

allowance upto 15%. The matter is being handled by the Indian standards Institution and it is expected to be settled amicably.

12.20 Hrs.

CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

GROUNDING OF *M.V. Vishwa Shanti* AT CONSTANTZA

श्री सीताराम केसरी (कटिहार) :

अध्यक्ष महोदय, मैं अबिलम्बनीय लोक महत्व के निम्नलिखित विषय की ओर परिवहन तथा नौवहन मंत्री का ध्यान दिलाता हूँ और प्रार्थना करता हूँ कि वह इस बारे में एक वक्तव्य दें :

“1 मार्च, 1968 को रूमानिया में कांस्टेन्ट्ज़ा बन्दरगाह के निकट एम० वी० 'विश्व शांति' के रुक जाने का समाचार।”

THE MINISTER OF TRANSPORT AND SHIPPING (DR. V. K. R. V. RAO) : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am sorry to state that one of our good ships....

SOME HON. MEMBERS: We have already received the copies of this statement and we have read it.

MR. SPEAKER: Then, the hon. Minister may lay it on the Table of the House.

DR. V. K. R. V. RAO: Sir, I lay the statement on the Table of the House. [Placed in Library. See No. LT-412/68.]

श्री सीताराम केसरी : अध्यक्ष महोदय, मंत्री महोदय के वक्तव्य से यह स्पष्ट हो जाता है कि जो जहाज “विश्व शांति” दुर्घटनाग्रस्त हुआ 1 मार्च को 6.50 पर, उसकी दुर्घटना का समाचार मंत्री महोदय को 2 मार्च को मिला। यह एक बहुत गम्भीर बात है। मैं जानना चाहता हूँ कि यह समाचार इतनी देर से क्यों मिला।

दूसरी बात यह कि जिस जहाज के बनाने में 1 करोड़ 45 लाख २० लगे वह 14 या 15 बार दुनिया का भ्रमण

कर चुका था। इस बार भी वह 9800 टन के करीब माल ले कर चला था। यूगोस्लाविया और यू० ए० आर० के बन्दरगाहों के बाद उसने रूमानिया के बन्दरगाह में प्रवेश किया। मैं जानना चाहता हूँ कि ऐसे जहाजों के प्रवेश के पहले मौसम के सम्बन्ध में जो किसी प्रकार का सिग्नल मिलता है वह उसको मिला था या नहीं, और अगर नहीं मिला तो इसकी जिम्मेदारी किस पर ठहराई गई?

DR. V. K. R. V. RAO: I am a little surprised that the hon. Member should complain of delay in information being sent. The ship struck the breakwaters at 6.30 p.m. on 1st March. At 3 a.m. on 2nd March, the crew were taken off the ship. We received information on the 2nd March morning, and immediately it was received, it was communicated to the Central Government; and the owners, namely the Shipping Corporation immediately communicated the information to the insuring company and to the Salvage Organisation so that somebody from the Salvage Organisation could go there. They had also immediately cabled to our Embassy in Rumania who sent their officer to the spot to find out what assistance should be given. Also an officer from the Shipping Corporation was immediately sent to Constantza.

I do not think I would accept the statement that there was any delay in the information being sent.

Regarding the second question whether there was any idea of the meteorological conditions being bad and so on, all that will be the subject of inquiry. The inquiry is being made by a nautical officer. Captain Rikhy who has been there from 10th March. All the officers are detained there along with their logbooks and other documents. As soon as the report is received, I shall be quite prepared to make a statement.

SHRI S. S. KOTHARI (Mandsaur) : It is a matter of serious concern that this vessel which was constructed by the public undertaking namely the Hindustan Shipyard Ltd. in which we have invested a lot of money, should have disintegrated

(C. A.)

and broken into two parts. It is not as if fractures have occurred, as the hon. Minister has pointed out. An important issue arises. Not only is it a pointer to the inefficiency of the concern which constructed it but what is of greater importance is this. Are there fundamental defects in the engineering and technology employed by this concern? If so, I would simply put this to the hon. Minister more in sorrow than in anger: *Quo vadis?* Where are you going? If the technology or engineering employed is not sound and some of the ships constructed are basically defective, then it is a matter of serious concern. Would the Minister appoint a commission of inquiry composed of technical personnel to look into this aspect of the functioning of Hindustan Shipyard, whether the engineering and technology are sound and efficient? Secondly, which authority certified the ship as sea-worthy, particularly when the special survey was conducted in mid-1967 when it was declared sea-worthy and fit to operate? In the light of this, why did it disintegrate into two parts by a minor shock? There was no collision of a type which would lead to disintegration.

MR. SPEAKER: How long am I to go on listening to his speech when only a question or two by way of clarification is allowed?

SHRI S. S. KOTHARI: I am asking only one or two questions.

DR. V. K. R. V. RAO: I am sorry that the hon. Member seems to have the public sector on his brain all the while. I strongly repudiate the allegations which have been made by such a responsible person as my hon. friend.

SOME HON. MEMBERS: No allegations.

SHRI S. S. KOTHARI: He is becoming irrelevant.

DR. V. K. R. V. RAO: Certainly, he has made allegations. I am extremely sorry he has done it.

This ship has got the best certificates from the Lloyds Register of Shipping and from all the persons who have deployed in service. It has made 14 runs. Unfortunately, accidents do occur. If a machi-

nery manufactured by my hon. friend's friends, may be a motor car or something like that were to meet with an accident, and get damaged, could it be attributed to the same defect. (Interruptions) I am perfectly entitled to defend the public sector in the face of the hon. Member's allegations against it.

SHRI S. S. KOTHARI: The Minister should not get excited.

SHRI RANGA rose—

DR. V. K. R. V. RAO: I am not yielding.

SHRI RANGA (Srikakulam): We are not asking him to yield. I am not bothered about the Minister. It is improper for us to lose our temper. But is it not more improper for a Minister to lose his in this manner?

SHRI BAL RAJ MADHOK (South Delhi): Are we to suffer because the Minister loses his temper?

MR. SPEAKER: My experience is that none of us can afford to lose temper, these days. These days are so bad (Interruption).

DR. V. K. R. V. RAO: I can assure the House that neither the hon. Member nor I have lost our tempers.

As regards the question who gave the certificate, the ship had been surveyed. When it was constructed, it was done under proper survey not merely by our own mercantile marine surveyors but also by Lloyds Register of Shipping. After completion of construction, the ship was surveyed for all the necessary technical details and certificate given. It was placed in the highest class by Lloyds Register. It has already done 14 voyages. I think it is an extremely unfortunate accident that occurred. But simply because an accident has occurred, therefore that the whole Hindustan Shipyard should be undermined and a demand made for the appointment of a commission of inquiry—I am not prepared to appoint any such commission.

SHRI S. S. KOTHARI: What is the nature of the accident? What was the extent of the impact?

DR. V. K. R. V. RAO : All that has got to be ascertained.

SHRI S. S. KOTHARI : He has not been able to ascertain this simple fact, though the accident occurred on the 1st of March.

SHRI K. NARAYANA RAO (Bobbili) : From the statement, it is evident that no immediate salvage measures have been undertaken. Even today the fate of the cargo is still in suspense.

It is also disclosed that we are having our shipping lines with Rumania for the past 10 years and we have done many voyages within that time. From this it is evident that we have not made any treaty provisions contemplated under sec. 403 of the Merchant Shipping Act, according to which we have to make treaty provisions on a reciprocal basis for wrecks of this kind. Nor do we have elaborate provisions covering wrecks and salvages for such contingencies which are costly.

Therefore, I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether we have any treaty arrangements with any of the maritime Powers, in particular with Rumania, so far as wrecks and salvages are concerned.

DR. V. K. R. V. RAO : I am sorry I am not in a position to answer the question at the moment whether we have any treaty. As far as salvaging is concerned, an officer of the salvaging organisation is already there surveying the ship and trying to find out how far it can be salvaged.

श्री रवि राय (पुरी) : यह बहुत ही दुखद घटना है। मैं जानना चाहता हूँ कि यह जो सिल्टवा साहब मर गए हैं, क्या उनकी फैमिली को मुआवजा मिलेगा और अगर मिलेगा तो कितना मिलेगा ?

DR. V. K. R. V. RAO : I wish I were in a position on to tell the hon. member the exact amount. My information is that adequate compensation has already been sanctioned. It will be given to the next of kin, but they have to produce a succession certificate. Pending production of a succession certificate, it has been decided to make an *ex gratia* payment

straightaway. I am extremely sorry the man should have died. I would like to extend my own sympathy and the sympathy of the House to the next of kin this gentleman who has lost his life on duty.

SHRI D. N. PATODIA (Jalore) : I can understand the hon. Minister getting irritated whenever the public sector is mentioned, but the record of the Hindustan Shipyard is not above board. I am myself aware of two cases. For Indian Steamship Co., one ship built by the Hindustan Shipyard by the name of "Indian Industry" had a constructional defect. In another case a ship was sold to Great Eastern Shipping Co., whose original name was probably Ratnakar which was subsequently changed, and that also had a constructional defect, as a result of which both had to carry 2,000 tonnes ballast whenever they travelled. Therefore, may I know whether in respect of this particular ship there was any particular constructional defect.

Secondly, what was the master's report in respect of this particular damage done, and may I know whether, in view of certain defects that might be in the construction or otherwise, Government anticipate any difficulty in settlement of claims by the insurers ?

DR. V. K. R. V. RAO : I do not know if I would be in a position to go into the history of Hindustan Shipyard. We all know that the early history when there was some difficulty in the beginning, but this ship was constructed in 1962 and to the best of my knowledge there was no question of any construction defect, because it has been certified, but an enquiry is going on. Not only an officer from the Shipping Corporation, not only the Harbour Minister of the port of Constantza of the Rumanian Government, but also a nautical officer of the Indian Government has proceeded there to conduct a preliminary enquiry under the provisions of the Merchant Shipping Act. As soon as we get his report, we will have to find out whether there was any defect on the part of the vessel, or any defect on the part of any individual and take necessary action.