the report of the Basu Committee. The Committee says a very significant thing, but this has not been attended to, the precautionary measures do not contain it. The Basu Committee says:

"Compared with the revenues earned, Indian Railways, even with all the recent expansions, are not spending any considerable amount in training their staff. The American Railroads, we find, lay a good deal of emphasis on training as means of increasing efficient performance and they have not grudged the expenditure involved."

So, how can you with over-aged engines hope to avoid accidents? When your child is ill, you want a good doctor; you do not want statistics of doctors and nurses that a hospital might possess. When there is a disease like that, a cancerous disease of accidents in this country, we want good engines and good men, technically competent men, who can look after the health of the engines; we do not want statistics of men who work in the loco sheds.

Often it is said that accidents are due to human failures, and as far as I know, the preliminary report on the Dumraon accident also says that this tragedy occurred due to human failure, but what about the drivers and firemen? The driver and firemen have no fixed time for rest, no fixed time for work, at times they are forced to work ten hours at a stretch. They live away from their families, live in the running rooms where conditions are not very satisfactory, I would say they are wretched. This human aspect is never taken into account. The drivers are exhausted because of overwork, because of fatigue.

I would put it in a different way. The drivers are exhausted, the tracks

are worn out, the engines are over-aged. Against this background, how can you hope to avoid accidents? On worn-out and dilapidated tracks, drivers are forced to overwork, are forced to drive over-aged engines, and the human body has certain limits. The driver's human body has these limits also. Under these circumstances, it is difficult to avoid accidents, and these are the facts that have to be taken note of, but in the precautionary measures I do not find any of these measures.

There are five accidents, the Minister said, so far as level-crossings are concerned. There are 19,000 level-crossings in this country, no doubt, but at the time of the construction of the level-crossings, only the classification is taken up, and then in our country because of the Five Year Plans or because of other factors, road traffic is growing in volume. That is never taken into account. Only when there is some sort of accident against road traffic at an unmanned level-crossing, the railway administration wakes up and tries to categorise it, put it into a new classification. This will not do. I would go a step further and say that if possible there should be an attempt to categorise, re-classify level-crossings, and they ought to be manned as far as possible. I know that we do not have the money, but this is also a fact that the railways are earning a substantial revenue. When the railways are earning a substantial revenue and are neglecting their primary functions, I would say that this is very bad for the country and bad for the administration also.

There is a very funny thing here, about action taken, and this was mentioned by a friend.

There was an accident on the South Eastern Railway. And, under the column, 'Action Taken', it is written like this: 'Driver was killed'. And the hon. Minister tried to explain it away as a mistake, a typing mistake. But the little bit of knowledge of English I have never made me spell

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it out like that. How could that have been typed incorrectly? The driver was not killed. He was not there. He was dead. How could it be a typing mistake? You can correct it in any way; you can re-type it in any way. You can do anything, I say. (*Interruption*).

May I say, what happened, indulging in a personal matter? (*Interruption*). My wife asked me, a little idiotically of course, 'Why is it that the driver was killed? Are not accidents an Act of God. Could not the Railway Administration find out some better action against the driver?' Now, I do not complain against the Railway Administration for subjecting me to this tortuous questioning. But, I would say a hundred times that this very fact epitomises the inefficiency of the Railway Administration. There is no doubt about it. (*Interruption*).

An Hon. Member: What did you tell your wife?

Shri Hem Barua: I tried to explain the thing. Einstein tried to explain the theory of relativity to his wife; and she told Pressmen that in spite of the best efforts that her husband took, she could not be made to understand the theory of relativity. Similarly, in spite of my best efforts I could not convey the mind of the Railway Administration to my wife because she is not as intelligent as most of the Delhi women are.

Shri N. Sreekantan Nair (Quilon): God save us from such wives!

Shri Hem Barua: Accidents occur and then enquiries are conducted. But, what about this enquiry? What about railwaymen giving evidence before the Enquiry Committee? There is always a sort of concoction, a misrepresentation of facts. Why is it? Because the railway employees who are asked to give evidence before committees like that suffer from a perpetual fear; and that fear is,

action against them. I would request the Minister to see that this fear is removed so that the truth may come out.

Towards the conclusion I would say that the Administration must be alert; must try to avoid accidents, must take more vigorous remedial measures; and whenever any complaints are made about defects or about shortages, the Administration must be made to see that these defects or shortages are removed.

I would say another thing. The other day, a certain Member demanded the resignation of the Railway Minister. I would not demand the resignation of the Railway Minister on the analogy of Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri. I have always thought that Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri's resignation was more or less a politically chivalrous gesture. And, I do not want the present Railway Minister to indulge in that sort of politically chivalrous gesture. He is a tall person; he has great capacity, he is capable of hard work. I only hope and trust that he would be able to streamline his Administration instead of resigning.

But I have also felt that Sardar Swaran Singh is an unlucky man and my sympathies go to him. (*Interruption*). He is unlucky because wherever he lays his fingers on the thing starts burning. And, that is why I have always felt like that. I would only beg of him to infuse his strength, infuse his courage, infuse his vision into the Railway Administration. What has happened is a legacy of the past because these accidents are not accidents of today. There is a legacy behind the accident; that legacy ought to be removed and a better administration should be given to the country so that the travelling public may feel a sense of security.

Dr. K. L. Rao (Vijayawada): Mr. Chairman, accidents are a natural

corollary to the adoption of increased speeds in the modern world introduced by cars, locomotives and aeroplanes. Last year I saw in Tokyo, boards put up at important places showing the number of dead and injured daily so as to remind the people of the dangers of road traffic and need for careful driving. Deaths of course occur due to the violation of one's own body's system or due to ill-feelings that enter between people and due to carelessness but in the train accidents, innocent people die for no fault of their own and that gives us a sense of sorrow and resentment. Accidents could be reduced by technical progress and by a process of increasing human efficiency. It should be our endeavour to discuss constantly about these problems, not only on occasions like this, but periodically so that if any bright ideas come up, the hon. Minister can apply and the accidents may be averted.

A moving train has got a lot of power. A moving train of a thousand tons with forty miles speed has got power equal to two times the amount of electrical power utilised by the Delhi Electric Supply system, when there was no shedding. Such a large amount of energy, if it is planned and utilised, can give good results but spent in an unplanned way, it results in destruction. Collisions take the largest amount of human toll. There is no other way to avoid them except to introduce more mechanisation and more scientific methods of control and avoid as far as possible human operations. That is what is being done in western countries. They are making use of electronics and modern science and these controls are operated by very few persons so that big mistakes are not coming in. At this stage, I may say that accidents in England and other countries are due to different reasons, due to increased speeds, fog and so on. That is entirely a different aspect. So, it should be our aim to gradually introduce these mechanical devices so as to reduce human factors as far as possible to

avoid collisions. In Dumaraon the accident could have been avoided if we had the track circuit system. The system consists in setting up a parallel electrical circuit along the rails and when a train or wagon stands on rails there is short-circuit and a red light is shown up in the cabin room and in the room of the station master so that they immediately know that the track is occupied and nobody would give a signal or clearance for that line. Of course one of the reasons generally adduced against this system is that we are short of wooden sleepers because wooden sleepers are required wherever this system is introduced. But I understand that there are excellent species of wood, apart from sal, in Indian forests which can supply the whole timber required for the sleepers in this country. Of course it is necessary that we should have planned afforestation because these wood require as much as 70-100 years to grow before they could be used as sleepers. So, we should have planned afforestation for the sake of railway sleepers so that the coming generations do not abuse us that we have been wasting the forest wealth without replenishing.

Many hon. Members have referred to the accidents and collisions at the un-manned gates. That is a very difficult problem. There is no easy way of dealing with it. Of course, we can provide over-bridges. That should be our aim whenever the traffic shows a tendency to increase. Our attention must immediately go towards a progressive scheme of putting up over-bridges as far as possible in these cases. At present, the authorities have got a tendency to enter into arguments about agreements relating to sharing of costs and all that. That should not be the aim. There should be a liberal attitude in this respect. But at the moment, in view of the large number of un-manned gates that we have, I suggest that we should have a combination of various devices which I submit below, departments require specialised staff.

[Shri K. L. Rao]

Firstly, these approach roads must be undulated and, as my hon. friend suggested, they must have islands on both sides so that the speed of traffic is reduced to a safe level. Secondly, the crew of the train must be asked to give the whistle from a mile ahead. It may be a nuisance, but it does not matter. Nuisance of this kind is much better than loss of lives. Thirdly, we must provide gates of such a design that they have got to be lifted up but within a short interval of time the gates come back to a closed position. In my humble opinion, if you design the gates properly it will be possible to do that. Lastly, we should provide a series of boards, not one or two, but many so as to attract the people's eyes to the fact that there is an unmanned gate ahead. For this, you may require the assistance of the road authorities and the Railways may have to contribute something. But the sign-boards that are put up must be conspicuous and attract the attention of the people. You must have a series of sign-boards. Thus, we require a combination or series of these various devices to avert collisions at unmanned level-crossings.

The other important reason which causes a large amount of damage to life and property, is the derailment. Derailment results either from the defect in rolling-stock or from a track defect. More often, it is because of rolling-stock. Therefore, we should have excellent machine-shop factories. That, I think, the railway administration can manage, by placing a little more emphasis on the establishment of a large number of workshops and expansion of these shops, and giving all the facilities for the examination of the rolling-stock.

One of the very important reasons for these unfortunate accidents is the parting of trains due to failure of draw-bars. The parting defect is due to the failure of draw-bars. The draw-bars are subject to a large amount of strain by pushing and pul-

ling. They are subject to these various stresses and are one of the weak links. The best way to get over these defects is to replace the draw-bars often and as far as possible by careful management and by ensuring that one bar, after being used say, for 100 or 200 times, is thrown away automatically. Thus, parting of the trains can be avoided.

Then, the next point that I would like to submit is that statistical analysis may be made of the frequency of derailments. We must know which are the tracks that are very bad; for example, Bangalore-Arsikere, Gudur-Nellore, Mughalsarai-Gomoh and also, I think, Delhi-Agra where the traffic is heavy and derailments often cause a large amount of damage. We have to pay particular attention to such lines so that the accidents due to track defects may not occur in these regions.

There is one thing. In the Deccan plateau, there are a lot of streams flashing across. They bring plenty of water especially in the rainy season. There is no use of being afraid of them. I think we are trying to show that we should enlarge the culverts and so on. That is not necessary. But what is required is, a very careful vigilance. A lot of vigilance is required on the lines in Deccan plateau, in the rainy season, over the culverts and the bridges and the embankments to ensure that there is no danger caused to the train. The lack of vigilance, I think, is a contributory cause to quite a large number of accidents.

For all these things, research must be made to which my hon. friend Shri A. P. Jain has referred. Research is a very valuable asset and it is a great field which can be explored very well for finding solutions for the avoidance of the accidents. For example, the relationship between speed, derailment and the turn-out is still not known. If it is known, of course, we can always establish regu-

lations by which this kind of derailment can be avoided. For example, even if a train goes slowly on a curved track, there is possibility of derailment. All these things can be subjected to experimental research tests in a research laboratory. The railways have got an excellent research laboratory in Lucknow and what is required is good coordination between the laboratory and the design and development departments. The design branches are located at Simla and they have got to be shifted to Lucknow. All these things put together will produce an excellent aid for the railway administration.

There is one other matter in regard to research which requires emphasis. In this country we have been so far doing only model tests in the railways and other departments like irrigation and power. We do not have full scale tests. Full scale test is a recent technique. For example, in Japan, I have seen quite a number of interesting experiments. They build regular buildings and subject them to forces which are similar to earthquakes, so that they may know the condition and behaviour of these buildings under actual earthquake conditions. Similarly, in Italy, I have seen big structures—dams of 60 feet high—being subjected to actual conditions of forces. Therefore, in the railway research laboratory, they should establish full scale tests. For instance, they should push one wagon against another as in an accident, study how they telescope into one another, what kind of strengthening will prevent this telescoping, and so on, so that even if the damage occurs, at least human lives can be saved.

There are lots of interesting problems connected with railway accidents which can be subjected to research. It would be very useful to establish basic research also in the universities. All that is required is more financial aid. That is what is done in western countries. If that is done, research on basic problems will

go on continuously, so that results may be available for later application.

All this requires very specialised staff. The design and development departments require specialised staff. The best engineers are recruited by the railways through a competitive system and you cannot say anything against them. They are doing wonderful work. They are experienced in construction and maintenance work, but the fact that they have been drawn up early in their career does not lead them to specialisation. Specialisation is the key to the mastery of modern science. That is one of the aspects where we are neglecting very badly in this country. Unless we realise that specialisation is very important, we would not be able to proceed. What is required is specialisation in research. There should be specialisation in embankment construction, bridges etc.; there are so many branches which require very specialised knowledge. For this, we must build up a "Specialists" organisation. It may not be possible to fit in the Specialist branch into the present railway administration. Then a separate section may have to be organised.

There is one other aspect which I would like to mention. The hon. Minister is very amicable and receptive. He should examine whether the efficiency of the railways can be increased by increasing the number of zones. At the moment, the zones are very vast and extensive. It is also necessary for us to look into the psychological aspect. We should have a psychological study of the staff at various levels, because psychology plays a large part in the determination of the fatigue in the mind. A driver may be able to work for 8 hours in a cool climate like England, but he will not be able to work for that time here. Therefore, a psychological sample survey or psychological analysis will be required in order to find out what are the regular number of hours of work that can be given to various members of the staff.

[Dr. K. L. Rao]

Finally, I would suggest that there may be a separate department for the safety measures with entirely separate staff, who would be stationed in different places to look after various safety propaganda, which has got to be incessant. The safety propaganda must not stop as soon as enquiry of an accident is over. Human memory is very short. As soon as an accident occurs we all talk about it and after that the whole affair is forgotten. In order to keep it always fresh and alive before us, it is very necessary to have an entire department devoted to safety measures. It should have a number of experienced people who could go round and do propaganda not only among the railway staff but also among the public. That is more important. The realisation by the public is of very great importance, because then they will be more careful and they will be able to lend a helping hand to the Railway Administration to deal with the safety measures effectively.

Sir, I should like to pay a tribute to the Railway Administration. They have done wonderful work in the matter of dealing with accidents. Their reports are excellent. Their investigations have been masterly. The way in which they have been going about with the accidents, in finding out their causes and in making a scientific analysis of them, has won a great name for them in foreign countries. I hope by constant vigilance, discipline and technical progress, the Indian Railway system shall earn the great distinction of overcoming this chronic train disease, these unfortunate accidents. I only hope that ere long our people will be able to forge ahead, find out the various reasons and show how these accidents can be avoided. Many countries are looking to us, because of our vast railway system and the difficult conditions under which they operate, for a solution of this very difficult problem, for the avoidance of accidents. I wish the Railway

Administration great success in their endeavour.

Shri S. M. Banerjee: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I have heard with rapt attention the very educative speech of our hon. Minister. Sir, I am thankful to him for giving this House so much of material. But the more I was trying to analyse his speech the more I have come to the conclusion that his conclusion was very sad, sad in the sense that if we have to believe his statement or his speech we have also to believe that railway travelling ultimately leads one to the grave. The conclusion of his speech is very sad. To my mind, he gave a caution to this House, to the hon. Members and through them to the countrymen, that railway travelling ultimately leads one to the grave and there is no escape from it, whether it be in the United States of America or in the United Kingdom or in any other country. When he compared the death toll in those countries with that in our country and told us about the human failings and other failings, at least I thought that his conclusion was very sad.

Sir, we cannot explain to the people, who view all these accidents, these tragedies with pity and terror, or console those widows and orphans who have lost their husbands and their parents, that there are valid reasons for these accidents as it is beyond the control of the Railway Administration to avoid them. The hon. Minister gave many statistics. I have before me a very elaborate statement which was given by his predecessor, Shri Jagjivan Ram, on 20th November, 1961 at the time of the Ghatsila accident of the Ranchi Express. In analysing the causes of accidents, he gave valuable figures. In 1957-58 the total number of accidents was 9,011. In 1958-59 it was 9,071, in 1959-60 it was 8,916 and in 1960-61 it was 8,808. According to the hon. Minister, these are inclusive of accidents which to a layman may not appear to be accidents but which, ac-

According to the railway terminology, are termed as accidents. Then he gave another set of figures. In 1957-58 number Killed 76, injured 475, total 551. In 1958-59 number killed 44, injured 357, total 401. In 1959-60 number killed 3, injured 315, total 318. In 1960-61 number killed 26, injured 213, total 239.

In reply to a question on the 7th August, 1962, which the hon. Minister has referred to while laying a statement on the Table which we are now discussing, where we had asked for the number of railway accidents that took place between 23rd June and 5th August, both dates inclusive, the reply was that the number is 181. Out of these 181 cases, 98 are still under investigation and in the remaining 83 cases, the causes are: failure of railway staff 53, failure of other than railway staff 6, failure of mechanical equipment 10, failure of track 7 and accidental 7. Then a detailed statement is given about the casualties.

I fully agree with the hon. Minister that there is a human element in these accidents, people should be more vigilant, the administration should be geared up, there should be traffic-consciousness in the people and the bus and truck drivers should take note of the unmanned level-crossings. Having considered all this, I want to put a question to the hon. Minister. Apart from all these educative steps, what positive steps have been taken by the hon. Minister to check these accidents. His predecessor, Shri Jagjivan Ram, has stated in this House:

"This watchfulness was rewarded... as a result of which the number of accidents decreased. This will be seen from the figures given below."

If the accidents have actually decreased, how did they or why did they suddenly increase? That is one of the factors which this House has to consider and for which, unfortunately, I have to hold the hon. Railway Minister,

for whom I have the greatest regard, responsible. I am not suggesting for a moment that he should resign. After all, resignation is no solution to these accidents. Resignation is purely an optional matter. He may opt for resignation or he may stick to his job; I do not mind it. But I have to state or express in this House the sentiments of those people in the country who are being represented by me and by my other friends. There is a common feeling of insecurity in the country about railway travel. I am not creating a fear psychosis or, I should say, a scare in this House, or through this House in the country. I am all for the good functioning of the railways, for the efficient functioning of the railways and the punctual running of railway trains. But we have to remove the fear in the minds of the people. It is true that, as my hon. friend Shri Dinanath Bhattacharya has stated, sometimes people do not know whether they will reach their destination or not because there are accidents every day.

In today's papers there is mention of an accident to a Deluxe train. Now everybody wants to travel in a Deluxe train and that train has also started jumping the rails. I do not know why. As a result of it, two persons were injured. I want to know from the hon. Minister if there is failure on the part of the staff why is not a meeting held, or a conference held, with the representatives of the railwaymen's federations, whether they are affiliated to INTUC or they are an independent federation. Why are they not taken into confidence? Why are they not consulted? After all, these federations and unions include technicians, train examiners, assistant station masters, signallers and all other categories of employees who are said to be responsible. I find from the statement that some of them are found to be responsible. They may give valuable suggestions. So, I am sure this would be accepted by the hon. Minister. That will help in checking these accidents.

[Shri S. M. Banerjee]

Then, is there any programme for changing the present cast iron wooden sleepers by concrete sleepers? I was reading with great interest an article written by a French expert. He is of the opinion that these reinforced concrete sleepers can absorb shock. They are shock-absorbers and are better than the cast iron sleepers. He says that the wooden sleepers, of course, are supposed to be the best. But my information goes that we are not getting the same type and quality of wood which we were getting before. As such, I want to know whether it is possible for us to start production of concrete sleepers, if they are good. I have no technical knowledge. I am not an expert. I am a layman. I am as ignorant as the hon. Minister or his deputies are because we are just people's representatives in this House. Of course, the hon. Minister knows better than I do.

Shri Shah Nawaz Khan: You know more because you were in the railways.

Shri S. M. Banerjee: You know better than me. I am only suggesting whether we could change over to these sleepers in a phased manner.

My hon. friend, the late lamented Shri Feroze Gandhi, had been pleading in this House year after year—I have heard him with rapt attention and he was supposed to be an expert on matters concerning the railways—for the introduction of the interlocking system. The opinion of one of the experts is that the Dumraon accident could have been avoided if there had been this interlocking system.

Shri Shah Nawaz Khan: It had the interlocking system.

Shri S. M. Banerjee: I do not know whether it had interlocking. But if even interlocking cannot avoid accidents, I think, nature is too cruel to us and nothing can be done. Again, I repeat that that sad conclusion is right that railway traffic will ultimately lead

to the grave and we will have to console ourselves.

Then, responsibility should be fixed on someone. I do not quarrel with the words that have been used in the statement that the driver has been killed. I know, no action could be taken against the driver because he was killed. It means that. But from the statement it appears that in two cases the assistant station masters have been charge-sheeted or removed from service. The assistant station master at a particular station has so many duties to perform that sometimes it becomes difficult for him to perform all those duties efficiently because of overwork. I am one with the hon. Member who spoke before me and said that overwork should be avoided; whether it is a question of the engine driver or of a fireman, or of an assistant station master, signaller or pointsman it should be avoided.

Then, responsibility should also be fixed on the high officials: otherwise, if a signaller or a pointsman is punished or if a gangman or an assistant station master is served with a show-cause notice for removal from service. I know it is not going to avoid railway accidents. Unless somebody on the top, whether he is a member of the Railway Board dealing with the engineering section or he is responsible for maintenance or repair, or whether he is a General Manager of a particular railway zone where the accident has taken place, is pulled up and censured for having more accidents in his region, nothing can happen by punishing the small fries in the railways. Nobody is going to be shot or terrorised. But I would humbly submit that these are the suggestions which should be considered favourably and sympathetically.

In regard to the unmanned level-crossings, I was surprised to read the statement placed on the Table of the

House today by the hon. Minister. He has stated in that statement that:

"There are about 19,000 unman-
 ned level crossings (excluding
 cattle crossings) on Indian Rail-
 ways".

Then, he goes on to say:

"The Hon'ble Justice of the
 Madras High Court, in a recent
 case of an accident at an unmanned
 level crossing, opined that it is
 impossible to expect the Railways
 to provide for gates and gatemen
 at every place where the railway
 line crosses a public highway and
 the road users should also exercise
 sufficient caution at such crossings
 to ensure safety."

I do not now why Government are so
 rigid in following the decision of the
 Madras High Court. Had it been a
 decision of the Madras High Court
 in favour of a railway employee
 they would have appealed to the
 Supreme Court, but because it suits
 them this time, therefore they are ad-
 hering to it. Probably, they think that
 the Madras High Court has expressed
 such an opinion, and naturally there is
 no escape from it; that seems to have
 become like the Law of Moses, some
 thing like a gospel truth, and nothing
 further can be done about it. They
 seem to feel that because a High Court
 Judge has expressed such an opinion,
 therefore, nothing need be done, and
 unmanned level-crossing will continue
 to be unmanned, no matter how many
 men may die, and it would be none of
 their concern. This is a highly irres-
 ponsible state of affairs.

17 hrs.

I fully agree with the suggestion
 made by Dr. K. L. Rao that if the un-
 manned level-crossings cannot be man-
 ned, at least there should be some
 boards at those crossings. There is not
 even a solitary instance where such a
 board has been placed even today, even
 after the Phulera accident and even
 after the Andal accident. So many ac-

cidents have been happening daily at
 these level-crossings, and yet nothing
 has been done, and the entire respon-
 sibility has been shifted to the State
 Governments.

It is just like cases of theft or
 murder on the railways. The respon-
 sibility is shifted in those cases to
 the State Governments, on the ground
 that it is a question of law and order,
 and it is for the State Governments to
 take notice of those things.

My suggestion is that at least the
 important unmanned level-crossings
 should be manned. If the railways
 have to spend some amount on this,
 they should not hesitate to spend it,
 and I am sure that this House will
 surely sanction that amount, in the
 larger interests of the country, and in
 the larger interests of the welfare of
 the people. The bus driver may do
 whatever he likes, and he will lose his
 life if he does not take precautions,
 or action can be taken against him if
 there is a proper board at those level-
 crossings.

There is also another suggestion that
 has been made, and that is that the
 train must whistle when it comes to
 the level crossings. I cannot imagine
 how a train can move on the level
 crossings without even giving a whistle.
 This morning, the Hon. Speaker was
 in the Chair during the Question
 Hour, and he was mentioning what
 was happening in foreign countries. As
 far as I remember—I speak subject to
 correction—he mentioned something
 about the whistling. There are numer-
 ous level-crossings which are unman-
 ned, but at every level-crossing, the
 train must completely stop, whistle and
 then only move.

**The Deputy Minister in the Ministry
 of Railways (Shri S. V. Ramaswamy):**
 Not the train, but the bus or the truck

Shri S. M. Banerjee: The train
 should stop and whistle.

Shri S. V. Ramaswamy: It cannot be
 the train which should stop. He was
 referring only to the bus or the truck.

Shri S. M. Banerjee: He said that I do not quite remember; anyway, it can be checked up from the records.

At least a board should be there at these level-crossings saying that the bus or the truck must stop. But at present, there is no board, and nothing is written. And the whole thing has been left entirely to the State Governments. I am afraid that this battle between the State Governments and the Central Government will result in more and more deaths only. I would submit to the hon. Minister that this is a very serious problem. In view of the various accidents that have taken place in the country at these level-crossings, something will have to be done to prevent accidents at these level crossings.

Lastly, I would request the hon. Minister through you, Sir, that there should be consultations with the railwaymen's unions and federations. When Shri M. A. Ayyangar was the Speaker of this House, he had put a question to me once 'Why should not the trade unions help?' and I answered him by saying 'We are ready to help the Railway Administration and the Railway Minister and his Deputies, provided we are also consulted on these matters, but the unions and the federations are never consulted on the ground that this is a highly technical matter.' I am sure that there are employees and there are representatives of the Railwaymen's federations, whether it be of the All India Railwaymen's Federation or the National Federation of Indian

Railwaymen, who can give correct advice and help on all these matters, and I hope, therefore, that this suggestion and request will be taken into consideration.

Finally, in the name of those widows and in the name of those children who have lost their parents, I would request the hon. Minister to consider this matter in all its seriousness, and I am sure he will do it, but it should be done immediately. What is happening in America should not be quoted here, because there the provision for social security is much more. If a man dies, his whole family is given family pension for the entire period they live. But what has happened here? In the case of the Mori accident, a paltry sum of Rs. 1000 or Rs. 2000 was given. What was the result? The old lady in Muradnagar is still weeping and going about with a begging bowl. There is nobody to help her in this matter.

I would request the Minister that he should consider this matter in all seriousness. We are all one with him in seeing that accidents are avoided, because accidents take place in this country and there is a sense of insecurity which is not in the interest of our advancement. I hope he will kindly take note of this.

17.06 hrs.

The Lok Sabha then adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Friday, August 17, 1962/Sravana 28, 1884 (Saka).