

SHRI K. KARUNAKARAN : Sir, as far as the first question is concerned, the man put in charge has full powers of the permanent C.M.D. or M.D. Even the C.M.D. or M.D. is not authorised to do everything. The C.M.D. or M.D. is controlled by the Board. The Board has to decide not only the policy matters and certain matters but also the Board will give directions to the C.M.D. or M.D. Just because a C.M.D. or M.D. is not there, the work will not suffer. The Board is functioning. The Board is responsible for the functioning of the undertaking.

SHRI CHETAN P.S. CHAUHAN : Why is there the C.M.D. then?...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI SRIBALLAV PANIGRAHI : Sir, the hon. Minister has already assured to expedite the process of appointment of the Chief Executives of the P.S.U.s. He is also right in his observation that the right type and competent people are required to be selected to man the PSUs...(*Interruptions*) Naturally, it is always necessary that they have the commitment and conviction to run the PSUs.

I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether after the implementation of our new economic policy and industrial policy and with the M.N.Cs. coming in large numbers, some of our executives are attracted towards the M.N.Cs. They are leaving our PSUs increasingly and joining the M.N.Cs. because the salaries, allowances and perks which they are offering are more attractive. I want to know whether this is also causing a problem to the Government in the selection of right type of persons, competent persons to man the PSUs and if so, what is the thinking of the Government to overcome the situation? In some PSUs, there is also discontentment among the executives when they are comparing the allowances, salaries and perks with that of the that the salaries, allowances and perks etc. of the IAS officers etc. because they are more attractive.

SHRI K. KARUNAKARAN : It is correct to certain extent. At the same time, the selections are made from among those who are working in the same undertaking or when no competent person is available in the particular undertaking, we take persons from other undertakings also. If competent persons are not available in the public undertakings, then only we will go to the open market. Of course, what the hon. Member has said is correct. To a certain extent, the salaries in other firms are more. In that case we are trying our best to take the best of the lot. There are people who want to serve the country. So such people may come forward. Or, certain people are taken in a sense of prestige to serve the public sector undertakings. Such people are coming and competent people are available.

[*Translation*]

SHRI RABI RAY : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I want to point out to

the hon'ble Minister that we are talking have about Public sector and this is public property. Does he know what is going on in The Hindustan Heavy Engineering Corporation, Ranchi which is to the List of 37 undertakings presented here. This Heavy Engineering Corporation which was supposed to industrialise India has even proposed to sell its Russian Hostel and Hospital to private parties even it was functioning without a CMD for a long time. The long time absence of CMD is the Crux of the problem. I want to know from hon. Minister whether it is true that the Russian Hostel and the Hospital were proposed to be disposed of to the private parties? Would he apprise of The Financial State of affairs and junctioning of that Heavy Engineering Corporation.

[*English*]

SHRI K. KARUNAKARAN : Sir, I am sorry the figure is not available with me. If a specific question is asked, I will reply.

MR. SPEAKER : Right.

Ferozabad Rail Accident

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*44. SHRI GUMAN MAL LODHA :
SHRI D. VENKATESWARA RAO :

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether the report of the judicial and senior Government Inspector of Railways Inquiries into the Ferozabad Rail Disaster has been submitted ;

(b) if so, the outcome thereof and the Government's reaction thereto ;

(c) the details of the compensation provided to the dependents of the deceased; and

(d) the preventive measures taken/proposed in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SURESH KALMADI) : (a) to (d). A *Statement* is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT

(a) Yes, Sir, The report of Commissioner of Railway Safety, Northern Circle, who enquired into this accident, has been received on 21.11.1995.

(b) The Commissioner of Railway Safety has held the Switchman of Ferozabad West Cabin primarily responsible for

causing the accident. The recommendations of the Commissioner of Railway Safety are being examined.

(c) An ex-gratia payment of Rs. 29,10,000 has been paid to the dependents of the deceased. Compensation will be paid soon after the claims are decreed by the Railway Claims Tribunal.

(d) Measures taken to prevent such accidents

- (i) The Government has decided to complete track circuiting from Fouling Mark to Fouling Mark on all the stations on trunk routes and main lines by March, 1996. Track circuiting between starter and advanced starter on all the trunk routes will be completed by June, 1996.
- (ii) The radio-based communication system between station staff, driver and guard of the running train will be provided which will enable preventive action in such exigencies.
- (iii) Railways have been asked to provide track circuit ahead of starter signal to make the starter signal red after the passage of the train.
- (iv) The distance between starter and advanced starter is being reduced to 180 meters at road-side stations so that the train, if it has not passed advanced starter, can be seen by the Cabinman.
- (v) Signal circuit are being modified to ensure the presence of only one train on one line at any given time in station limits.
- (vi) A high level 'Safety Group' has been set up to suggest measures to further improve safety standards on Indian Railways.
- (vii) In addition, on-going safety measures like counselling, inspections/checks, monitoring have been intensified.

[Translation]

SHRI GUMAN MAL LODHA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, We are well aware that the Rail Disaster between Kalindi Express and Purushottam Express is the most horrible and worst train accident that ever took place during the last ten years in India in which more than 500 people were killed and many more got injured. When the Honourable Minister was asked as to what happen to the report submitted by the judicial and Senior Government Inspector of Railways regarding investigations carried out about the accident. He did not uttered even a single word about it and tried to evade this question, whether any such probe has been made in this regard or not in his reply he maintained that the Security Officer had investigated the

matter and we are looking into the report received in this regard. But nothing was said substantially in the House about this horrible incident. I would also like to know from the honourable Minister as to what sort of probe was made by the judicial and Senior Government Inspector and where is the report. If no report is there then what are the reasons?

I would also like to know from the honourable Minister that how many people died in this accident, what is the number of those who had been permanently disabled and ex-gratia payment made to each of them. The Prime Minister had announced double ex-gratia payment than the payment made in the normal circumstances in view of the horrifying nature of this Rail Disaster. I want to know the amount paid to each such person and whether the guard sitting in side had really give any signal?

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : I will not allow a question of this kind. You please come to the question proper.

SHRI GUMAN MAL LODHA : Sir, the question is that whether...

MR. SPEAKER : Whether there was a judicial inquiry or not, whether the report is given or not and what are the contents of the report. That is all. Please sit down now.

SHRI GUMAN MAL LODHA : How many persons have been killed, how many persons have been permanently disabled, how many persons have been temporarily disabled and what is the amount of compensation paid to each one.

SHRI SURESH KALMADI : Sir, I will answer all his questions. Sir, the hon. Member has not seen the statement which has been laid on the Table of the House. It very clearly says that the report of the Commissioner, Railway Safety, Northern Circle, who inquired into the accident, has been received on 21.11.1995. That is just about a week back and it is under study. But I shall tell you that they have held the Switchman, Gore Lal of the Ferozabad Station who is primarily responsible for it.

Sir, we have given – as the Prime Minister had directed – double compensation, the *ex-gratia*, etc. to them. A total number of 310 persons had lost their lives and 252 persons sustained injury. Out of which, 152 were grievous. But out of these 152, only six people continue to be serious and are in the hospital. First, we have made *ex-gratia* payment.

As regards, the permanent claim of Rs. 2 lakhs which is to be given, that is being given by the Railway Claim Tribunal which is processing the cases. Up till now, 146 persons have already claimed for it and we are awaiting for the orders of the Claim Tribunal.

[*Translation*]

SHRI GUMAN MAL LODHA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have not received the answer of my question. I wanted to know whether the judicial and Senior Government Inspector of Railways had made any probe in this regard. Because the Minister of Railways had announced that considering the tragic nature of this Rail Disaster a probe would be conducted by the judicial Senior Government Inspector. Whether the probe was conducted and if not then why?

As has been said that the precautions would be taken to prevent such accidents in future and whether there is any plan afoot to develop a system for sending radio signals to the nearby stations for this purpose. This is the age of cellular phones which can be installed within the vicinity of 10-15 kilometer area near the accident site. Therefore, whether you are going to make such an arrangement as soon as possible, so as to avoid this type of Rail Disaster and what steps have been taken to prevent the same in the near future?

[*English*]

SHRI SURESH KALMADI : Sir, it was already announced that the Commissioner of Railway Safety, Northern Circle, would inquire and he had accordingly, submitted his report last week.

Now, we have taken many significant steps for preventing such accidents. Actually, the safety aspect has been on the top most priority of the Railways, and we have been monitoring very minutely even if it is a very small incident.

We are completing the track circuiting from Fouling Mark to Fouling Mark on all the stations on trunk routes and main lines, which are originally scheduled to be finished by June end. Now, they are doing it by March end. Also, the track circuiting between Starter and the Advanced Starter was supposed to be done by December and next year, but we are focussing on safety.

Regarding the communication system which you have mentioned, we have gone in for the latest type of communication system between the driver, the guard and the railway station. A budget of Rs. 200 crore has been ear-marked for two years. In many places, the trial has already gone on and we are taking this up. Communication is also another top-priority aspect for us because it will increase safety.

SHRI D. VENKATESWARA RAO : I would like to know from the hon. Minister, what are the recommendations of the V.S. Dutta Commission. The Minister has been saying that certain measures have been taken like complete track circuiting, radio-based communication system between the station staff etc. But if you look at the number of accidents that took place,

in 1990-91 it was 532; in 1991-92, it was 530; in 1992-93, it was 524; in 1993-94, it was 520, and in 1995-96 it is reaching about 520. These include all kinds of accidents, be it fire accident or level-crossing accident or collusion accident.

The hon. Prime Minister ordered a study of the railway safety system in the advanced countries by a Special Group in the Ministry of Railways as well as in the Defence. What are the recommendations of this Special Group, what are the recommendations of the Dutta Committee, and what measures are being taken to implement recommendations?

SHRI SURESH KALMADI : The Prime Minister had constituted a Committee. Some members of the Committee went to U.K., and some members went to Japan to study the various aspects of safety. The Committee will complete and give its report by December.

As far as the number of railway accidents is concerned, I am happy to say that the accident rate is coming down year by year. In 1960-61, it was 5.5 per cent. You have started from 1990-91, when it was 0.86 per cent, it has come down from 532 to about 501. In 1994-95, from April to October, 307 accidents took place, and in 1995-96, from April to October, 215 accidents took place. So, the trend is downwards. I would like to say that we are taking stringent action, and we are not shielding anybody. For the last 50 accidents that took place in the last two-and-a-half months, nearly 50 people have been suspended. So we are sparing no effort to ensure safety because each life is very precious.

[*Translation*]

SHRI HARI KISHORE SINGH : Mr. Speaker, Sir, every year between Kanpur and Tundla about one hundred major and minor accidents take place. Recently we went to attend the last rites of our old friend Shankar Dayal Singh. A train accident occurred on this line after Kanpur. The tractor and trolley collided with each other as a result thereof we were delayed by eight hours. I would like to submit that keeping in view the volume of traffic between Kanpur and Tundla, the Government would make arrangement for a double line in order to decrease the number of accidents and to avoid any impediment in the movement of goods as well as of passengers.

[*English*]

SHRI SURESH KALMADI : Sir, We can consider the suggestion.

SHRI HARI KISHORE SINGH: Very good.

[*Translation*]

SHRI MOHAN SINGH (Deoria) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, Even after the Ferozabad Rail Disaster, such accidents have become a common feature on this trunk. As magnitude wise

these are not so big than the Ferozabad accident. Therefore, Government does not pay much attention to such things. The main reason for this as pointed out by Hari Kishoreji is that the railway line between Ghaziabad and Kanpur is functioning much above the saturation point. 135 per cent trains are running there. From goods to passenger trains are running on this track. Therefore, such communiques were received repeatedly from the department that between Kanpur and Tundla and Tundla and Ghaziabad four tracks would be constructed in place of two tracks. Announcement to this effect has also been made but in this connection we want to know whether the department has actually initiated any follow up action in this regard? At the same time it has also been asked in the original question that what assistance have been rendered to the kith and kin of those killed in this accident? So far as I know the department has not been able to find out and publish the address of the families of the deceased accurately till date. I want to know from the Minister that how many helpless and orphan children are getting assistance from the Government at present and where they have been kept?

[English]

SHRI SURESH KALMADI : I will mention that this is a very busy route. We are thinking of the third line on certain stretches of the route. Also, we are updating all the communication system and signalling system. In that way, the frequency of the trains etc. also can increase.

As far as compensation given is concerned, most of the people have been given, everybody has been paid *ex-gratia* payment. Then, in the case of 19 people who died, their bodies have not been recognised or recovered by anybody. So, those are the only cases which are pending. Now, about the cases which have gone to the Railway Claims Tribunal, 146 compensation cases have been filled so far. Generally, the Railway Claims Tribunal does the payment in about six months' time. They all get it. So, the process is on. From the Railways side, we have given the forms to everybody who has been affected, to all the families which were affected, to all the people who were injured. All that has been done.

[Translation]

SHRI SURAJ MANDAL : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the switchman has been held guilty in the report of safety Commissioner. In the Ferozabad and Pradhankhanta Rail Disaster too the switchman was held responsible. Where ever accidents occur in most of the cases switchman is found guilty. The accidents take place mainly due to the shortage of switchman, running staff and other class four employees and often they have to perform 12, 18, and even 22 hours duty for eight hours normal duty. I want to know from the Government whether the vacancies under these categories are likely to be filled by the Railway department or not, in the Ferozabad accident. The switchman was found guilty whether he did more than eight

hours duty or not? All the posts of high ups never lie vacant but the posts of running staff and those belonging to grade three and four are not filled up. They should not do duty for more than eight hours to avoid accidents... (Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Please be relevant to the question.

[Translation]

SHRI SURAJ MANDAL : I also want to know whether the switchman of Ferozabad did more than eight hours duty or not?

[English]

SHRI SURESH KALMADI : Sir, I would like to say that in this case, the switchman did not do duty for more than eight hours. He was away on training for about 15 days. He came back and the last two days he was on duty. it was for eight hours only. It is also not true that only the switchmen has been singled out though he is primarily responsible for this tragedy. He failed on many fronts. But we have taken action on many others. For poor supervision, we have suspended Shri R. P. Yadav, Station Superintendent, Ferozabad. We have also suspended Shri A.K. Sexena, Traffic Inspector, Tundla, who was also in charge of the Marshalling Yard.

We have charge-sheeted Shri K.S. Mann, Yard Master, Delhi Main, Shri Kulbhusan, Yard Master, Delhi Main, Shri R. P. Pandey, Yard Master, Delhi Main, and Shri S. N. Sharma, Dy. Yard Master, Delhi Main for improper marshalling. We have also taken action against the Senior Divisional Safety Officer, Allahabad and the Divisional Traffic Superintendent, Tundla. I would like to say that in case of any accident, nobody is going to be spared. And they all have to accept the responsibility. It is not the last person down the line alone who will get it on his neck but everybody is responsible for this. So we have introduced a system of surprise checks in the Railways for the last two and a half months. Everybody is going for the surprise checks. Right from the Board Members to the General Managers they are going around and doing surprise inspections. So the last man down the line is not the only person responsible. A lot of people have been held responsible for it.

[Translation]

SHRI KALKA DAS : Mr. Speaker, Sir, on the 27th a girl named Ms. Menaka boarded the train Goa Express from Delhi.

MR. SPEAKER : We are discussing a specific question related to accident but you are deviating from it and talking about Goa Express. You please Sit down. I shall allow you lateron.

SHRI PRABHU DAYAL KATHERIA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, this issue is related to my constituency. Hon. Minister understands it and hon. Prime Minister is here, he may recollect that the Minister for Railways was just now saying that there were 90 such bodies as could not be identified.

SHRI SURESH KALMADI : They were not 90, rather 19.

SHRI PRABHU DAYAL KATHERIA : No, this is not true. There were 40 such bodies as could not be identified and registration of twenty per cent people at the Ferozabad station could not be done despite their insistence yet the Government says that this serious accident occurred due to the negligence of the switchman. This has been the most serious accident among the ten accidents occurred previously. The Government is shucking its responsibility by holding the switchman alone guilty for the accident. What action has been taken against the officials who gave the sleep inducing injections to the injured persons. Hon. Prime Minister was there and I had given an indication in this regard.

MR. SPEAKER : He has just told this about it.

SHRI PRABHU DAYAL KATHERIA : Sir, this is not so. It is an important question. What action has been taken against the officials who gave sleep inducing injections. The secondly, 20 per cent people died of electric disturbances after the accident, what action is being taken by the Government in this regard? After the accident live electric wire fell on the bogies and due to this 20 per cent people died of electrocution. I would like to know as to what action has taken by the Government against the guilty officers?

MR. SPEAKER : Now, you please sit down and listen to the reply of the important question which you have raised.

SHRI SURESH KALMADI : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have said that 19 dead bodies could not be identified. We have already taken coloured and black and white photographs of those dead bodies.

SHRI PRABHU DAYAL KATHERIA : I can give you in writing.

SHRI SURESH KALMADI : Even then I would like to say that if you insist, I shall check up the matter. As I have said that action has been taken against a number of persons. Some of them have been suspended including the switchman.

SHRI RAJVEER SINGH : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the Hon'ble Minister whether it is a fact that the concerned switchman had joined the duty only 15 days back after completing his training as switchman but he was declared fail in the training and was instructed not to attend the switchman duty. In spite of that he was asked to perform this duty? This is what I know and someone has given me this information. That he was compelled to attend to this duty and

he remained on duty beyond the prescribed working hours and he was not even provided any rest.

My second question is what Shri Hari Kishoreji has said that there is a great rush on this line. In order to reduce the rush will Ghaziabad-Muradabad railway line be doubled so that Howrah bound trains may pass via both the routes i.e. Bareilly and Kanpur? I would like to suggest that the Government will have to spend only for 50 to 60 kilometers and ultimately it will be cheaper and convenient too.

SHRI SURESH KALMADI : You have rightly said that Bhure Lal, Switchman had gone on refresher course and he could not pass the test .. (*Interruptions*)

SHRI RAJVEER SINGH : Then why was he asked to perform the duty, this is what I want to know... (*Interruptions*)
Mr. Speaker, Sir, this accident was caused to occur deliberately.

SHRI SURESH KALMADI : It is a fact that he had gone for a refresher course but his result was declared 10 days later. I would like to say that the rules regarding the posts of switchmen is being reviewed. Anyman educated upto class four or five could become a switchman but now we are going to amend the rules. Now in future whoever shall be appointed as switchman will have to be at least a matriculate and we are also considering to give them a grade equal to that of ASM...(*Interruptions*)

SHRI RAJINDRA AGNIHOTRI : How many persons have been suspended so far?

[*English*]

MR. SPEAKER : Question Hour is over.

(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER : It is not going on record. Question Hour is over. Now you should sit down.

(*Interruptions*)*

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

[*English*]

Public Sector Undertakings-Disinvestments

*45. SHRI CHINMAYANAND SWAMI :
SHRIMATI SHEELA GAUTAM :

Will the Minister of INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) The names of those public sector undertakings whose share capital has been disinvested so far;