

ments have helped them to improve their condition. Only the system of stringent exchange control and rapid rise in productivity will save the country. After all, we are in a developing condition.

So far as deferred payments are concerned, we, especially, from the Congress, and some others also in the country are very hopeful about it. But one thing that I would like to point out in this connection is that we must be in a position to make all these payments, when they become due, for, we are only postponing the evil by resorting to deferred payments.

16 hrs.

In order to have adequate gold security, I would urge Government to inaugurate a drive with a view to inducing the people to give some gold to Government and thus make our rupee more valuable. It was said by somebody that nearly Rs. 15000 crores worth of unproductive gold is there in India. If only the wealthy men and women of India contribute a bit of their gold, I think that would certainly bolster up the value of the rupee.

**Shri D. C. Sharma (Gurdaspur):** Why does the hon. Member not set an example?

**Kumari M. Vedakumari:** Some hon. Members expressed the doubt that if the bullion reserves are kept at Rs. 115 crores, it may destroy the confidence in the value of the rupee. But I think this fear is only the result of a long habit of having large reserves in our country. In my opinion, that is not really a thing of which we should be afraid. A minimum level of Rs. 115 crores is quite consistent with the levels maintained by the other countries in the world. That is why I am not of the opinion that the value of the rupee will be destroyed if we brought down the minimum level of our reserves.

Even though the situation is grave, I feel that by raising the productivity and by keeping the reserves at Rs. 115 crores at the minimum, and also by adopting stringent measures of exchange control, we shall be able to help the country to regain its position and also develop further.

In spite of the fact that the situation is very bad, we can say as Napoleon has said 'The battle is lost, but there is time to win another'. Further, there are no roses without thorns. So, with this hope, I hope we shall march forward; we shall march with hope and guidance and confidence not only in the rupee but in every deed that we do.

With these words, I give my full support to Government and to this Bill.

**STATEMENT RE: ACCIDENT TO BOMBAY-CALCUTTA MAIL ON 23RD NOVEMBER, 1957**

**Mr. Chairman:** The Minister of Railways would make a statement now.

**The Minister of Railways (Shri Jagjivan Ram):** I wanted to take the earliest opportunity to make this statement. But as the plane arrived after 12-30 P.M. I could not make the statement then.

It is with deep regret that I have to inform the House that there has been a serious accident to I Down Bombay-Calcutta Mail on the Central Railway. At about 22-45 hours on 23rd November, 1957, this train derailed between Padali and Asval stations on the Bhusaval-Igatpuri section. As a result, the engine and the following eight bogies were derailed, out of which four (third to sixth) capsized, the last three bogies however, remained on the rails. Nine persons lost their lives and fifty-one were injured, most of whom fortunately have received minor injuries.

[Shri Jagjivan Ram]

I proceeded by plane to Devlali on the 24th morning, accompanied by Member, Transportation, Railway Board, and then by car to the site of the accident. Brig. Sathe accompanied us from there. On arrival, I found that the Government Inspector of Railways, the Magistrate and the District Police were carrying out their investigations. The senior officers of the Railway were present. I made a thorough inspection of the site, accompanied by these officers.

The site of accident is 97 miles from Bombay on the Igatpuri-Bhusaval section of the Central Railway, 13 miles from Igatpuri and 16 miles from Devlali. It is also quite close to the Bombay-Agra road. The location is in an undulating country with deep cuttings and high banks. The height of the bank at the site of the accident varies from 22 ft. to 30 ft. There is a sharp curve at the site, and the line is falling in the direction of the train, on a gradient of 1 in 100.

The engine No. 7538 'WP' of the ill-fated train stopped at a distance of 620 ft. after passing the first mark of derailment, where a complete rail was found lying displaced by about 9 inches outside its original position. The front bogie wheels of the engine were front derailed, but closely hugging the running rails, the front two on the right-hand side and the rear two on the left-hand side. It was this circumstance which enabled the engine to remain on rails instead of running down the bank. Its coupled wheels and hind truck wheels were not derailed, but the tender wheels were derailed.

As to the train, the first coach (brake and luggage van) behind the engine was derailed but remained upright on the bank. The second coach (third class) was standing partially tilted on the slope of the bank. The third coach (first class) was found lying upside down on the slope of the bank

and its wooden body-work was completely smashed. It was in this coach that the largest number of fatalities occurred.

It carried only 15 passengers, of whom eight were killed. Had it been a third class coach, the number of passengers would have been much larger, and consequently, figures of both dead and injured would have been considerably higher.

The fourth and fifth coaches (first—third and second) were capsized and were resting on the slope of the bank. The sixth coach (air-conditioned) was only slightly tilted. The seventh coach (restaurant car) was also derailed but standing upright. The eighth coach had only derailed by its leading wheels, and the last three coaches (third class and brake) were neither derailed nor damaged.

An examination of the track showed that at the first mark of derailment, the left-hand rail was found completely displaced and lying parallel in a tilted position at about nine inches outside the normal alignment. The fish-plates and bolts and nuts of the joint were found open and lying undamaged nearby. The end of the next adjoining rail was dented with the formation of a 'lip' due to flow of metal, indicating clearly that a large number of wheels had jumped down on to the sleepers from this end of the rail, as the previous rail had been displaced and was not in position. The first sleeper under the displaced rail was undamaged, but the second and the subsequent sleepers were badly damaged. The sleepers consisted of cast iron plates, and had broken under the impact. The joint at the other end of the displaced rail was also found open, with the fish-plates lying closeby along with one bolt and nut undamaged, and the other bolts and nuts were probably buried under the ballast.

The near-end of the rail ahead of the displaced rail was found dented and bent inwards. The displaced rail, although outside the normal alignment had portions of the derailed coaches, such as foot-boards and battery boxes, standing directly over it. There were no signs of damage whatsoever on the displaced rail.

From the above description of the site of the accident, the position of the engine and coaches and their wheels as well as of rails, sleepers and fish-plates, it would seem that the displaced rail was not in its position on the track at the time of derailment. In this connection, it may be mentioned that the accident occurred at about 22.45 hours, and the preceding train which was a goods train had passed the site at about 21.15 hours, or about an hour and a half earlier.

The total number of passengers in the ill-fated train is estimated at 450. As stated earlier, nine persons were killed and 51 injured, ten of whom received serious injuries such as fractures etc. None of these cases, though classified as 'serious' according to the rules, is likely to prove fatal. Among the dead were two children of Shri Chatterjee, Works Manager, Matunga, Central Railway, who was proceeding on leave, Shri, Patel, an Electric Foreman of the Central Railway, his wife and an adult son, Sardar Pardaman Singh of Delhi, Shri Balakrishnan of Vizagapatnam, and Shri Mehta. One remains unidentified. All the dead bodies have been disposed of except one of Shri Balakrishnan whose relations are on their way and steps have been taken to preserve the dead body.

Expenditure on the last rites of the dead persons will be met by the Railway Administration.

I also visited the Railway Hospital at Igatpuri and the Military Hospital at Deolali where 44 and 7 of the injured respectively have been admitted. They are receiving all care and attention. The next of kin have been

advised telegraphically or telephonically and have been offered the facility of free travel to meet their injured relations.

I have asked the General Manager to make suitable payments immediately to the injured apart from any compensation that they may be entitled to. Their relations who come to meet them, will also be suitably looked after. On discharge from the hospital the injured will be provided free transport to their destination.

Medical relief arrangements were prompt and adequate. The Railway Assistant Medical Officer, Igatpuri, was the first to arrive by road, at 00.15 hours. Shri Sathe, the Brigadier in charge, Deolali Military station which is nearby, organised valuable rescue work and medical relief work. The military team arrived at the site of the accident at 00.45 hours. The railway breakdown train and medical van from Igatpuri with adequate complement of staff and equipment, also arrived simultaneously. By 00.45 hours, there were no less than 10 doctors at the site. Besides, the Igatpuri medical van, other vans from Bombay and Bhusaval, in charge of the District Medical Officers, soon arrived. A number of local private doctors also assisted.

An emergency relief rake was formed and rushed to the site of the accident. The passengers and their luggage were transhipped into this rake and the train left the site at 04.25 hours, and proceeded as duplicate Calcutta Mail to Howrah.

The Government Inspector of Railways, Bombay, has already commenced his statutory inquiry into the accident. It is only after the completion of this inquiry that the cause of the accident will be finally established. Railway lines extending over miles and miles in open country can be vulnerable to the extreme. It is neither practicable nor feasible to guard every inch of the line. I have ins-

[Shri Jagjivan Ram]

fructed that for the present the patrolling of the track of the contiguous areas during the night should be introduced, as a precautionary measure.

I again express my deep regret at the accident and send my sympathy to the injured and to the relations of the deceased.

Shri T. K. Chaudhuri (Berhampore): In the morning's papers, the Minister is reported to have stated—I do not know whether he has been correctly quoted—that on *prima facie* evidence he was satisfied that this was due to sabotage. Has he anything to say on that point?

Shri Jagjivan Ram: I have nothing to say except what I have said, and at no stage have I expressed any opinion as regards the cause of the accident. I was of course approached by the Press; they wanted to know but I made it clear—that I could not say anything definitely at this stage, I had to make a statement in Parliament and the Government Inspector of Railways was making his inquiries. I told them that even a layman who visited the place would see what might be the cause of the accident.

Shri Goray (Poona): In first reports appearing in the Press, it was stated that the casualties were 50 dead and 100 injured. How were these numbers given by the Press?

Shri Jagjivan Ram: That was a puzzle for me also. But it so happened that the accident occurred during night time; it was all dark, and as you know, 4 bogies capsized. So naturally people thought that a large number of people might have been there. That was purely guesswork. As I have said, had these bogies been third class, the casualties would have been much larger.

श्री बाब्रवेयी (बलरामपुर) : मैं जानना चाहता हूँ कि जो मालगाड़ी बाद में घाने वाली थी उसमें क्या सामान था और क्या

इससे पहले इस सैकशन पर मालगाड़ियों को सूटने की बटनाएँ हुई हैं ?

Mr. Chairman: Order, order. No questions can be allowed on a statement. The hon. Minister has made a very full statement in regard to this particular accident. I do not allow any further questions.

RESOLUTION RE: RESERVE BANK OF INDIA (AMENDMENT) ORDINANCE AND RESERVE BANK OF INDIA (SECOND AMENDMENT) BILL contd.

Shri Morarka (Jhunjhunu): Mr. Chairman, Sir, one cannot feel very happy at the prospect of passing or the necessity of passing this Bill which is before the House. It would be quite a different thing if we without any compelling necessity decided not to have any backing for our currency rather than being compelled by circumstances—as we are today—to do away with the backing.

Now, hon. Members who have opposed this Bill have made mainly two points. The first is that once these reserves have been done away with, currency notes would be printed indiscriminately and without any limitation. If I may say so, the hon. Member for Berhampore, who made this suggestion, has really not understood or tried to understand the implications of this Bill. At present, the reserves are the minimum reserves and they have no relationship to the issue of currency at all. You can issue any amount of currency even today without any regard to those reserves. The Act, as it stands today, requires a reserve of Rs. 400 crores which, with the permission of Government, could be reduced to Rs. 300 crores. All that you are required to do is to keep the reserves at Rs. 300 crores, and this