

involved. We are taking steps to see that this does not happen.

At the same time, it is necessary that costly things are not carried in the baggage. If they are carried in the baggage, the Airport authorities have to be informed that those things are carried in the baggage. They may have to pay some extra charges for that so that those things are separated and put in some other place. Lakhs and lakhs of rupees are carried in suitcases and the authorities in the Airport are unaware of these facts. It sometimes becomes difficult to give protection also. So, costly things have to be carried in their hands, not in the baggage which is kept like that. This is the difficulty. All the same, we are looking into this matter and we are going to provide as much safety as is possible.

Fire in Ordnance Equipment Factory, Kanpur

*568. SHRI ATISH CHANDRA SINHA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have finalised the quantum of losses due to fire in 1987 in the textile wing of the Ordnance Equipment Factory, Kanpur;

(b) the details of the investigating agencies that conducted enquiries into the fire in 1987 in the Ordnance Equipment Factory, Kanpur; and

(c) the action taken against those found responsible for the fire?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE PRODUCTION AND SUPPLIES IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI): (a) to (c). A statement is given below.

STATEMENT

The fire which occurred in one of the sheds of Light Textile section of Ordnance Equipment Factory (OEF), Kanpur on the night of 17th and 18th May, 1987 (sunday) was investigated into by two Boards of Enquiry.

2. The preliminary Board of Enquiry constituted by the General Manager, OEF, Kanpur on 18.5.87 was chaired by Shri K. P. Singh, Joint General Manager with Shri G.P. Sinha, Deputy General Manager and Shri Mahesh Gupta, Works Manager as Members. The preliminary enquiry report was sent to Additional Director General Ordnance Factories, OEF Group Hqrs., Kanpur who thereupon appointed a regular Board of Enquiry on 4-6-87 with Shri C.K. Gupta, Director Vigilance, OEF Group Hqrs., Kanpur as Chairman with Shri V.P. Chandna, Joint Director (Project), OEF Group Hqrs., and Shri R. K. Singh, Accounts Officer, OEF Group Hqrs as members. The second committee finalised its report on 17.7.87.

3. The damage to building, electric wiring, material etc. has been assessed at Rs. 1,16,650.

4. The undermentioned staff, who were found negligent in detecting and putting out the fire quickly, were proceeded against:—

(a) One security Assistant Grade 'A' incharge of security in night shift.

(b) One Security Assistant Grade 'B' on duty as Gate-Keeper near Weigh Bridge

(c) One Jamadar Durwan (civilian)

(d) One Durwan (civilian)

(e) One Fireman

The disciplinary action against persons at (a) to (e) above were concluded and penalties of reduction of pay have already been imposed on them.

5. The Ordnance Factory Board has initiated disciplinary action against a Foreman who was incharge of opening and closing of the building in which the fire occurred. The disciplinary case is underway.
6. No person was found directly responsible for the fire which most probably was caused by Electrical Short Circuit, though evidence available was not conclusive.

SHRI ATISH CHANDRA SINHA: From the answer of the Minister it seems that the staff involved in this were found negligent in detecting and putting out the fire quickly. I think, for the staff who are negligent in putting out a fire quickly there should not be any pardon. I strongly feel that the penalties that have been imposed by the Government on these negligent staff are absolutely inadequate. I don't know exactly the amount of money that has been deducted from their salary. But I think more penal action should have been taken. I would like to know what exemplary punishment does the Department think should be befitting such negligent staff which has caused a loss to the tune of Rs. 1,16,650 to this factory?

SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI: I am very happy that the hon. Member is putting a very relevant question. First there was a preliminary board of inquiry and as it was not found satisfactory they set-up a regular

board of inquiry. That regular board of inquiry has already taken action against one Security Assistant Grade 'A' incharge of security in night shift; one Security Assistant Grade 'B' on duty as Gate-Keeper near Weigh Bridge; two civilians and a Fireman. Now the hon. Member wants to know whether the penalty is serious or mild. This penalty has been recommended by the regular board of inquiry and those penalties have already been imposed. Further they have initiated disciplinary action against Foreman who was incharge of opening and closing the building in which fire took place. That case is still under-way. According to the recommendation of the regular board of inquiry they have taken action. If the hon. Member feels that this action is a mild action then we will have to go into the things but it is the board of inquiry which has to take action. We are not directly concerned.

SHRI ATISH CHANDRA SINHA: It seems that the cause of this fire is through a short circuit. I understand that the building is old and the electrical wiring is old. Apart from the measures that the hon. Minister has suggested to be taken against the negligent staff what steps are being taken from the Ministry for re-wiring of building so that short circuit does not take place in future?

SHRI CHINTAMANI PANIGRAHI: It is a long statement. The regular board of inquiry has suggested about 14 remedial measures. If you like, I can read them out.

Package of Programmes on Science and Technology

*571. **SHRI SRIBALLAV PANIGRAHI:** Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the basis on which a package of programmes intended to give a boost to higher science and technical education during the Eighth Plan is proposed; and