

LOK SABHA DEBATES

1

2

LOK SABHA

Monday, April 20, 1970/Chaitra 30,
1892 (Saka)

The Lok Sabha met at Eleven of the Clock

[MR. SPEAKER in the Chair]

RETURN OF U. S. ASTRONAUTS

MR. SPEAKER: The Prime Minister wanted to make a brief statement about the safe return of the Astronauts.

THE PRIME MINISTER, MINISTER OF FINANCE, MINISTER OF ATOMIC ENERGY AND MINISTER OF PLANNING (SHRIMATI INDIRA GANDHI): Mr. Speaker, Sir, with your permission I should like to refer to the safe return of the Astronauts last week, and express the pleasure and admiration of this House and of the people of India for the magnificent achievement of the scientists and technicians of the U. S. Space Agency.

Many Members of this House may have sat up on Friday night, as I did, awaiting news of the splashdown and must have shared the tremendous relief, when the news did come through that Lovell, Haise and Swigert were back on earth, sound in body and unvanquished in spirit.

In olden days, we spoke of perilous seas. Yet, the perils of outer space are far more awesome than any that had been known.

When the spaceship Apollo-13 developed trouble last week, the anxiety was world-wide and one of the more welcome aspects of this harrowing experience was the fact that it linked the peoples of the world into one family. When he was in Bombay, Ambassador Keating was asked about the welfare of 'our Astronauts'. The three brave men belonged to the United States, but we looked upon them as representatives of the human race, and of the spirit of man.

The Apollo-13 mission might have failed in its avowed objective of making a third landing on the moon. But it is one of those instances when failure can be deemed greater than victory. The rescue operations proved once again the extraordinary power and precision of the instruments of modern technology and even more remarkable than the instruments are the minds which devise and control them. Our congratulations go out to the Scientists and Technologists of the Ground Control Systems, whose work has enabled the astronauts to return safely.

I am glad that the prayers and good wishes expressed by you, Sir, and other Members of the House were of avail. I offer congratulations and greetings to the astronauts Lovell, Haise and Swigert and to their families; also to the Space Scientists and to the people of the United States.

SHRI SHRI CHAND GOYAL (Chandigarh): Sir, I request that the feelings and sentiments of the House may be conveyed to the Astronauts.

MR. SPEAKER: On your behalf I join the Prime Minister in conveying our congratu-

tulations and in the fine and laudable ideas expressed by her, and I think the whole House joins me in sending our felicitations to these brave men.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Loan agreements with West Germany

*1081. SHRI N. K. P. SALVE: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the number of loan agreements signed between India and West Germany during the current financial year and the total amount involved;

(b) the purposes for which the loan agreements have been entered into;

(c) whether all of the earlier loans taken from West Germany by India have been fully utilised and if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the amount remained unutilised?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI P. C. SETHI): (a) No loan agreement has been signed with West Germany during the current financial year which commenced only on 1st April, 1970.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d). In respect of loans contracted upto 1969-70 for a total amount of Rs. 953 crores, an amount of Rs. 88.6 crores remains to be disbursed. This is inclusive of an amount of Rs. 46 crores for which commercial contracts have been signed already and in respect of which disbursements will take place in keeping with deliveries. Some time lag is inevitable in the utilisation of those portions of the credits which pertain to projects and to the import of capital goods.

SHRI N. K. P. SALVE: My query relates to the non-utilisation of these credits. I think the Minister is oversimplifying the matter by saying that there is some time-lag which is inevitable in the utilisation of those

portions which pertain to projects and to the import of capital goods.

In fact, the Public Accounts Committee, in their Fifty-fifth Report narrate a different story. The Committee's findings seem to suggest that it is due to dilatoriness on the part of the administrative ministries.

MR. SPEAKER: You ask a question. I am not going to allow introduction in the speech in future.

SHRI N. K. P. SALVE: I am coming to that. The story of the Public Accounts Committee is different. What they have stated is that the non-utilisation is on account of the failure of the Government to take sufficient preparatory action in respect of projects. And there is plenty of duplication of administrative work involved in the matter. They have also stated that the matter should be investigated and steps taken.

May I know from the Minister if this is the finding of the Public Accounts Committee in their Fiftyfifth Report, what were those factors which impeded in not taking advance preparation of action for the projects and what concrete steps have been taken by the Finance Ministry in that direction so as to avoid this non-utilisation of the credits? We do not again have to explain the non-utilisation of credits.

SHRI P. C. SETHI: I understand what is meant by non-utilisation of credits and therefore, the hon. Member need not take the trouble of explaining what is non-utilisation.

SHRI N. K. P. SALVE: When did I explain that?

SHRI P. C. SETHI: You stressed on that. Therefore, I would only like to add that this has been continuously receiving the attention and as a matter of fact if he looks into the figures of the total non-utilisation of credits with regard to non-project or project aid he will find that as on 1st April, 1967 the figure was \$ 848 million (in 1967) which has been reduced to 480 million dollars in 1970. In the case of project aid, from 2083 million