

[Shri Sachindra Chaudhuri]

thoughts which are entirely modern, which are discussed in modern courts and the language has been used in the past for expressing every kind of scientific thought, is it a language to be eschewed? Is it a language to be denied the place which it pre-eminently deserves, in fact a language which is enshrined in our Constitution earlier? Is it a language which has got to be denied its chance of recognition by the country as an official language? It is not a question of whether it should or should not get into the Constitution. That is a very moderate suggestion or submission made by my esteemed friend, Shri Bhattacharyya. If I have taken up your time, I apologise, but I think the occasion demanded that something should be said by somebody who does not claim to be a Sanskrit scholar and who has got every admiration for the English language.

16.31 hrs.

CRASH OF I.A.F. HELICOPTER

The Minister of Defence (Shri Y. B. Chavan): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, with great sorrow, I rise to inform the House that an Alouette helicopter belonging to the Indian Air Force crashed near Poonch this morning. According to the information available, the following passengers were killed in the tragic accident:

Lt. Gen. Daulat Singh, G.O.C. in C. Western Command,

Lt. Gen. Bikram Singh, Corps Commander.

Major General N. D. Nanawati, MC.

Brigadier Sri Ram Oberoi, MC.

Air Vice-Marshal E. W. Pinto,
Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Western Command.

Flight Lt. S. S. Sodhi.

In the death of these officers, our defence forces have lost very distinguished, able and promising leaders.

The cause of the crash is under investigation.

Sir, particularly in the death of Lt. Gen. Gault Singh and Lt. Gen. Bikram Singh, the Western Command has lost very able leadership. The work they did during the last operations in Ladakh will remain a tribute to their military leadership.

Air Vice Marshal E. W. Pinto, who did excellent work in the last exercises, was with us only two days before to explain to us the details of the air exercises when the Finance Minister and myself flew to Patiala. Sir, he was one of the most able air officers that our Air Force had, and the other two officers, whose names I have just mentioned, had both of them very distinguished military career and won Military Crosses in the last war. Really speaking, in their death we have received a very severe blow to our military officers' cadre and their leadership.

I think this hon. House, and Government particularly, share in the loss sustained by the families and I would suggest that, as a tribute to their memory, possibly the House may stand adjourned.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: It is a great tragedy. I join the Defence Minister in expressing the deep sense of sorrow of this House in the death of these gallant officers. I also express sympathy to the families of the bereaved on behalf of the House. They were very efficient officers and we lost them when we needed them most. I hope the House will stand in silence for a short while to express its sorrow.

The Members then stood in silence for a short while.

Mr. Deputy-Speaker: As a mark of respect to the deceased, the House stands adjourned.

16.35 hrs.

The Lok Sabha adjourned till Eleven of the Clock on Monday, November 25, 1963/Agrahayana 4, 1885 (Saka).