

each of the following Orders (Hindi and English versions) of the Delimitation Commission under sub-section (3) of section 10 of the Delimitation Act, 1972:—

- (1) Order No. 24 of the Delimitation Commission in respect of the State of Tripura, published in Notification No. S.O. 633 (E) in Gazette of India, dated the 7th November, 1974.
- (2) Order No. 25 of the Delimitation Commission in respect of the State of Meghalaya, published in Notification No. S.O. 634(E) in Gazette of India dated the 7th November, 1974.
- (3) Order No. 26 of the Delimitation Commission in respect of the State of Assam, published in Notification No. S.O. 635(E) in Gazette of India dated the 7th November, 1974.
[Placed in Library. See No. LT-8630]

SHRI NOORUL HUDA (Cachar): I would like to draw the attention of Government and yourself also to part (3) of item 2, Order No. 26 in respect of the State of Assam. This is purported to have been published on 7 November, 1974. Today is the 3rd December. I understand the last day for filing objections to the proposals of the Delimitation Commission has been fixed on 7 December, 1974. I had gone to the Election Commission and other places and have not been able till 30 November to procure a copy of these proposals. I had been to my home district, Silchar, Cachar district in Assam. There also I found that upto 26 November, these notifications and also the proposals had not been received in the election office of that district. The officer there was not in the know of things. He had sent a special messenger to procure a copy from Gauhati Assam.

So it appears to me that Government is dilly-dallying on this, because only four days are left for filing objections. Hence I would suggest to the Law Minister and others in Government that the last date for filing objections to the proposals should be

extended from 7th December to, say, 20th or 31st December. Otherwise, people would be deprived of the opportunity of filing objections to the proposals. The proposals involve major changes in the constituencies of Assam including my own, Silchar Cachar district. That is why I would humbly request Government through you to extend the last date for filing objections to the proposals.

STATEMENT re. DEMAND No. 83 RELATING TO THE DEPT. OF REHABILITATION

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF SUPPLY AND REHABILITATION (SHRI G. VENKAT-SWAMY): I beg to lay on the Table a statement (Hindi and English versions) in regard to Demand No. 83 relating to the Department of Rehabilitation, included in the Supplementary Demands for Grants in respect of the Budget (General), for 1974-75, presented to Lok Sabha on the 18th November, 1974. [Placed in Library. See No. LT-8631/74].

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Shri Samar Guha is not there.

14.36 hrs

CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

REPORTED COLLAPSE OF THE HANGING ROPE BRIDGE OVER THE MAHAKALI RIVER

श्री नवल किशोर शर्मा (दोहा):
उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, मैं अबिलम्बनीय लोक महत्व के निम्नलिखित विषय की ओर विदेश मंत्री का ध्यान दिलाता हूँ और प्रार्थना करता हूँ कि वह इस बारे में एक वक्तव्य दे :-

“भारत-नेपाल सीमा पर महाकाली नदी के रज्जुपुल के गिर जाने और उस के परिणाम-स्वरूप 140 से अधिक व्यक्तियों, जिन में अधिकांश भारतीय थे, की मृत्यु हो जाने का समाचार”।

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI BIPINPAL DAS): Following the publication of reports which appeared in the press on the 27th November 1974, to the effect that a suspension bridge over the Malakali River at JAULJIBI on the Indo-Nepalese border had collapsed on the 17th November and that 140 persons were feared killed, my colleague the Minister for Shipping and Transport, made a statement in the Rajya Sabha on the 28th November to the effect that full facts regarding this accident were being collected from the U.P. Government. Our Embassy in Kathmandu was also in touch with the Nepalese authorities.

I am happy to be able to inform the House that both the U.P. Government and the Government of Nepal have now confirmed that the earlier press reports were exaggerated. The Government of U.P. despatched the Commissioner, Kumaon, to the site of the accident. After his visit he has reported that there was no death on our side.

The Government of Nepal have informed our Embassy in Kathmandu on the 2nd December that they have also received detailed reports of this accident. According to these reports one Nepali woman was killed in the accident and two Nepalese children are reported missing. There were no other casualties on either side apart from 8 Indians who received minor injuries and were given prompt first aid.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: I notice from the minister's statement that he has made a reference to a certain statement made in the Rajya Sabha by the other minister. It is a well-established rule of this House that unless the minister makes a statement of definite policy in the other House, what happens in the other House is never quoted here because that opens the door of reference to the proceedings of the other House, which is unhealthy.

(PROF. MADHU DANDAVATE (Rajapur): The entire Taimohan Ram episode arose out of that.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Rule 354 says:

"No speech made in the Council shall be quoted in the House unless it is a definite statement of policy by a Minister."

I am only pointing out this that what I insist on members, I would insist on the ministers too.

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE (Gwalior): Instead of quoting, can he give a gist?

श्री नवल किशोर शर्मा उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, मंत्री महोदय ने जो स्टेटमेंट अभी दिया है, उस से हम बाएँ में उतना परेशानी नहीं रही, जितनी कि पहले थी। "खुशी का वान है कि इस दुर्घटना में बहुत ज्यादा लोगों को जाने नहीं गई, नैसा कि अखबारों ने लिखा था, और केवल मात्र 8 भारतीय मामूली रूप में घायल हुए।

मगर इस सदस्य में प्रश्न यह है कि यह वाक्या 17 नवम्बर का हुआ था और हम की सूचना जिलाधोश, पिथौरागढ़ न विदेश मंत्रालय को 18 नवम्बर, का देना और 27 नवम्बर का इस बारे में राजसभा में एक बयान दिया गया। उस बयान के वक्त यह जाहिर किया गया—अखबारों में जो कुछ आया है, मैं उस के आकार पर बह रहा हूँ—कि सरकार को अभी सूचना प्राप्त नहीं हुई है और काठमांडू में हमारी एम्बेसी में पूछ-ताछ की जा रही है। मैं मंत्री महोदय का ध्यान इस ओर दिलाना चाहता हूँ कि बावजूद इस बात के कि हमारी सरकार, और हम देश के रहने वाले हम सब लोग, नेपाल के साथ बहुत अच्छे मित्रता के सम्बन्ध रखना चाहते हैं, और हम चाहते हैं कि हमारी और नेपाल को मित्रता प्रगाढ़ हो, इस बात से इनकार नहीं किया जा सकता

है कि नेपाल में कुछ तत्व प्रेक्षित हैं, जो भारत के खिलाफ विद्रोह-व्यवस्था करते रहते हैं और वहाँ की सरकार का भी रबैया कभी कभी गैर-जिम्मेदाराना होता है ।

मन्त्री महोदय से अपने स्टेटमेंट में कहा है : "दि गवर्नमेंट आफ नेपाल हैव इनफार्मिङ्ग आवर एम्बेसी इन काठमंडू आन दि सैकंड दिसम्बर"। नेपाल गवर्नमेंट के अपने अखबार "राइजिंग सन" ने, जो उस का स्पेक्सर्भन पेपर है, इस खबर को 26 नवम्बर को छपा, जिस में कहा गया कि इस दुर्घटना में 140 भारतीय मारे गये । उस के बाद हमारे यहाँ दूसरे सदन में यह प्रश्न उठाये जाने के बाद, श्री गालिबन हमारी एम्बेसी के प्रयत्न करने के बावजूद, नेपाल सरकार 2 दिसम्बर को यह सूचना देती है । मेरी निगाह में नेपाल सरकार का यह रबैया सन्तोषजनक नहीं है । यह उम्मीद की जा सकती है कि अगर दो मित्र देशों के रहने वाले लोगों के बारे में कोई दुर्घटना होती है, तो उस को तुरन्त जाच कर के दूसरे दूतावास को तुरन्त सूचना दी जाये । मैं मंत्री महोदय से यह जानना चाहता हूँ कि क्या नेपाल सरकार का यह आचरण सही था; यदि नहीं, तो क्या वह नेपाल सरकार का ध्यान इस ओर आकर्षित करेगा ।

दूसरा प्रश्न यह उठता है कि नेपाल में हमारे दूतावास में शायद लन्दन में हमारे दूतावास के बाद बहुत बड़ा झमला रहता है । वहाँ इनना बड़ा झमला होने के बावजूद, और इस बात के बावजूद कि विदेश मंत्रालय ने उस को सूचित किया कि वह इस बारे में तथ्य प्राप्त करे, हमारे दूतावास ने अपनी ओर से कोई जानकारी प्राप्त नहीं की । क्या इस में हमारे दूतावास की लापरवाही नहीं रही कि ससद में एक सवाल उठे, अखबारों में खबर आये और वह सोतार रहे तथा मौके पर जा कर पूरे तथ्यों का पता न लगाये ? यह कोई ऐसी बड़ी बात नहीं थी, जिस की जानकारी दूतावास के लोग मौके पर जा कर

प्राप्त नहीं कर सकते थे । और मेरे ध्यान में ऐसी कोई बन्धिम भी नहीं है कि वे मौके पर जा कर इस बारे में जानकारी प्राप्त नहीं कर सकते हैं । मैं यह भी जानना चाहता हूँ कि हमारे दूतावास ने जो लापरवाही बरती है, क्या मंत्री महोदय उस को गम्भीर नहीं मानते हैं, यदि वह उस को गम्भीर मानते हैं, तो क्या वह हम बारे में कोई कदम उठावेंगे, कोई कार्यवाही करेंगे ।

हिन्दुस्तान के लोग हर साल दीपावली के बाव इस पुल पर से जाते हैं । आखिर यह पुल गिरा तो सही और उस की वजह से कुछ लोगों को चोटें भी आई । मैं मंत्री महोदय से यह जानना चाहता हूँ कि क्या वह नेपाल सरकार का ध्यान इस ओर दिलावेंगे कि वह ऐसी अग्रिमियत वाले पुल की व्यवस्था को ठोक रखे, किस पर से हजारों यात्री ऐसे मौके पर हर रोज जाते हैं, क्योंकि यह दोनों देशों के पारस्परिक सम्बन्धों का सवाल है, और यह पुल दोनों देशों के बीच का पुल है ।

SHRI BIPINPAL DAS: Sir, the place where the accident took place was quite far away from the capital of Nepal. It was also far away from the capital of UP. The time taken by the Nepal Government to furnish information to our Embassy was almost the same as the time taken by our own people to furnish information to our authorities, because it is a way-side place, far away from the capital. Naturally, it took some time. Therefore, I do not think any criticism should be made on this account of the Nepal Government's response to our enquiry.

The second point asked by Shri Sharma is that we have a big Embassy in Kathmandu, that they are careless or indifferent and not very active. It is not true. As I said, the incident took place in a far away place. Certainly, our Embassy people took time to get information. They took the

help of the Nepalese Government who ultimately gave the information.

Thirdly, he asked the question whether we should draw the attention of the Nepal Government to the fact that such bridges should be kept in order. Certainly, we have drawn the attention of the Nepal Government to that.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: How long does it take to travel from Kathmandu to this place?

SHRI BIPINPAL DAS: I cannot tell you exactly. But it is quite far away.

SHRI SURENDRA MOHANTY (Kendrapara): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, more tragic than the collapse of the Mahakali bridge is the very casual and the insensible manner in which the Government has been tackling this particular matter since 28th November last. In the Rajya Sabha....

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Please don't refer to the Rajya Sabha.

SHRI SURENDRA MOHANTY: I am referring to the extent to which the Rajya Sabha has been referred.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Two wrongs cannot make one right. I have already said that it is unfortunate that a reference has been made to the Rajya Sabha proceedings here. Please don't do that.

SHRI SURENDRA MOHANTY: In the other place, it has been handled by the Minister of Shipping and Transport....

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Again, you are referring to the proceedings there. It is not desirable. Please don't do that. I am concerned with this House. I am not concerned with what the Rajya Sabha does.

SHRI SURENDRA MOHANTY: Sir, I rise on a point of order.

This matter was handled by the Minister of Shipping and Transport in the other place....

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: I rule out that point of order because a point of order on what happens in the Rajya Sabha cannot be raised in this House. I do not admit that. The Rajya Sabha can do whatever it likes. We can do whatever we like.

SHRI SURENDRA MOHANTY: Then, the Minister's statement must be expunged.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: I have already said that it is unfortunate.

SHRI SURENDRA MOHANTY: It must be expunged.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: There is no need to expunge it.

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE (Kanpur): It should not go to the press.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: The rules of expunction are different. This has gone on record. There is nothing unparliamentary. But I have already said that it is unfortunate. No further reference should be made to it.

SHRI DINEN BHATTACHARYYA: (Serampore): That is the decorum.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: That is the rule.

SHRI SURENDRA MOHANTY: Already, it has been claimed by a responsible spokesman of the Government that the bridge did not fall on any national highway system of the country. Therefore, the obvious inference is that it was on the border roads system. In the first place, I would like to know wherefrom the External Affairs Ministry pops in how the border roads system relates to the External Affairs Ministry and what *locus standi* the Deputy Minister in the Ministry of External Affairs has

in this particular matter. Therefore, I make bold to say that in a very casual manner, the Government has been handling it. This is the most serious matter.

Palpably, the statement seems to be unreliable. If you go through the statement, you will find that the bridge collapsed under the impact of 11 persons among whom there were 2 children—one woman, two children and 8 other persons have sustained minor injuries, according to the statement. If you add up, you will find that 11 persons were on the bridge at the time the collapse occurred. I would like the hon. Minister and the House to consider whether the bridge could collapse under the impact of only 11 persons out of whom two are children. Therefore, the original figure which had been published by the Nepalese press, which had also been published in the Indian press, that more than 140 lives had been lost is a figure which cannot be white-washed away.

The Government, at another place, earlier, had taken the plea that maintenance of the bridge was the responsibility of the Nepalese Government, with the obvious insinuation that, due to lack of proper maintenance, the bridge had collapsed in which the Government of India had nothing to do. To counteract that insinuation, the statement of the hon. Minister says:

"The Government of U.P. despatched the Commissioner, Kumaon, to the site of the accident. After his visit, he has reported that there was no death on our side."

Obviously, the bridge had collapsed in the middle. In that event, how could death take place on this side or on that side—on the Indian side or on the Nepalese side? Whichever side the bridge collapsed, the deaths would have occurred on the bridge. Therefore, what sort of answer is the hon. Minister giving to the House?

The Nepalese Home Ministry spokesman, as late as 15th November, 1974, had claimed that the bridge had collapsed from the Indian side, to which I find no contradiction even in the statement. In the circumstances, to resolve this dilemma, I would ask as to what is the agreement between the Government of India and Nepal as regards maintenance of the bridge. Who was responsible for maintaining this bridge? Who was responsible for maintaining it from the Indian side and who was responsible for maintaining it from the Nepalese side? Or, was it the overall responsibility devolving on a particular Government to maintain this bridge?

My next question is in which year the bridge was constructed and who was the contractor, whether the foundation had been laid according to approved specifications and the bridge had been constructed according to the approved design and whether the Government of India had ensured that the bridge had been constructed on this strategic road according to the specifications. Will the Government order an inquiry into it? Of course, it is like asking a dumb wall because the subject of border roads does not come under the Ministry of External Affairs. In the fitness of things, the Defence Minister should have answered this call-attention notice. I do not know why the Defence Minister has played truant and the Deputy Minister of External Affairs has been placed here as a scapegoat as much as Mr. Tulmohan Ram is placed as a scapegoat before the House in the import licence scandal.

Finally, I would like to know whether the Government had collected detailed descriptions of the persons who lost their lives and whether compensation has been paid to the families of those who lost their lives in this unfortunate accident.

SHRI BIPINPAL DAS: The first point I would like to make clear is

[Shri Bipinpal Das]

That the call-attention notice was addressed to this Ministry and the Speaker, in his wisdom, accepted the call-attention. Therefore, this Ministry has felt called upon to answer the call-attention.

I do not agree with the hon. Member that the Government has handled this situation in an insensible manner; I do not agree with him at all.

The Border Roads Organization does not come into the picture. This bridge does not fall on any national highway. So, they do not come in the picture. It is a small bridge constructed by the Darchula District Panchayat of Nepal. Naturally, therefore, the maintenance of this bridge was their responsibility.

The hon. Member calculated and said that 11 persons died in the accident. But I have given the actual picture. The bridge is over the river Mahakali which is the border for both sides and naturally, half of the bridge is their responsibility and this side is ours. The rope this side became loose. It was a suspension bridge hanging over the river. When the bridge on our side started sinking down, the large number of people who were on the bridge jumped to the other side and as a result, one woman died as per the report from Nepal Government, and two children were missing. There were some who received minor injuries and eight persons who fell this side were given first aid. The figures I have given, of course, do not account for the total number of people who might have been on the bridge at that time. But the press reports that appeared earlier according to the information at our disposal and which we have received from the Commissioner of the Kumaon Division of UP and also from our Embassy in Nepal, were not correct.

As I said, the maintenance of the bridge is supposed to be the respon-

sibility of the Nepalese because it was constructed by the Darchula District Panchayat. He has asked as to what was the agreement for the maintenance of the Bridge. There is no agreement between India and Nepal so far as the maintenance of the bridge is concerned. It is a bridge constructed by them and maintained by them.

Then the hon. Member asked what is the approved sanction and what is the approved specification. This question does not arise because we do not take the responsibility for the construction of the bridge.

The last question is about the detailed investigation. The Government of UP has asked for a thorough inquiry to be made into this incident and when the results of the inquiry come, we will know. The road connecting this bridge is not the central responsibility. It is the responsibility of the UP Government. Therefore, the UP Government has taken upon itself the task of investigating into the accident.

Regarding the compensation, since nobody has died on our side, no question of compensation arises.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Since this bridge is within the Nepalese territory, how can the UP Government conduct the inquiry?

SHRI BIPINPAL DAS: Since the bridge is over the river Mahakali which divides India and Nepal, half the bridge is on our side and half the bridge is on the other side. Since it became loose on our side and the bridge started sinking on our side, therefore, some amount of investigation is still necessary. Therefore, the UP Government has asked for an investigation.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: There is a lot of confusion. Some members have sent notice to the External Affairs Ministry. Some have sent to

the Irrigation and Agriculture Ministry. Some have sent notice to the Works and Housing Ministry and some have sent to the Transport and Shipping Ministry. I myself am confused. It seems that part of a bridge is in our territory. He has also said that the bridge is constructed by Nepal and Nepal is responsible for it, so on and so forth. I do not know how the UP Government can inquire into the maintenance of the bridge and the specifications of the bridge and all that..

SHRI BIPINPAL DAS: I did not mean that. I meant about the incident.

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: We are concerned only about the 8 persons who were injured on our side. I do not know. There is confusion.

SHRI P. M. MEHTA (Bhavnagar): Thank God that the news were found exaggerated and there is no casualty on our side but there are some casualties on the side of Nepal...

MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER: Why thank for that? We should sympathise with our friends in Nepal.

15.00 hrs.

SHRI P. M. MEHTA: Yes, we extend our sympathies to our friends in Nepal. I would ask, when the direct message was received by Ministry of External Affairs for the Government of UP, when they received information from Government of Nepal, and why on receipt of information the External Affairs Minister has not come forward with a statement. Does he take this so lightly that it was not worth informing the House? The report says:

'It is reported that there was heavy traffic on the bridge on that day because of the traditional joola jeevi fair held after Diwali in Darchula district of the Nepalese kingdom which is attended by people on both sides of the border. It

is also mentioned that the bridge gave way when pillars on the Indian side collapsed as the bridge could not obviously bear the weight of about 150 persons.'

What are the facts? I want to know whether the pillars on the Indian side gave way and the bridge collapsed or is it from Nepalese side? Why is there no arrangement to control traffic from Indian side, so that there will not be over-weight and was there not any caution sign or signal in this regard so that people could take care for themselves and may not go there? That is number one. Here it is said: 'The responsibility lies with the Nepal Government'. Does it mean that the Government of India has nothing to do with the maintenance of the bridge? Was there not proper checks and surveys to see that such bridges are maintained properly to see whether they have to be replaced or repaired and is there no such inspection on the side of the Indian territory? Is it a fact that this bridge is a new type of bridge, constructed very quickly and not properly supervised also, no attention being paid by the Government of India and so this accident took place? Is it correct or not, I want to know. These are my questions.

SHRI BIPINPAL DAS: There is no question of any statement being issued by the Minister of External Affairs. We got the information from our Embassy only yesterday.

SHRI P. M. MEHTA: When railway accident takes place the Minister for Railways comes and informs the House. That is the convention which we are observing. How can he say like that,—there is no question of statement?

SHRI BIPINPAL DAS: We were waiting for information from Lucknow and Kathmandu. We got the information from Kathmandu only yesterday and we are making this statement today. Here the question is one of rope becoming loose and

[Shri Bipinpal Das]

therefore one side sank and this accident took place. It is true there is no traffic regulation. Such types of bridges are there at many places and these have been used by people for long time; people go from outside to their side and vice-versa. Till date no such accident took place. Had there been no loose rope on our side this accident would not have taken place.

It is quite true there is no arrangement for control of traffic over the bridge. So far as the responsibility is concerned, this bridge was constructed by the Nepal authorities and they have maintained it and there was no question of our taking over the responsibility of maintaining this bridge.

डा० लक्ष्मीनारायण पांडेय (मंसौर):
 उपाध्यक्ष महोदय, यह अत्यन्त ही दुःखद घटना है चाहे इस में भले ही नेपाल के आदमी क्यों न मरे हों। सरकार की धनमत्ता के कारण हमें जो समय पर सूचना प्राप्त होनी चाहिये थी वह नहीं प्राप्त हो सकी। जैसा समाचार-पत्रों में प्रकाशित हुआ है यह 28 नवम्बर के अखबार पैट्रियट में निकला है :

"U.P. probe into bridge collapse."

मैं जानना चाहता हूँ इसके बारे में किन अधिकारियों को नियुक्त किया गया है और उन की रिपोर्ट आप के पास आयी है कि नहीं? आपने बताया कि केवल एक अधिकारी मौके पर गया है और उस ने घटना स्थल का निरीक्षण किया जिस के आधार पर आप ने वक्तव्य दिया। मैं जानना चाहता हूँ कि क्या नेपाल में जो हमारा दूतावास है वहाँ का कोई अधिकारी उस स्थान पर गया था जहाँ यह घटना घटी है? और यदि नहीं गया तो उस ने अपने कर्तव्य का निर्वहन नहीं किया है।

समाचार-पत्रों में यह भी निकला है कि पुल की मर वहन क्षमता केवल 150 व्यक्तियों की थी और उस पुल पर प्रति दिन

काफी संख्या में लोग जाते हैं। उस दिन जब कि भारी संख्या में लोग अगले वाले से उत्तर के कारण तो ऐसे समय क्या हमारा कर्तव्य नहीं था कि हमारी सीमा में बैठे हुए अधिकारी इतने लोगों को एक साथ पुल पर जाने से रोकते?

ऐसे पुलों के सम्बन्ध में जिन पर कि भारतीय और नेपाली दोनों ही देशों के लोग आते जाते हैं, क्या हम संयुक्त-उत्तरदायित्व की बात नहीं कर सकते? इस का उत्तरदायित्व क्या हम केवल नेपाल पर ही छोड़ देंगे? जब कि इस नदी का आधा हिस्सा हमारी सीमा में पड़ता है, और हमारी साइड के पिलर्स के खराब होने के कारण ही यह दुर्घटना हुई है। अखबारों में 142 लोगों के मरने की बात कही गई है, जब कि आप ने अपने वक्तव्य में केवल एक आरत और दो बच्चों के गायब होने की बात कही है। तो मैं जानना चाहता हूँ कि शेष व्यक्ति जो पुल पर थे क्या वह सब के सब नहीं सलामत पुल पर से निकल गये? आखिर वस्तु स्थिति क्या है? और इस पुल के सम्बन्ध में क्या हम संयुक्त उत्तरदायित्व की बात नहीं कर सकते ताकि भविष्य में ऐसी दुर्घटना न हो सके? आखिर में यू० पी० सरकार जो प्रोब कराने वाली है उस की रिपोर्ट कब तक आ जायगी और क्या उस को आप सदन की मेज पर रखेंगे?

SHRI BIPINPAL DAS: Sir, I must make it clear that I am not holding Nepal Government responsible for the accident. Accident is after all an accident. What I said was the Nepal Government was responsible for the maintenance of the bridge because it is they who have constructed the bridge. I cannot hold either the Nepal Government or our Government responsible for the accident. There is no question of holding any Government responsible for the accident.

As regards the exact number, I have already told the House that as far as our information goes only one woman has died, two children are missing and eight persons were injured and given first-aid.

श्री भगवतीप्रसाद शर्मा : हमारी तरफ की सीमा में जो पुल के विपक्ष में उन में खराबी होने के कारण यह दुर्घटना हुई।

SHRI BIPINPAL DAS: I do not know whether the hon. Member has seen any suspension bridge. If he had seen, perhaps, he would not have asked this question. Now he has asked one question. That is about the augmenting of the capacity of the bridge. Since the accident took place, we had been in touch with the Nepal Government to see that the capacity of the bridge is strengthened.

श्री भगवतीप्रसाद शर्मा (जजगीर) मैं मकी महोदय से जानना चाहता हूँ कि ऐसी दो देशों की सीमाओं में बहने वाली नदियों पर बने पुलों के सम्बन्ध में उन के रखरखाव का क्या प्राविधान है ? दूसरे यह कि महावाली नदी पर बने हुए इस पुल की बचत-रकम कितनी है ? क्या यह भी पता लगाया गया कि इस दुर्घटना के पीछे किसी विदेशी या भारतीय तत्वों का तो हाथ नहीं है क्या कि अज्ञान वरुण किस्म के प्रश्न को ले कर हमारे और नेपाल के बीच अच्छे सम्बन्ध नहीं है।

श्री भगवतीप्रसाद शर्मा : मैं यह जानना चाहता हूँ कि दुर्घटनाग्रस्त भारतीयों की चिकित्सा आदि के बारे में शासन ने क्या व्यवस्था की है ?

SHRI BIPINPAL DAS: About maintenance of the bridge or bridges of this type, I have already explained. Now the question is that because the accident took place, certainly both the Governments will see to it that it does not take place again. He has made a remark about the trained

relations between India and Nepal. Our relations with them are fairly good. Certainly our relation with Nepal has nothing to do with this accident.

13.12 hrs.

STATEMENT RE: ONGC'S OFF-SHORE DRILLING PLATFORM, SAGAR SAMRAT

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND CHEMICALS (SHRI K. D. MALAVIYA): Mr. Deputy-Speaker, Sir, I visited the Sagar Samrat on the 27th of November, 1974, and I consider it my duty to report to Parliament the good work that is being done in the Bombay High of shore operations.

As the Hon'ble Members are aware, the first well drilled by Sagar Samrat in February this year in the Bombay High structure, led to a discovery of oil which was described as "significant" at that time. The second well was spudded on 7th October and drilled to the main horizon. The preliminary tests confirmed the results obtained from the first well. The conventional production test was carried out from the 18th to the 23rd of November and it showed a good flow of oil. Oil has been found in the limestone layers of the Bombay High Structure. It is a new feature of oil exploration in India that oil has been found for the first time in limestone. We have so far got oil in India in sand stone layers only in the onshore areas. The limestone pay zones have been prolific producers of oil in the Middle East. It was therefore decided to carry out an acidization test since acidization is one of the established techniques for well-stimulation in limestone reservoirs. The acidization tests were commenced on 25th November and were continued till the 30th. The tests confirmed the earlier hypothesis that acidization would substantially