

[Shri Humayun Kabir]

when I discuss the points raised by my hon friend, Shrimati Renu Chakravartty, why IAC is going for better aircraft like Viscounts

But I should like to assure my hon friend Shri Jaipal Singh even though he is not present here, that though IAC is in a monopolistic position, there is no intention and there shall be no intention that it will take advantage of that position. It is a service and one of the main purposes why the airlines were nationalised

Mr. Chairman Order order The hon Minister may resume his seat The Minister of State in the Ministry of Home Affairs wants to place a document on the Table of the House

PAPER LAID ON THE TABLE

REPORT OF THE ADDITIONAL
DISTRICT MAGISTRATE OF DELHI
ON THE POLICE FIRING IN DELHI
ON 31-7-1957

The Minister of State in the Ministry of Home Affairs (Shri Datar): Sir, I beg to lay on the Table a copy of the Report of the Additional District Magistrate of Delhi on the Police firing in Delhi on the 31st July, 1957 [Placed in Library See No S-154/57]

Mr. Chairman Are there copies for circulation?

Shri Datar: It is a fairly bulky report We have not got copies

Shri Nath Pal (Rajapur) Can we have a look at it?

Shri Datar: It is placed on the Table of the House

Mr. Chairman In the meantime the hon Minister may continue his speech

DEMANDS FOR GRANTS—contd

MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS—contd

Shri Humayun Kabir: Sir, I was saying that the IAC certainly has a monopoly but it can never be the intention of IAC—and I am sure the

Parliament will never permit it even if the IAC should ever have such an idea and I do not think the IAC had that idea at any time. One of the reasons why the airlines were nationalised was precisely this, that service will be provided economically and from the point of view of national advantage. At the same time, direction was also given that the services should be run on business lines. The main task of AII and IAC is that of reconciling these two aims,—that the services shall be run on business and commercial lines and at the same time every effort will be made and is being made to give as much comfort as is possible to the passengers by way of service, by way of courtesy and by way of different amenities that are provided to them.

The hon Member also referred to the pilot position. This is I agree with him, one of the most difficult problems which any airline at any time has to face. Training in flying is such an expensive business that if a person has to be discarded after receiving training for some time, great amounts of money will have been wasted. Therefore, it is very necessary that there should be a careful scrutiny of the aptitudes, reactions, and general intelligence of anyone who offers himself for training as a pilot.

I should like to tell the hon Member and the House through you, Sir, that this question of improvement of the pilot position is continuously under scrutiny. I am planning to appoint a small committee with one representative of the DGCA, one representative of the IAC and one representative of the Indian Air Force to go into the whole question of training to see if all the methods of training followed today, the standards which we have laid down, are fully satisfactory or not. That committee will, I expect, submit its recommendations within a very short time and then we shall see how we can improve the existing methods of training and also push up standards.

I have also heard this criticism, though it was not voiced by anyone in this House today, that some of our licences—not the licences of the pilots who actually operate the commercial planes—are not up to international standards. This committee will examine whether there is any truth whatever in that allegation. But, in any case, every effort will be made to see that our pilots retain the very high reputation which they have built up.

This House will be glad to hear when I say that the representatives of one of the greatest air powers of the world told me very recently, that he had with pleasure and gratification noticed the way in which our pilots, both of AII and IAC, handle their planes. He said that our landings and take-off are among the best which he has experienced in any part of the world. I am sure hon. Members of this House will be glad to hear this. Therefore, when I say that we are anxious to improve the training of the pilots, it is no reflection on the existing standards, but only an attempt to improve them still further so that the reputation which has been built up can be maintained.

The hon. Member also referred to the question of combining the aeroclub and the gliding club, and made certain references to promises made from time to time in this House. We shall certainly look into those promises, and if any promises have been made in this House I should like to assure him that either those promises will be kept in full or the House will be told why the promises have not been kept.

Now, Sir, I would like to take up some of the points raised by my hon. friend, the Member from West Bengal, who is not present here now. She devoted almost her entire speech to civil aviation. I will try to be very brief with regard to her points, because she raised a large number of points and I wish to give some time to the question of general policy at the end.

Her first complaint was that there has been some reduction in the pay of staff in the civil aviation department after India became free. I looked into the matter and I find what happened was this. The radio operators had a scale of Rs. 80 to Rs. 250 for those who were appointed before 1931 and Rs. 00—Rs. 150 for those who were appointed after 1931. When civil aviation was introduced in 1946, radio operators were being appointed on a large scale. The question of their scale came up. They were not satisfied with the scale of Rs. 60—250 as it was considered too low. At the same time, no permanent scale was at that time instituted, because the Pay Commission was examining the whole question. Therefore, they were given an *ad hoc* provisional scale of Rs. 120—230. Later on, when the Pay Commission reported—they went into the whole question—they recommended a scale of Rs. 80—220 with a selection grade of Rs. 200—250 for 25 per cent of the posts. Therefore, you can say that the Pay Commission's recommendation was Rs. 80—250 as against a provisional pay—some of the radio operators were enjoying it—of Rs. 120—230. The maximum went up; the minimum went down a little. Therefore, the statement of the hon. Member that their pay was reduced would not be quite true though it is partially true.

I may also inform the House that the actual salary of no incumbent was reduced. The existing pay was protected, though naturally they had to come under the new scale. If there is any fault, the fault is the Pay Commission's and not of the Director-General of Civil Aviation or of the Government. Repeatedly Members in this House and the public outside have demanded that the recommendations of the Pay Commission should be accepted. If the recommendations have been accepted, I am sure that it does not lie with the hon. Member opposite to say that this was something which was wrong.

The hon. Member also referred to the question of housing—the lack of

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housing—and adverse living conditions of aerodrome staff. We all know that people in the Civil Aviation Department have often to live far away from the town. The aerodromes are generally at some distance, and therefore, a policy decision has been taken that so far as the remote aerodromes are concerned, the aim is to provide 100 per cent accommodation to the staff there, in the case of other aerodromes which are easily accessible from towns, the accommodation will be provided for about 80 per cent of the staff. This general policy has been accepted and for that purpose, a provision of Rs 92 lakhs has been made in the second Five Year Plan. During the second plan period, it is our expectation and our hope that this target will be largely achieved.

The hon. Member referred in particular to Mohanbari. With regard to this, I can say that Rs 6 lakhs have been sanctioned for 39 residential quarters which will meet almost the entire requirement there. The formalities have been concluded, the necessary technical sanction has been issued from the CPWD, tenders will be invited very shortly, and I expect that before the year is out many of the houses will be ready if not all of them.

The hon. Member referred also to the question of schools for children of employees in aerodromes. Here, we are faced with certain difficulties. If the aerodrome is near a town, it would obviously be not worthwhile to provide alternative schools. If they are far away generally there are not sufficient children to justify the establishment of a separate school for them. Nevertheless, every effort is being made to overcome their hardships. In certain areas it is proposed to build schools for the children of the employees of the Civil Aviation Department and other air staff who are located there. In places like Calcutta-Dum Dum, Santa Cruz in Bombay, Madras and Nagpur, it is proposed to provide separate schools

like that. In other places, accommodation has been given in the premises at nominal rents and this also operates in about half a dozen places. Where such facilities cannot be provided in the aerodrome itself, the children are offered the facility of going by the transport which takes the workers to the towns, and for this, they are charged half rates. The workers themselves are charged nominal rates. It is Rs 6 a month for a worker if the distance is about four miles and for a child it is Rs 2 per mensem. No one can say that this is a very high rate, and in this way facilities are sought to be provided. But I admit that there are certain intrinsic difficulties which cannot always be overcome.

Then the hon. Member also made a reference to the regulation of hours of work and the question of payment for the gazetted holidays. I propose to take up the two questions together. With regard to the regulation of hours of work, she said almost in a tone of despair that for the last four or five years every year the case of the chowkidar has come up and she said that she has had nothing but discouragement because no results have emerged. I would like to assure her through you, sir, that she is misinformed. Something has been done. A classification has taken place. The classification is in three grades—continuous, intermittent and casual. For the continuous the hours of work are 54 with one day off in a week. For the intermittent, the hours of work are 75 with one day off in a fortnight and of course for the casual there are no fixed hours of work. Therefore, it would not be quite true to say that nothing has been done.

I think it would also interest hon. Members of this House to know that as a result of this classification, about 140 additional posts of chowkidars have been sanctioned. They have had to be created as the work-load has been reduced. In spite of this, the representatives of the union are

not fully satisfied. I will not blame them; it is part of the business of every union never to be satisfied and always to argue for more. That is part of the function of a union. But, at the same time, I also think that the responsible members of union will recognise that when a particular settlement has been reached, when a solution has been offered, there should be time given for that position to stabilise. We can make our attempts from that higher level after sometime, not immediately. Nevertheless, we have told the representatives of the union that if as a result of their efforts, the hours can be further reduced without any addition to the staff, the administration will have no objection whatever in meeting their point of view. Therefore, the ball is now with the union. If the union can produce a roster where, without additional staff, the hours of work can be reduced, we shall be very glad to accept that roster, but they have not given it yet.

Now, the hon. Member also referred to the question of operational staff and their weekly off. The hon. Member has been interested in labour matters for a long time. I think she knows better than many Members of this House that certain categories of operational staff do not get a weekly off as such, because traffic has to be continuous. It has to be maintained round the clock. Therefore, certain types of operational staff do not get any weekly holiday and gazetted holiday, but they are compensated in other ways, and one of the ways is that the hours are so arranged that for every four or five days of work there is a 36-hour off. There is a 36-hour off after every four or five days of work. We are examining if any other type of concession can be given to them. In principle I agree that if a person never gets a gazetted holiday, never gets a day off, some compensation should be given to him. What form that will take is now under examination, and I hope that some kind of satisfactory solution, satisfactory both to the administration and to the union will be reached fairly soon.

Then the hon. Member referred to the purchase of new aircraft. Here, I found that the two hon. Members who spoke yesterday more or less contradicted one another and cancelled one another's argument. The hon. Member who spoke first did not want us to purchase any aircraft for the IAC. She conceded.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty (Basirhat): For the time being.

Shri Humayun Kabir: For the time being. I am not talking of eternity. I am only talking of today. The hon. Member who spoke first yesterday suggested that for the IAC we should not purchase the Viscounts or any other improved type of aircraft because IAC has a monopoly and we must be enured to the hardship.

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty: Because of the shortage of foreign exchange. That was the point.

Shri Humayun Kabir: I will come to that in a moment. The other hon. Member complained that the Viking—I think it was not Dakota but Viking—by which he travelled from Delhi to Bombay or from Bombay to Delhi was not good, that everything in that Viking was not as good as it was in the AIL. I have already said earlier—the hon. Member was absent when I discussed this point—that even in a country like the United States of America, there are certain airlines where the standards are very very different from international standards. If the hon. Member goes there, or goes to the Soviet Union—I have had the good fortune of travelling in both the countries—he will find that there are certain airlines where the standards can by no means be compared to international standards. They are not intended to be so, because they are a sort of trial flight through areas where attempts to fly any of these internationally-equipped aircraft with international standards would not succeed.

Shri Nath Pal (Rajapur): But why is this inclination to imitate the bad points alone?

Shri Humayun Kabir: Here, the Question of foreign exchange comes

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in. As I said earlier, the hon. Member was absent when I dealt with this point I have said, if we were flowing with money, as some countries in the world seem to be flowing, then we would have made all the improvements and purchased the latest aircraft for every type of sector, whether it is 100, 200 or 2,000 miles. But being short of foreign exchange, we have to parcel out gains against losses, balance the distribution and do the best we can.

The hon. Member just now referred to the question of foreign exchange. May I tell her that it is partly in consideration of foreign exchange that we have to go in for Viscounts? Some of the IAC routes operate in sectors outside India. Besides when we develop the tourist traffic in this country, it will not yield full results if our internal airlines cannot conform to the standard of the international lines and offer facilities and comforts which are not too different from the facilities offered by the international lines. We have earned, I believe, over Rs. 10 crores through tourist traffic last year. I may assure the hon. Member that if the IAC did not go in for better types of aircraft, much of the foreign exchange would not be coming. From foreigners I have had very few complaints about IAC. This is a thing which has struck me during the last one year. Not only during the last three months that I have been associated with this Ministry, but even before that I have been associated with this Ministry, but even before that I have been interested in aviation as a traveller. I have always noted that we, Indians, are far more critical of IAC than foreigners. There is nothing wrong in that; we have a right to criticise our own airlines, but I think we should also consider some of the difficulties which they have to face.

I would like to draw the attention of hon. Members to another point. We operate in Pakistan, Ceylon and Burma. Some of these routes are the highest income earning routes of the IAC. Pakistan and Burma have already

ordered Viscounts. If we also could not offer Viscount service, the passengers travelling in these routes would not be satisfied and I am sure we would lose very heavily. Once you introduce Viscounts, you cannot operate only with two viscounts on only two of the routes. All the trunk routes have to be improved.

Referring to the Skymasters, the hon. Member said there was some loss there. She referred to the losses on certain sectors, but she did not refer to the enormous increase in passenger traffic which has developed in this country as a result of the introduction of the skymaster. If you look at the figures in the report of the Ministry or the IAC, you will find that between 1954-55, 1955-56 and 1956-57, there has been an astonishing increase in the number of passengers carried by IAC.

Shrimati Renu Chakravarty: Is there any utilisation of full capacity. Also, what are the overhead charges going to be?

Shri Humayun Kabir: I am afraid on this particular point, the hon. Member is not as well briefed as she usually is on other subjects. So far as skymasters are concerned, the pay load has always been pretty high—70 per cent, 75 per cent and in some cases as high as 78 per cent. While talking of losses, we must distinguish between two types of losses, loss on overheads, taking the entire system, and the other losses which arise out of direct operation. So far as direct operations are concerned, I think it would be correct to say that the skymasters have not shown any loss. On the contrary, they have shown some profits.

The question of losses comes in only when the distribution over overheads is concerned. For that, there are many reasons. The major reason is that when the Corporation became nationalised, we had to introduce or maintain certain sectors which from the nature of the case were uneconomical. Because it is a national airline service, it has to cater to the needs of the public; in spite of the losses, these services are maintained.

Some of the losses on the more unprofitable sectors are distributed over the profitable sectors. That is why, she says there are losses. I am sure if the hon Member goes more into the details, she will be convinced, because I have sufficient faith in her intelligence and integrity. Once she goes through the figures, as she has done in certain other cases, I have no doubt in my mind that she will be satisfied that the introduction of the skymaster has given a tremendous impetus to the development of air traffic in this country and also helped air transport economy by reducing the overhead cost.

I think I have disposed of most of the specific points that have been raised. Now I would like to say one or two things about the general policy. I am very happy to find in this House and outside an appreciation of the standard which has been maintained by the A I I. Everyone of us is proud about that, we are proud that the A I I compares favourably with any airline anywhere in the world. So far we are all agreed. I would like to go a step further and say that I am also proud of what the IAC has done, though I readily concede that there is room for improvement and there will be room for improvement. If it comes to that, there is certainly room for improvement also in the A I I or in many other air services in the world. There is never a stage when further improvements are not possible.

If you take the performance of the IAC, some hon Members opposite were absent when I explained that as a result of nationalisation, there has been a great improvement in certain sectors. In certain other sectors, where the previous airlines operated with the highest efficiency, the improvement is not so marked. I readily concede that in the services Calcutta-Delhi, Calcutta-Bombay or Delhi-Bombay, the improvement is not so marked, though even there I will say there is some improvement as a result of the introduction of the skymasters, and there will be more when the viscounts begin to operate.

There is greater confidence in the minds of the public and greater stability and the time has also been slightly reduced. But in some of the other sectors like the Assam area, North Bengal area, areas in North Bihar and parts of U P, where I have travelled, I am sure also in some of the areas which are served in Kutch and Saurashtra, there has been considerable improvement. When hon Members condemn the IAC, they should try to see whether there has not been some improvement all along the line. I also readily concede that the Assam service is not as good today as the service from Calcutta to Delhi, but, is it not better than what it was in 1953? That is the point Hon Members have to bear in mind.

[MR SPEAKER in the Chair]

Again and again it has been said that the nationalised corporations have operated less efficiently than the private companies. I am afraid that that is also based on certain misunderstanding or perhaps lack of information. One of the usual charges is that of top-heavy administration. I have gone into this matter a little. Before nationalisation there were 8 companies, each with a General Manager, Operation Manager and a Chief Engineer. The General Manager had sometimes a salary as high as Rs 3,750. In any case, each of these higher executives received I am told not less than Rs 2,500. With 8 companies, there were 24 people who drew salaries over Rs 2,000, in some cases, they drew Rs 3,000. Today after nationalisation, we have one Chairman, 4 posts at the headquarters and 2 posts in each of the areas, or in other words, there are 11 posts in all which carry a salary more than Rs 2,000. I would ask hon Members of this House, is this evidence of top-heavy administration? In place of 24 officers who drew salaries of Rs 2,500 or more, today we have only 11 officers and the maximum salary of anyone of them except the Chairman, I am told, is only Rs 2,300. This certainly is a sign of economy and not a sign of top-heavy administration. (Interruption)

Mr. Speaker: Is the hon. Minister likely to take more time?

Shri Humayun Kabir: I have a little more to say

Mr. Speaker: He may continue afterwards

BUSINESS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

SIXTH REPORT

Sardar Hukam Singh (Bhatinda)
Mr Speaker, I beg to present the Sixth Report of the Business Advisory Committee

I want to submit that the Business Advisory Committee held its sitting today, 3rd August, 1957. The Committee recommends that ten hours may be allotted to the consideration and passing of the Essential Services Maintenance Bill, 1957, and that it should be distributed as follows: General discussion, six hours, Clause by clause consideration, three hours, third reading, one hour. It further recommends that on the 5th August, 1957, the House may sit from 9 A.M. to 1 P.M. and again from 2-30 P.M. to 9-30 P.M. for consideration and passing of this Bill.

I beg to move

"That this House agrees with the Sixth Report of the Business Advisory Committee presented to the House today."

Mr. Speaker: There was a suggestion made that instead of sitting from 9 A.M. to 1 P.M. and then again from 2-30 P.M. to 9-30 P.M. on that day, we may sit for seven hours on that day and for three hours the next day. If the House is agreeable and the hon. Minister is willing, we may think of that. Nothing is lost if two or three hours are spent on the next day.

The Minister of Home Affairs (Pandit G. B. Pant): That is a matter for our decision.

Mr. Speaker: They wanted to finish that day. Hon. Members will get

tired later in the night. So, we will sit normally from 11 o'clock, and instead of 9 o'clock, we will carry on till 7 that day. On the next day, we will give this work three hours. That is better than sitting from 9 o'clock till 1 o'clock and then from 2-30 to 9-30. It will be inconvenient.

I think the House is agreeable to change this timing to 11 A.M. to 7 P.M. on Monday and three hours on the next day, whenever we start.

Hon. Members: Yes

The Minister of State in the Ministry of Home Affairs (Shri Datar): No Question Hour?

Some Hon. Members: No

Mr. Speaker: The Question hour will be there. We proceed to

The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs (Shri Satya Narayan Sinha): May I suggest one thing? We agree to what you have said that on the next day also, we sit for three hours. But, if the House is not prepared to do away with the Question Hour on Tuesday, the House might sit from 10 o'clock and finish the whole thing by 2 o'clock.

Some Hon. Members: Why?

Shrimati Renu Chakravartty (Basirhat): May I submit, Sir, that is unnecessary. We will sit an hour later. We will not agree to having the Question Hour dispensed with.

Shri Satya Narayan Sinha: The point is, if the House is not prepared to do away with the Question Hour, instead of starting at 11 o'clock on Tuesday, we may start at 10 o'clock.

Mr. Speaker: Instead of 9 o'clock on Monday, we push it on to 11 o'clock. It does not matter if we come at 10 o'clock on Tuesday. Hon. Members will see that this work will be put off by so many days. Before the end of August, it has to be completed.

Some Hon. Members: No

Mr. Speaker: All right. We will think out on Monday whether we will