

to take place, what steps are Government going to take to implement the favourable recommendations of the Commission because all the employees in the country are anxiously waiting for the decision of Government?

Then regarding bonus, Government are already committed to the minimum bonus to be paid to Central Government employees who are industrial workers. That question is before the Bonus Review Committee. I would like to know the decision of Government regarding that also. Are Government going to announce this decision after the report of the Bonus Review Committee is received or before that, because Government's assurance in this connection was that they would consider the question of bonus after the receipt of the report of the Pay Commission?

SHRI K. R. GANESH: As far as the Bonus Review Committee is concerned, the hon. Member, as a trade unionist and knowledgeable member, knows that this matter will be decided by the Committee. Their report will be available and Government can take a decision on the basis of the report.

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE: It was never before the Pay Commission.

SHRI K. R. GANESH: As for the other point, second consultation with employees and at what time Government will consider it, I have already indicated it is the intention of Government to finalise these recommendations, at least the major recommendations, as early as possible, during the current session.

MR. SPEAKER: In 45 minutes we have overed just two questions. What ever be the nature of a question, do not make it controversial and then take the whole time. In the last three or four days, we have not been able to go beyond four questions. I just appeal to you: after two or three members, others should not get up.

Report of Judicial Commission on the Crash of Indian Airlines Boeing 737 Aircraft on 31st May, 1973

*83. SHRI RANABAHADUR SINGH:

SHRI C. K. JAFFER SHARIEF:

Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether any Judicial Commission was appointed by the Central Government to inquire into the circumstances of the crash of Indian Airlines Boeing 737 aircraft on 31st May 1973 in which a number of passengers including Shri S. Mohan Kumaramangalam, the Union Minister of Steel and Mines were killed;

(b) if so, the broad outlines of the Commission's report; and

(c) Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION (DR. KARAN SINGH): (a) and (b). Yes, Sir. A copy of the report has been laid on the Table of the House.

(c) The findings have been accepted and the recommendations are being examined and processed.

SHRI RANABAHADUR SINGH: It is now evident from the Report of the Commission that the accident that took place at Palam occurred because of the fact that the pilot did not check the altimeter at that point of time. May I know whether there is any action taken by Government to stop recurrence of such things as the pilot not checking the altimeter at the right time which might cause another such major accident?

DR. KARAN SINGH: I do not know what exactly the hon. Member means when he talks about the altimeter. The Judge has clearly held that there were several errors commit-

ted by the pilot. We are in fact taking a whole package of measures to improve and strengthen pilot training, including rechecking of all the present Commanders who are flying, the appointment of two senior air force officers directly under the DGCA who will be check pilots not members of any Union, not members of the Corporation, but separately under the Department of Civil Aviation, medical checks in order to improve pilot efficiency and so on.

DR. HENRY AUSTIN: It has been reported that one of the many reasons for this mishap and also several repetitions of lesser mishaps has been the result of maximum utilisation of the planes without adequate ground facilities and other technical devices. I was just wondering whether a reference has been made to this aspect of the situation in the report of the Judicial Enquiry Commission, and what steps are the Government contemplating to meet these contingencies.

Only on the 6th of this month I was taking a plane to Calcutta, and then, at about 7-30 A.M. when we landed at Lucknow; one of the devices, I think it was the flap on the wings which, I guess, is intended for controlling the speed—I do not know what gadget—broke away. Mr. P. N. Haksar and other members of the delegation to Dacca were also there. The replacement came only at about 5-30 P.M. We were stranded there from 7-30 A.M. It is pretty obvious that adequate maintenance was not there at the place. What measures are, therefore, being contemplated to meet this situation?

DR. KARAN SINGH: I do not think the hon. Member is correct in saying that in any way the utilisation of the plane has been responsible for any crashes. It is quite clear that the judge has held that the plane was fully airworthy and properly maintained.

This question of keeping replacements is a difficult one because we normally keep our stocks and spares at the four major airports. It is very difficult to keep every spare-part in every airport. If an accident occurs, say in Lucknow or in Gauhati or some such place, these spares have got to be flown out from one of these four major airports. It is neither economical nor practicable to keep every spare in every place. But I entirely agree with the hon. Member that this is a matter which must be kept under constant supervision and efforts made to improve the system.

PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE: After the occurrence of this accident, a specific statement had appeared, and it was in the name of an airport expert, which said that this accident and even the earlier accidents were probably due to the failure of the communication system at Palam airport. I would like to know from the hon. Minister what steps are being taken to see that this inadequacy of the communication system at the Palam airport is completely removed.

DR. KARAN SINGH: I am not aware which expert the hon. Member means, nor do I know the specific statement. But generally, the communication network as well as various other components of aviation structure need to be strengthened, and a number of measures are being taken immediately. Orders have already been placed for equipment worth many lakhs of rupees, even crores of rupees, and every effort will be made within the limitation of our resources to improve the situation.

SHRI R. S. PANDEY: The hon. Minister just now told the House that the necessary orders have been placed for equipping the airports. May I know whether the attention of the Minister has been drawn to the report that the World Pilots Association have refused to land at Palam airport because they have drawn the

conclusion that Palam airport is not fully equipped.

AN HON. MEMBER: It has been contradicted.

SHRI R. S. PANDEY: I know the contradiction. May I know whether it is true that this kind of news has been published and whether the attention of the Minister has been drawn to it? May I also know whether all the international airport in our country are fully equipped and, if not, why not?

DR. KARAN SINGH: The reported statement of the World Pilots' Association to the effect that they were going to overfly the Indian airports is not correct. At our instance, the Aviation Adviser in our High Commission in London contacted the London headquarters of the IFALPA in regard to the reported move about the ban on flights and he has been informed by their spokesman that they are not aware of the alleged move nor did they authorise any newspaper to publish any such report. May I say that this sort of report has been appearing and we ourselves are extremely anxious that our equipment should be tested and retested. We have done that.

As I mentioned the other day, the ILS has been calibrated by us again. After these reports, a representative of the manufacturers of this equipment is in India. Also, if necessary, more tests will be done. But this sort of press campaign abroad which seems to have started against the Delhi airport,—I do not really know—I think, is very unfortunate. We have looked into the working of all the four international airports and the deficiencies such as may be there and the improvements that will take place cover all the four international airports.

SHRI SOMNATH CHATTERJEE: The Minister said that after the report of the commission has been received, a system of medical check-up

of the pilots has been introduced. May I know whether previously there was no system of medical check-up of pilots? What is the new system that has been set up?

DR. KARAN-SINGH: There was a general system of medical check-up which the pilots had to undergo from time to time after a certain number of months. Now the new system is that at the four major airports from where flights originate, doctors have been posted at the airports. Before a pilot undertakes a flight, the doctor looks at him and if he suspects anything, they are put through a breathalyser test. I agree that it is unfortunate that this sort of thing had to be introduced. In the interests of safety and in view of our past experience, we had no alternative.

SHRI BHAGWAT JHA AZAD: While appreciating the appointment of Mr. Lal, may I know what efforts and action are taken by the Government at the departmental level to give a decent burial to controversies like ILS or non-maintenance etc. in this regard?

DR. KARAN SINGH: As I had occasion recently to announce, we have appointed a high level committee under Mr. J. R. D. Tata including Air Marshal P. C. Lal and the Secretary in my Ministry to look into the entire structure and functioning of the civil aviation department. This department was set up about 40 or 45 years ago. In view of the modern requirements of aviation, we are looking at it *de novo* and whatever major modifications or changes may be required, they will be looked into by this committee.

SHRI MOINUL HAQUE CHOU-DHURY rose—

MR. SPEAKER: You have become suddenly very active!

SHRI MOINUL HAQUE CHOU-DHURY: Yes, Sir, I have got to be active. Referring to Lucknow airport, the Minister just now said that they cannot keep spares in every airport. While travelling from Calcutta to Delhi in a Boeing, the plane was diverted to Lucknow at 9-30 in the night.

MR. SPEAKER: Everyone will have a number of stories to tell, but ask a relevant question.

SHRI MOINUL HAQUE CHOU-DHURY: Is it a fact that at 9-30 in the night, in the Lucknow airport there was no ground officer, catering was closed and all the passengers including myself had to wait till 12 o'clock without a drop of water? Will the civil aviation department make some arrangement for the normal facilities of passengers at least in every airport?

MR. SPEAKER: This does not relate to the air crash.

SHRI M. KALYANASUNDARAM: The Minister said that a high level committee has been appointed to enquire into the deficiencies. I do not know what are the terms of reference of this committee. Since a large number of technicians are involved, may I know whether the technical personnel will be represented in the committee? If there is nobody from the technical side, what are the reasons for it?

DR. KARAN SINGH: This committee is going to look into the entire gamut of civil aviation problems including not only the four international airports but airports all over India. Air Marshal P. C. Lal, who has been the Chief of the Air Force and who is going to take over from 1st August as Chairman and Managing Director of Indian Airlines is there. In addition, any technical

body or any other person who may be required to give evidence will be allowed to give evidence. We would welcome in fact every technical view that may be available.

MR. SPEAKER: Do the survivors have any question to ask? We are very happy that Shrimati Jayalakshmi and Shri Bhaura are amongst us. Do they have any questions to ask?

SHRIMATI V. JAYALAKSHMI: No; thank you, Sir.

SHRI SEZHIYAN: The findings of the Sachar Commission had brought out the deficiencies and failures in the instruments and other equipment associated with the landing. But these deficiencies and failures have not been there only on that day. They ought to have been there for long and should have been identified by earlier investigations whenever such mishaps took place at Palam and other airports. I would like to know what actions have been taken on the previous investigations to avoid and eliminate the deficiencies which have persisted that long, for which I feel the Ministry should own responsibility. The Minister of Civil Aviation has been so sensitive as to resign earlier when an Avro crash took place. Now I feel the entire Ministry should resign after this air crash on 31st May.

DR. KARAN SINGH: For the sake of record, I should say that the judge has not held that the instrument was not in any way responsible for this crash. On the contrary, the judge has clearly said that the nonavailability of the ILS cannot be said to be a cause of the accident. I am saying that for the record. There is no doubt that this enquiry as well as earlier enquiries have brought to notice certain points which need improvement.

SHRI PILOO MODY: What is the function of the ILS?

DR. KARAN SINGH: To help the pilot to come below a certain minima. But that was not a cause of the crash. There are many airports where ILS is not there and Boeings are landing.

SHRI PILOO MODY: It was one system which was not available to the pilot, for which responsibility attaches to the Ministry.

SHRI SEZHIYAN: When you say they need improvement, you accept that there are deficiencies.

DR. KARAN SINGH: I accept that there is a great deal of scope for improvement. As I said, a number of measures have already been initiated to improve the situation and more will be done.

SHRI VIRBHADRA SINGH: From the reports appearing in the press from day to day during the enquiry one got the impression that there was an over-eagerness on the part of all, especially the people in the civil aviation ministry, to put the blame on the pilot. Because it was a highly technical matter, I would like to know whether the judge was competent to give a judgment on such a highly technical matter and if he was, whether he was assisted in this by any technical people.

DR. KARAN SINGH: I must repudiate the suggestion that there is any attempt by us to put the blame on anybody. This is a judicial enquiry. He is a sitting judge of the Delhi High Court. He was assisted by two assessors, Group Captain A. D. Ralli of the Indian Air Force and Captain D. Bose of Air India. He has come to his own independent conclusions. There is no question of putting the blame on anybody.

SHRI H. M. PATEL: It would seem that the Ministry is accustomed to take steps to improve matters only when there are crashes. There was a crash of an Avro and it was the finding of the judge who was appointed to go into it that the training instructor was an established alcoholic. No statement has been issued by the Ministry as to what steps they have taken to prevent this. Just as medical checks are now introduced after the crash, I presume that the question of pilots not being under the influence of alcohol when they are in charge of an aircraft will now be instituted. It is said that you have sent for instruments to check the pilots. But we would like to know how it came about that a known alcoholic, known even to the Aviation Department, was permitted to be in charge of an aircraft.

DR. KARAN SINGH: It is indeed extremely unfortunate that highly paid and highly skilled people like pilots, some of them at least, should be consuming alcohol before flights. Even if a pilot drinks, at least when he flies he should not drink. We assume that a pilot will have that much responsibility. He can have a drink occasionally at his house, if he feels like that. It is for this very reason that we have now instituted checks before flight to ensure that alcohol is not consumed so many hours before the flight. Certainly, my personal view is that nobody should drink. But if he is on holiday and he wants to have a drink, we do not grudge it. But he must not drink before he takes a plane. It is a criminal offence to drink before you fly a plane. It is for that reason that we have introduced that system.

SHRI H. M. PATEL: In the case of the Avro crash, the pilot was known to be an alcoholic. He was put in a medical institution to see if he could get over it. But he could not get

over it. He was always under the influence of liquor. This is not my view but the finding of the Committee. How is it that no steps were taken in the matter earlier? How could he continue to fly?

MR. KARAN SINGH: I agree that it is a very unfortunate case. Since the pilot died no steps could be taken against him. Steps could be taken only to prevent a recurrence of such things.

MR. SPAKER: The question is very simple. When he was known to be an alcoholic, why was he allowed to fly a plane? The question is not whether he died or not.

DR. KARAN SINGH: It is certainly very unfortunate that this sort of person should be allowed to be in the corporation at all. We are now 'looking into the matter.' We have taken a number of pilots off command. We are looking into the hole of our checking and training procedures of pilots and trying to ensure that this sort of thing does not recur.

WRITTEN ANSWER TO QUESTIONS

Loans from World Bank for Irrigation Projects in India

*84. SHRI NARENDRA SINGH:

SHRI B. S. BHAURA:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether differences between India and the World Bank in fixing the criteria for new bank loans for irrigation projects have been sorted out; and

(b) if so, the broad outlines of the terms and conditions of agreement reached in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI K. R. GANESH): (a) and (b). The Government of India has made suggestions regarding procedures for tendering and award of civil works contracts in irrigation projects financed by the World Bank group. These are still under discussion.

Recommendations made by Mathrani Committee

*85. SHRI SAMAR MUKHERJEE:

DR. H. P. SHARMA:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received the recommendations of Mathrani Committee regarding the pay-scales of employees in the General Insurance business; and

(b) if so, the recommendations made by the Committee?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI-MATI SUSHILA ROHATGI): (a) and (b). A statement is laid on the Table of the House. (Placed in Library. See No. LT-5128/73).

Formulation of a Plan to step up Exports

*86. SHRI R. R. SINGH DEO: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have formulated a 10-year perspective plan to step up exports;

(b) whether a copy of this plan will be laid on the Table of the House; and

(c) the total additional foreign exchange earning which is anticipated at the end of 1980 on the basis of this plan?