

### Passenger service of Air India

\*290. SHRI D.P. JADEJA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) what steps are being taken to improve passenger service of Air India, both on the ground and in the air;

(b) whether any monitoring is being done of complaints about the casual treatment and cavalier attitude of ground staff to passengers of Air India;

(c) whether any such cases have been brought to notice of Government;

(d) the details of such cases in 1987; and

(e) the penalties meted out to erring and mis-behaving staff?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION AND MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) to (e). A Statement is given below.

#### STATEMENT

(a) Improvement of services of Air-India is a on-going process. Air India makes constant efforts to provide better and more modern facilities to its passengers. Introduction of computerised ticketing/reservation systems, provision of special facilities for business/first class passengers, and training of staff in dealing with passengers are some of the steps which have been taken to improve services, both on ground and in the air.

(b) All passenger complaints are analysed in the Passenger Relations Division of the Commercial Department. Remedial action, including disciplinary action is taken if responsibility of the Air-India staff is established.

(c) and (d). Complaints are received both in the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Air-India. These complaints generally relate to staff attitudes, improvement in ground handling of passengers and inflight service.

(e) Penalties like withholding of increment, reduction in grade, withholding of portion of the efficiency bonus, issue of warning, etc., are imposed on the erring staff.

SHRI D.P. JADEJA: I join my colleague in wishing the hon. Minister a very happy Birth Day.

I would like to know this from him because the answer that he has given is of a very general nature. I would like to inform him that people who fly by Air India are doing so mainly because of the high reputation of the technical staff and the pilots who have a long experience. This is the principal reason why people fly by Air India.

As far as in-service matter is concerned, the service towards the foreigner is excellent. They are full of praise for it. But Indians who are not, I would say, recommended to the airlines find it a little difficult to get things what they want from the crew. But the in-flight service is also excellent. The complaint is mainly from the ground staff, more so, with the staff in the offices in different places. And the maximum complaint we receive is from London. It is difficult to contact anybody responsible in the London office at all. In view of this, I would like to know from the Hon. Minister that the passengers who come by Air India normally come to Bombay and then go onwards to different places by Indian Airlines. They come to Bombay with OK ticket, with an OK on their Indian Airlines ticket also. But when they go to the Indian Airlines office, they are told that their name is not on the list whereby they find it difficult in going to these places especially to Cochin, Trivandrum and Hyderabad. These passengers suffer because the Air India agents abroad put these OK marks and send the passengers away. I would like to know from the Hon. Minister what steps have been taken for a better coordination between Air India and Indian Airlines and the Air India agents?

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER: Sir, the Hon. Member has pointed out some of the fre-

quent complaints which we also receive. On the basis of these complaints, I have been constantly trying to improve the image of Air India and trying to provide more comfort and also see that the people who generally come from outside countries whether they are foreigners or the Indians returning homes are not put to difficulties. We have recently started computer services and we have connected the Indian Airlines computers with the Air India. After we have connected computers, these kinds of complaints are much less in number. Wherever it has been reported, wherever passenger who has had OK ticket bought from a local agent and if that has not been honoured by Indian Airlines, I have personally seen and gone into the complaints. I may tell you, these were frequent complaints before. But recently, the number has come down drastically and I think, in times to come, it will be completely eliminated.

SHRI D.P. JADEJA: Sir, my second question to the Hon. Minister would be regarding the Board of Air India. It was the practice earlier that this board was dominated more by bureaucrats. Lately you have introduced people from big business houses. Sir, these are two classes who always fly either at company account or at Government account and they do not have a real feed-back of the difficulties faced by the general public. Would the Minister consider having more public men on this Board for a better service in Air India?

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER: Sir, this is the experiment we did and we are just analysing the effect of that experiment. I will certainly keep your suggestion in view.

SHRI SRIKANTA DATTA NARASIMHARAJA WADIYAR: Hon. Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the Hon. Minister that has it come to his notice that a large number of passengers were stranded at London Heathrow Airport even after having confirmed onward reservation, due to lack of proper co-ordination between Air India Booking Staff and the handling staff at the airport? I would like to know what

action the Minister proposes to take to set right this state of affairs?

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER: Sir, this kind of problem exists in New York and London where we are over-booking, but that practice is done because the international tickets one does not cancel as there are cancellation charges. So, the people do not turn up and we have to suffer a huge loss. As a policy matter, it is not the Air India but all over the world, the international flights are over-booked. But whenever there is the instance of passengers being stranded, either because of a technical snag or some other reason, we make sure that they are put in a comfortable hotel next to the airport.

PROF. MADHU DANDEVATE: Sir, I would like to know from the Hon. Minister, whether it is a fact that some of the pilots have complained that some aircrafts which we have purchased from Singapore as second-hand aircrafts, are not giving proper service and as a result of that...

AN HON. MEMBER: Sir, it does not relate to the original question.

MR. SPEAKER: He is taking over my duty.

PROF. MADHU DANDEVATE: Can I know, what the Deputy Speaker is saying, Sir?

MR. SPEAKER: He is in the post of Chairman, sir.

PROF. MADHU DANDEVATE: Sir, I would like to know whether some pilots have complained that the aircrafts, which were purchased from Singapore as second-hand aircrafts, does not give proper service to the passengers and as a result of that, to be very concrete on 16 July, 1987 the Air India flight which was to fly from Bombay via Delhi was grounded and as a result of that some other aircraft was to be used proving that the complaint was correct. If it is so, what steps are you

taking, at least in the future, to avoid purchase of second hand aircrafts?

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER: Sir, first of all I would like to inform the hon. Member that it was not the pilot who complained about this particular crack. We got the information, rather I got the information from Singapore that this aircraft has...

PROF. MADHU DANDEVATE: Forget that pilot, take it as my complaint.

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER: But this was a minor thing and it took few hours to repair that. As far as I know, there has not been any complaint to us of this sort. Where we find that passengers were put to inconvenience because the flight could not start in time, another aircraft was used.

PROF. MADHU DANDEVATE: I have concretely given the date and the flight, you can check it up.

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER: Yes, I will check it up.

SHRI D.N. REDDY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, before I ask the supplementary, I seek permission to make a submission. Some of the few silent members....

MR. SPEAKER: Is this under 377?

SHRI D.N. REDDY: I seek permission to make submission for only one minute. All the silent Members who have been obediently raising their hands every time to ask for a supplementary but Sir, unfortunately are not able to catch the eye of the Chair....

MR. SPEAKER: There are 544 Members. Naturally, I have to see all of them. I know you are very eager, but I cannot help it.

SHRI D.N. REDDY: One of my colleagues has advised me that it is not enough to raise my voice, but I have to shout and outshout some of the Members to catch the eyes and the ears of the Chair. Can you advise me to follow their advice or

just silently observe the Members who by their noise dominate the House? I would request you to please give a chance to those Members who silently obey the Chair.

MR. SPEAKER: It is not a question of noisy scene; in the Question Hour everybody does it. If you were to be in the Chair, I think you would do the same thing because you cannot do it all the time, you cannot call everybody at every time. If you can do it, I will be your *Chela!*

SHRI D.N. REDDY: In the present Session, this is the first time that I am getting a chance to ask a supplementary; I am very sorry for it.

PROF. MADHU DANDEVATE: I would suggest that don't keep your eyes steady, try to wink!

SHRI D.N. REDDY: I may be mistaken by the lady Members.

MR. SPEAKER: If that is not unparliamentary, I will allow!

SHRI D.N. REDDY: Coming to the supplementary, though today is the birthday of the Hon. Member, I am sorry to say that I have to pass a dispering remark about his Department.

Especially in the last three months the punctuality of flights and the catering have been bad and they are becoming worse. I don't know the reason why the punctuality of getting off of the planes has been so bad in the last three months. I had to return from the airport twice or thrice because the 5.40 flight which goes from here to Hyderabad and then to Madras was late by two or three hours. I hear the same thing from other passengers also.

As far as the catering is concerned, I remember that a few months back a petition signed by some ten MPs both from Madras and Hyderabad complaining about the catering of the Hotel Samrat Complex had been given to you. There, the

food was very very bad I am told by the staff that I have to pay nearly 40 to 50 rupees for that catering. I am not quite sure how much you take. You should improve the catering and improve the punctuality of the flights also.

Today is your birthday, please keep your word. Don't give an empty promise.

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER: I would like to inform the Hon. Member that the question originally relates to the Air India; but anyway he had put a question on Indian Airlines. I would like to take this opportunity to inform all the Hon. Members that as for the Air India's punctuality, I think it is one of the best in the world. If I were to give the figures... *(Interruptions)*

He has not heard me. I have said that he has put a question on Indian Airlines. But because the question relates to Air India, I would take this opportunity to inform the House that the on-time performance of Air India is one of the best in the world.

Coming back to the question which he has put, I would like to inform him that no Airlines officer or a G.M. or a Chairman or the Minister would like to have an aircraft on the ground even for five minutes because it is a total loss for us; even a minute costs us. If it is on a technical reason, or for certain reasons beyond the control of the pilots or engineers, then I am sorry, nobody could help it.

AN HON. MEMBER: It is happening everyday.

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER: As far as food is concerned, initially there was a lot of complaint about it. Wherever it had been brought to my notice, I made it sure myself personally that the Regional Director was responsible for lifting of the food to any particular region. If there is any particular problem, I would like to put that also right.

SHRI NARAYAN CHAUBEY: Air India is one of the best in the world and Indian Airlines is the worst in India!

### **Refinance support for Financing Tractor owners by NABARD**

\*292. SHRI SOMNATH RATH:  
SHRI PARASRAM BHARDWAJ:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) has drawn up a new scheme to extend refinance support for financing tractor-owners to undertake major repairs of tractors; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COOPERATION IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI YOGENDRA MAKWANA): (a) and (b). A Statement is given below.

#### **STATEMENT**

(a) and (b). In order to ensure optimum use by prolonging the economic life of tractors, the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) has introduced a scheme of refinance for renovation/replacement of important spare parts of tractors from 1st July, 1987. The terms and conditions for such refinance are as follows:—

#### *Eligibility of loan*

- (i) Only those farmers who had purchased tractors earlier through bank finance and had fully repaid their loans will be eligible for obtaining loans for repairs of their tractors from the branches of the same bank.
- (ii) The tractor for the repair of which loan is to be obtained should be more than 7 years old but should not be older than 12 years from the date of manufacture.
- (iii) Bank loan for the purpose will be available once only.