

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE

THIRTY-FIRST REPORT

SHRI KRISHNA CHANDRA HALDER (Ausgram): I beg to present the Thirty-first Report of the Estimates Committee regarding action taken by Government on the recommendations contained in their Fourth Report on the Ministry of Labour and Rehabilitation (Department of Labour and Employment)—Workers' Education Programme.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

SEVENTY-SECOND REPORT

SHRI SEZHIYAN (Kumbakonam): I beg to present the Seventy-second Report of the Public Accounts Committee regarding action taken by the Government on the recommendations contained in their Fortieth Report relating to the Department of Health (Indian Council of Medical Research).

13.05 hrs.

CRASH OF AN HS-748 AIRCRAFT
NEAR SECUNDERABAD ON 15TH
MARCH, 1973

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION (DR. KARAN SINGH): Sir, it is with deep regret that I have to inform the House that an Indian Airlines HS-748 aircraft VT-EAU while engaged on a local training flight crashed yesterday at approximately 16.48 hours near the South Central Railway headquarters in Secunderabad, about 3 miles away from the Begumpet airport.

The aircraft under the command of Capt. J. E. Issac took off from Begumpet at 16.36 hours with two pilots, Captains Srikanth and R. P. Singh, on a training flight for co-pilot conversion. After making one circuit and landing the aircraft took off again. The air-

craft reported that it was simulating a bad weather low-level circuit on one engine. The last communication from the aircraft was at 16.48 hours when reported on the down wind leg of the circuit in preparation for landing on runway 27. Thereafter contact was lost. A telephone call was received a few minutes later at the control tower to the effect that the aircraft had crashed. The fire brigade and ambulance services were immediately sent to the site and officials of the Civil Aviation Department and Indian Airlines also rushed to the spot. Immediate action was taken to rescue the crew, but unfortunately when it was finally possible to reach them they were found dead. It is reported that two persons, a boy and an old woman, were injured on the ground as a result of the crash and that the boy died in the hospital. The woman is in hospital with serious injuries.

At the time of the accident the weather is reported to have been good with a clear sky. Capt. Issac had over 16,500 hours of flying to his credit, and had been an instructor for several years. For the information of the House I may add that the aircraft was one of the latest batch of three delivered by Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd. (HAL) in May 1972. The climb performance of the aircraft at the time of delivery exceeded the requirement of 2.4 per cent in second segment and 1.2 per cent en route specified in the approval flight manual.

A Court of Inquiry under a High Court Judge is being set up to investigate into the causes of the accident.

The House will join me in expressing our deep sympathy with the families of those killed and praying for the speedy recovery of the injured lady.

Sir, with your permission, may I read two paragraphs of a letter I have addressed to the Prime Minister last night?

"As you know, the Avros have been the subject of a prolonged con-

[Dr. Karan Singh] controversy going back to even before I assumed charge of this Ministry. Doubts have been expressed from time to time regarding their safety, but the advice I have received from the manufacturers, Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd., the operator, Indian Airlines and the Director-General of Civil Aviation, who is the authority statutorily charged with ensuring the air-worthiness of civil aircraft has consistently been that the planes are entirely safe.

The fact remains, however, that the country and Parliament are exercised over this issue. After careful deliberation, I have come to the conclusion that my moral duty lies in accepting responsibility, and this will also be in keeping with the highest parliamentary traditions. I have decided, therefore, to submit my resignation from the Council of Ministers, and would like to announce this in the Lok Sabha after my statement on the air crash."

श्री अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी (ग्वालियर) : दुर्घटना के बारे में हम सब को खेद है। लेकिन मंत्री जी स्वयं यह मानते हैं कि एव्रो का मामला उनके ध्राने से पहले चल रहा है। एव्रो की सेफ्टी के बारे में सन्देह है। मंत्री महोदय उसकी जांच करवाएँ। क्या उनके त्यागपत्र से एव्रो का मामला हल हो जाएगा? हम त्यागपत्र के हक में नहीं हैं। वैसे उन्होंने एक झन्डी परम्परा कायम की है दुर्घटना के बाद त्यागपत्र दे कर। उन्होंने एक आदर्श रखा है। हम चाहते हैं कि वह घोषणा करें एव्रो के बारे में कि वह क्यों खरीदा गया और उस में कमियाँ होने के बाद भी वह क्यों आज प्रयोग में लाया जा रहा है? उसके दोषों को दूर करने की कोशिश क्यों नहीं की गई है? इस सब की जांच के लिए एक कमीशन बनना चाहिये और वह इसकी घोषणा करें। त्यागपत्र का यह एलान कहाँ से आ गया ?

SHRI PILLO MODY (Godhra): Sir, to begin with, I want to congratulate Dr. Karan Singh because this is a practice which is all forgotten in this country. Therefore, I want to congratulate him for having taken this step. However, I think that this particular issue is not merely a question of one person against the government; it is a question which is exercising the mind of the whole people, the travelling public, Parliament itself, and if it is to save the prestige of the government that the Minister has to resign, I do not understand it. It is the Avro that has to be rectified; it is not the Minister that has to be rectified. It is the plane that has to be rectified or scrapped. I do not think by merely scrapping the Minister, we will have achieved what we want. Let there be a proper and thorough investigation into it. I for one, with a little knowledge that I have about it and with a little time that I have spent going into this problem, am convinced that there is something wrong with the plane. It is the plane that has to be changed although we appreciate the gesture of the Minister in bringing this matter to a head.

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE (Kanpur): Sir, I admire his courage and conviction that he has come forward with his resignation. I must congratulate him for that. But is that the solution? If we really follow this, if the other Ministers follow this. I think, 50 per cent of the Ministers should have resigned by this time because there are so many charges against so many Ministers. But still they sit here very nicely. I personally appeal to Dr. Karan Singh. I am not appealing to withdraw resignation—that is for the Prime Minister and her party to do; the Ministers may come and the Ministers may go; that is a different matter—but I am only concerned with the Avro which is manufactured in Kanpur. This project is in Kanpur. With great difficulty, we got this project. There is a scathing criticism about the Avro by the vested interests.....(Interruptions).

MR. SPEAKER: Don't go into the discussion about the Avro. The Minister has resigned.

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE: The accidents take place in the case of other planes also, Boeing 707 and other planes. Let there be a high-powered Commission appointed to inquire into the whole incident. The resignation of the Minister will not solve the problem.

SHRI SHYAMNANDAN MISHRA (Begusarai): I would also like to join other hon. Members in congratulating the Minister on having taken the decision that he has conveyed to us just now. May I say that such a decision is not taken lightly? There must be a background to such a decision. It is not an odd incident or accident that has inspired the Minister to take a decision of that kind. If there is a background to it, if there have been certain doubts persisting in his mind about the safety of people and he did not find a way out of those doubts, I think, the Minister should be congratulated doubly for this. Now there would be some way found out of this. There is at least one person who is going to force a decision of the Government in this matter.

SHRI BHAGWAT JHA AZAD (Bhagalpur): I would say that if the Avro has certain defects or snags, these should be rectified. If it is that there is some difficulty in "climb", that should be looked into. But to condemn the entire Avro, our indigenous production in the country, is absolutely wrong. I would support what Mr. Banerjee has said that there are some persons in the country who are trying to bring American plane and there is a lobby for it. Let there be a Commission appointed to look into the matter.

I appreciate the hon. Minister's gesture to resign but that will not solve the problem. Let Shri Shyamnandan Mishra look into the resigna-

Plane (St.)

tion that there is something wrong persisting. It is the nobility and the character of the Minister that has to be appreciated, that he has tendered his resignation. I would say, let not the whole project be condemned. If there are certain defects or snags, they may be looked into. But the Avro project as a whole should not be condemned.

SHRI DINESH SINGH (Pratapgarh): Mr. Speaker, there should be a thorough look into the question of Avro seriously. It is not a matter of something which is being made in this country. Doubts were raised about the Avros in this House even before the manufacture was started. It was then said that these planes had been discarded in other places. If it is necessary to make a plane, then we should find a design which would be suitable to our country. The Avro has been rejected in other countries. It is not a question of something which is made in India or not. It is a foreign design. What is indigenous about a foreign design? It is a question of getting a better design and making something in the country instead of persisting with something which was obsolete even when we bought it. (Interruptions). It was said in this House even then.

Therefore, I would say, now that this matter has been brought to a head—the hon. Minister has already sent his resignation letter on this point—, we should take this opportunity to go into every question concerning Avros, and if that particular design is not suitable, we should have another design. This does not mean that we should stop manufacturing planes in Kanpur. Of course, planes should be manufactured there. There is the whole infrastructure there. One plane is being manufactured, and if that plane is not good, it is a question of finding a better plane. That does not mean that it should be closed down. I am in entire agreement with Shri S. M. Banerjee that the plant

[Shri Dinesh Singh]
should not be closed down. If the design is not good, we should find another design and manufacture planes in Kanpur.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Viswanathan.

SHRI H. N. MUKERJEE (Calcutta—North-East): We have asked for a debate....

MR. SPEAKER: If you want to have a debate on it, we can fix the time for it later but not now.

SHRI H. N. MUKERJEE: It is for you to give an idea that a debate will take place.

MR. SPEAKER: I welcome your idea. A debate should take place on it.

Mr. Viswanathan.

SHRI G. VISWANATHAN (Wandiwash): Let us not import ideology into the question of safety, with which the entire House is concerned. The gesture of the hon. Minister in resigning should open the eyes of the Government of India and they must go into it thoroughly—the question of safety of Avro or any other plane. Whether it is indigenous or imported, let us have safe planes.

SHRI SAMAR GUHA (Contal): I appreciate the dignified gesture that has been made by the hon. Minister. Mr. Lal Bahadur Shastri did the same thing; he owned responsibility for a railway disaster. I congratulate the hon. Minister on this. He has set up a very healthy practice. But he is not personally responsible for what has happened in regard to Avro. He is one of the Ministers who has endeared himself in this House not only to the members of the ruling Party but also to the Opposition members. The resignation of the Minister will not solve the real problem. The merits of the issue have to be gone into, whether it

is indigenously manufactured or not. This issue has been raised in this House on several occasions. Therefore, as has been rightly pointed out, this matter should be discussed, debated and thoroughly gone into before another such tragedy overtakes us.

डा० कौलाश (बम्बई दक्षिण) : माननीय अध्यक्ष जी, एवरो के विषय में इसमें कोई सन्देह नहीं कि इस सदन में और बाहर भी काफी चर्चा चलती रही है और उसके लिए इन्क्वायरी कमिशन होना चाहिए। उसमें कोई नुक्सान रहे इसको देखना भी आवश्यक। एवरो की मशीन भ्रामी में भी काम में आती है, वहाँ कोई नुक्सान नहीं पाया गया है लेकिन इंडियन एयर लाईंस में क्यों ऐसा होता है। तो इसमें कोई सन्देह नहीं कि इन्क्वायरी होनी चाहिए लेकिन मन्त्री जी ने जो पत्र प्रधान मंत्री को लिखा है उसमें उन्होंने अपनी नैतिक जिम्मेदारी के चरित्र का प्रतिपादन किया है कि किस प्रकार एक मंत्री को सरकार में रह कर व्यवहार करना चाहिए। यह उनके नोबल कैरेक्टर का सूचक है।

में एक बात कहकर बैठ जाना चाहता हूँ। जब शर्णाधिकियों के लिये विदेश से कुछ रेडक्रास के पास सामान आया था वह कलकत्ते में पड़ा था और देशों से भी माल आया था तथा कलकत्ते में पड़ा हुआ है, जिसको उठाया नहीं जा रहा है तो यही डा० करण सिंह जी ने जल्दी सारी जिम्मेदारी अपने ऊपर ली जैसे जितनी भी ट्रेक्स वगैरह उनके मंत्रालय की थीं उन्हें काम में लगाया। इन्का इस प्रकार का एक चरित्र भूत काल में रहा है और आज इस प्रकार की परिपाटी वे प्रस्थापित कर रहे हैं लेकिन मेरी उनसे प्रार्थना है कि इस प्रकार जो उन्होंने देश के सामने एक उदाहरण पेश किया है, पर यदि प्रधान मंत्री उनसे विनय करें कि त्याग पत्र न दें तो वे अपना त्याग-पत्र वापस ले लें।

SHRI A. P. SHARMA (Buxar): The question of air-worthiness and the safety of the Avro aircraft has been a matter of serious concern not only to Parliament but also to the people at large in this country who are users of the air services. In this respect, I do not think, as my friends have said that the Minister has established a healthy tradition or practice. I do not think the resignation of the Minister is going to solve this problem. In spite of the doubts expressed about the air-worthiness and safety of the Avro aircraft, it has been persistently certified by the Director-General of Civil Aviation and other people that there is nothing wrong with it. But we are seeing that one after another unfortunate accidents are taking place so far as Avros are concerned. Therefore, we would definitely like that this matter should be gone into very seriously because the Minister's resignation is not going to solve the problem. It is also not a question whether we should build Avro aircraft in the country. That is not the question. The question is that the air-worthiness and the safety condition of the Avro should be inquired into and put right.

श्री शशि भूषण (दक्षिण दिल्ली) : अध्यक्ष महोदय, प्राकृतिक कारणों की वजह से कोई दुर्घटना हुई हो और उस की वजह से मंत्री महोदय इस्तीफा दे दें, यह ठीक नहीं है। वह हमारी पार्टी के अच्छे मंत्री हैं। उन्हें इस सम्बन्ध में पार्टी के नेता से बात करनी चाहिए। इसी प्रकार के एक अवसर पर श्री लाल बहादुर शास्त्री ने भी इस्तीफा दे दिया था। हमारे यहां ऐसी परम्परा रही है। शक्तिमान ट्रक के भी एक्सिडेंट होते हैं और नैट हवाई अड्डा के भी एक्सिडेंट होते हैं। उन के बारे में हम समय समय पर जांच कमीशन बिठाते रहते हैं। इस में शक नहीं है कि इस एवरो के बारे में इम्प्लूमेंट होनी चाहिए। लेकिन इस को इस्तीफे का कारण बनाया जाये, यह उचित नहीं है। मैं आशा

करूंगा कि मंत्री महोदय इस सम्बन्ध में पार्टी के नेता से बात करेंगे।

श्री सतपाल कपूर (पटियाला)
अध्यक्ष महोदय, हमारे यहां जो इन्फ्रास्ट्रक्चर बन गया है, सारे कन्ट्री और पार्लियामेंट में कुछ ऐसे एलिमेंट जरूर हैं, जो चाहेंगे कि एव्रो का कारखाना बन्द हो जाये। जो डिजाइन है, उस को इम्प्रूव किया जा सकता है और कारखाने को अच्छे ढंग से चलाया जा सकता है। लेकिन डा० कर्णसिंह ने जो इस्तीफा दिया है, उन्हें उस को वापिस लेना चाहिये और प्राइम मिनिस्टर को भी उसे मंजूर नहीं करना चाहिये।

SHRI K. P. UNNIKRIISHNAN (Bada-gara): I profoundly disagree with the views of my distinguished friend, Mr. Dinesh Singh who wanted the Avros to be grounded.

I think more important or at least equally important as the question of an aircraft's air-worthiness is the problem of its maintenance. It is not going to be solved by the gesture of the kind Dr. Karan Singh has shown which is truly democratic. But, I am afraid, that is not going to solve the problem. The basic question, to my mind, is that of maintenance. A number of people in the Indian Airlines have come to us and said that it is a question of faulty maintenance and particularly, an aircraft of this kind needs a greater degree of alert maintenance. So, the whole question of maintenance has to be gone into and also maybe, if necessary, other structural and other changes brought in. But this resignation is not going to solve any problem.

So, let us not condemn what we considered at one time to be an achievement like the Gnat aircraft which has proved itself but it was also condemned and debated here in this Parliament. So, we should take a proper and constructive approach to

[Shri K. P. Unni Krishnan]

the whole problem and I do not think that the Minister's resignation will solve the problem.

SHRI P. G. MAVALANKAR (Ahmedabad): I beg to add my voice to the expression of the hon. Members in congratulating the hon. Minister, Dr. Karan Singh, for having shown the rare courage of resigning when he thought that the responsibility, though not technically his, was certainly moral on his part.

We are living at a time when many Ministers in many countries commit all kinds of mistakes and blunders and still persist in remaining in power. Therefore, it is a very rare gesture on his part and I think, it is in conformity with the highest traditions of parliamentary and public life and I am sure the House agrees with me when I say that the Minister has enhanced the reputation of parliamentary democracy and of public life in this country. I only hope that this particular gesture, rare though it is, and because it is rare, all the more I hope, will lead to a very proper, elaborate and complete inquiry into the whole question of Avro. We are really sorry we are losing one very good and eminent and experienced Minister....

AN HON. MEMBER: We are not going to lose....

SHRI P. G. MAVALANKAR: As it is, it is not for us in this House to say, we accept or reject this. It is entirely a matter for the Prime Minister and her colleague; of course, it is a party affair. But I want to express the sentiments of the House when I say we are sorry if a good Minister, an efficient Minister and an experienced Minister is resigning. This gesture on his part is a rare gesture that we find, but it is a bold gesture and this will help us to maintain the best of traditions. Regarding the Avro subject I would only request you, Mr. Speaker, that we have an early debate in this House.

DR. KARAN SINGH: I wish to make a few submissions. In regard to Avro itself the technical advice given to me has consistently been that it is safe, and I have taken that view. Also, I can assure the House, and I have already pointed out, that a further thorough probe or enquiry will take place into the entire matter. I would only now like to express my very deep gratitude for the sentiments expressed by the hon. Members. I would only say that from the age of 18 years when I entered public life, I functioned as Governor and then for 6 years as Cabinet Minister, and I have been most fortunate in receiving the affection and the consideration of you, Sir, and of all sections of the House. I can assure you that my services,—in whatever capacity, whether as Minister or not,—will always be available to the country.

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Members in their speeches referred to the need to have some time being allotted for the debate on the subject of Avro. I think we could fix up some time at the earliest. But, at the same time, I also join you in saying that Dr. Karan Singh has taken a decision which is rather an extreme step which he has taken. Personally I liked him, I loved him, I appreciated his ability. Whichever the man is, his worth accompanies him. So, we do not wish to say to you good-bye as Minister yet, we will see what decision the Prime Minister takes. But we believe, in this age of accidents and mishaps, so much is happening every day, machines sometimes fail, but that does not mean the man also should fall along with—any way let us hope you do not press on it.

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE: You should not defend the Minister. Otherwise they will take the cue from you.

MR. SPEAKER: I am not defending. I am just appreciating him. Tomorrow if something happens to you, I will be the first to come to your aid.

AN HON. MEMBER: He is not a Minister.*

MR. SPEAKER: Whatever he has read out will be circulated—the Press people are quite clever, they will get the whole letter also.

Now, Mr. Raghuramaiah. I hope you do not follow him!

(a) The Refugees Relief Taxes (Abolition) Bill, 1973.

(b) The Union Territories Taxation Laws (Amendment) Bill, 1973.

(8) The Capital of Punjab (Development of Regulation) (Chandigarh Amendment) Bill, 1972, as passed by Rajya Sabha.

13.28 hrs.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI K. RAGHURAMAIAH): With your permission, Sir, I rise to announce that Government Business in this House during the week commencing 20th March, 1973 will consist of:

(1) Consideration of any item of Government Business carried over from today's Order Paper.

(2) General Discussion on the Andhra Pradesh Budget for 1973-74.

(3) Discussion and voting on:—

(a) Demands for Grants on Account (Andhra Pradesh) for 1973-74.

(b) Supplementary Demands for Grants (Andhra Pradesh) for 1972-73.

(4) Discussion on the Resolution seeking approval of the Proclamation issued in respect of the State of Orissa.

(5) General Discussion on the Orissa Budget for 1973-74.

(6) Discussion and voting on:—

(a) Demands for Grants on Account (Orissa) for 1973-74.

(b) Supplementary Demands for Grants (Orissa) for 1972-73.

(7) Consideration and passing of:—

श्री हुकम चन्द कछवाय (मुरेना) : अध्यक्ष महोदय, पिछली बार आप को ध्यान होगा यहां बहुत सी बातें सदस्यों द्वारा उठाई गई थीं कि इन विषयों पर कब चर्चा होने वाली है, तो दो शुक्रवारों को मंत्री महोदय ने यही कह कर टाला है कि आप की भावनाओं को मैं संबंधित मंत्री तक पहुंचा दूंगा। कोई स्पष्ट उत्तर नहीं दिया था। मैं उन से आज स्पष्ट उत्तर चाहता हूँ कि शोइयूल्ड कास्ट ऐंड शोइयूल्ड ट्राइव्स की कई रिपोर्टों पर चर्चा नहीं हुई है, उन पर चर्चा कब लेने वाले हैं, और पिछली लोक सभा में एक बिल लेव्स हो गया था शोइयूल्ड कास्ट ऐंड शोइयूल्ड ट्राइव्स प्रमोडमेंट बिल, वह कब तक लाने वाले हैं, सफाई से इन का उत्तर हमें चाहिए।

SHRI S. M. BANERJEE (Kanpur). Mr. Speaker, Sir, you remember when yesterday Calling Attention notice on the resumption of arms supplies was being discussed many Members demanded that there should be a discussion. I am sure you have read in the newspapers that President Nixon is not giving arms but selling arms. President Nixon has vigorously defended the decision. I want that a Resolution should be brought by the Minister on this subject and it should be discussed. Secondly, there are misleading reports in the Press about Pay Commission. It seems they are delaying the submission of the Pay Commission Report. Then hon. Minister had made a promise that it will be submitted by 31st March, 1973. I will only remind him that if the Re-